Expanding our Cultural Worldview Through the Arts: Looking Within to Reach Beyond.

ACCTA 2018,
Minneapolis – St. Paul

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Presentation Description:
Artistic exploration and self-expression can be used to bring interns and training staff together, create safety for mutually appropriate vulnerability, and deepen understanding of cultural differences and similarities. The art acts as both a buffer and a bridge to connection, creating a "brave space" and allowing participants to titrate their sharing to the level that they feel appropriate. The result can be enhanced cultural competencies and a corrective emotional experience that deepens the internship experience – for interns and training directors alike.

This experiential workshop will provide supportive background and personal examples of this process, and then offer participants their own experiential creating and sharing activities. Participants will engage in a self-exploration process around their cultural identities and be invited to share in small groups. The degree of sharing and self-disclosure will be at the discretion of each participant.

This is an opportunity to build bridges with colleagues, and also take home a diversity training idea for your home training program.

Learning Objectives

Explain the importance of including experiential activities in diversity training

Explain the benefits of using art during a diversity training

Utilize art in a diversity training activity with interns at your own counseling center

Multicultural Competency Training:

One of today's learning outcomes is that you can explain the importance of using experiential activities for diversity trainings and building cultural competency…

So here is what the literature says about this…

The more trainings do the following, the more impactful they are:

Training should be "bottom-up" rather than "top-down" training. This means is should be more experiential and participatory.

Reduce or avoid lecture formats

Promote group dialogue

Be real – transparent and vulnerable - facilitators too,

Encourage listening before sharing

Include self-discovery activities

Provide opportunities to react to cultural values other than your own

Encourage self-reflection and elicit self-awareness

Learning theory – Pyramid

The best ways to learn and teach are **Participatory Not Passive**:

Experiential, leading to engagement, relationship, insight..

Involve discussion and processing

Involve practicing the skills and concepts

Involve teaching the concepts

Adding Art to Multicultural Training

Art can evoke emotional processing –

Art can evoke cognitive processing, insight and reflection

The artist can explore deeper and share deeper

The receiver of the art can process deeper

Art also provides distance from emotion – if needed

It allows an artist to explore and share safely – managing the amount of vulnerability desired in the situation. Bridge or Buffer

Visual images are powerful and convey what words cannot

Art leaves you with something tangible, reminding you, of your experiences with others

Art Reduces self consciousness

Sharing images – brings together verbal and visual, enhancing integration and processing.

Art offers active self-involving strategies and procedures – making it experiential.

How to share, How to respond

Sharing is voluntary, self-initiated, self-filtered - communication is impacted by culture, tend to this healthy sharing process for everyone's benefit.

Honor someone's sharing, politely ask if you can respond to their sharing – accept "no", but if it's a yes, don't talk about the person or their art

– talk about yourself – how did the person/art impact you? What emotions, experiences came up for you when they shared.

Don't compliment the art, it is not about the product, instead compliment the process, compliment the courage you see in others, honor them back with your own sharing about yourself.

A safe environment

Disclose only as much as you feel comfortable

Our information about others stays here, how they impact us will stay with us forever.

Take risks and grow together.

Be open to differences.

Respect and care for others' experiences and identities.

Validate the vulnerability of someone sharing.

Share back how you were impacted by someone's story.

Discussion Questions

What was your experience in your small group like?

What processes did you see emerge?

Did your group develop a pattern of interacting, its own norms?

Was it hard to share your images? What made it hard?

How did you decide what to share and what to hold back?

Was there something you wanted to know about someone else but were afraid to ask?

Why did you hold back? What would have happened if you had asked?

Share a way you were impacted by someone else.

What parts of your identity were easier to share, which were more difficult?

Selected References

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