Exploring Intersectionality and Multiple Cultural Identities within Developmental and other Disabilities

January 25, 2018

PRESENTERS

Angel Love Miles
Postdoctoral Research Associate in Translational and Community-Engaged Scholarship to Improve Community Living and Participation of People with Disabilities, The University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Disability and Human Development and Department of Occupational Therapy

Lydia Brown
Disability Justice Organizer, Advocate, Writer, Educator

Andy Arias
Disability Advocate and Policy Advisor

Tawara D. Goode
PI, Leadership Institute for Cultural Diversity and Cultural and Linguistic Competence
Director, Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence
Director, Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Examine the components of Crenshaw’s conceptualization of intersectionality and their relevance for people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities.
2. Examine the concept of multiple cultural identities and the implications for people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities.
3. Delineate the leadership implications of intersectionality and multiple cultural identities for those leading cultural diversity and cultural and linguistic competence within their respective settings.

Let’s review the meaning of culture.
**Culture** is the learned and shared knowledge that specific groups use to generate their behavior and interpret their experience of the world. It includes but is not limited to:

- thought
- languages
- customs
- rituals
- roles
- beliefs
- expected behaviors
- practices
- relationships
- communication
- manners of interacting
- courtesies

Culture applies to racial, ethnic, religious, political, professional, and other social groups. It is transmitted through social and institutional traditions and norms to succeeding generations. Culture is a paradox, while many aspects remain the same, it is also dynamic, constantly changing.

---

**Culture ...**

- is applicable to all peoples
- is value laden & rooted in belief systems
- is active & dynamic
- is multilayered & multidimensional
- exists at conscious & unconscious levels
- is often viewed as thick, thin, or compartmentalized
- provides group member identity
- structures perceptions & shapes behaviors
- varies in expression both among and between
- individual group members
- permeates every aspect of life

---


Comprised of beliefs about reality, how people should interact with each other, what they know about the world, and how they should respond to the social and material environments in which they find themselves.

Reflected in religion, morals, customs, politics, technologies, and survival strategies of a given group. It affects how groups work, parent, love, marry, and understand health, mental health, wellness, illness, disability, and end of life.


What are multiple cultural identities?

What is intersectionality?
What the literature is telling us about cultural identity

“The concept of cultural identity refers to familial and cultural dimensions of a person’s identity, and how others perceive him or her, i.e., factors that are salient to a person’s identity both as perceived by the individual and how others perceive the person’s identity.”

A number of scholars have highlighted the dynamic nature of cultural identification, and how it is subject to change over different phases of life as one reconciles ones multiple roles.

---

Slide Source: © 2018 - Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence

---

What the literature is telling us about cultural identity

The Cross model provides insight that:

- Identity is influenced by positive or negative experiences in a social setting, especially for marginalized individuals, identity can get facilitated, or compromised;

- It is possible for identity to evolve to higher levels of functioning in spite of challenging life experiences; and

- The social construction of race, and the history of slavery, segregation, exclusion, and the negative sociopolitical history of a nation can negatively influence identity development with race-related trauma and stress over several generations.

What the literature is telling us about cultural identity

Ibrahim anchors cultural identity within a person’s primary cultural context, and it includes:

- ethnicity,
- gender and gender identity,
- spiritual assumptions,
- age and life stage,
- ability and disability status,
- family,
- community, and
- nation.

Culture influences all these dimensions however; the effect varies across various dimensions, including life experiences and time.”


POLLING QUESTION

Does your organization collect data on cultural identity beyond race and ethnicity?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Don’t Know
What the literature is telling us about multiple cultural identity

An individual who has been exposed to and has learned more than one culture is a multicultural person, but only when this individual expresses an attachment with and loyalty to these cultures can we say that the individual has a multicultural identity.


MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES

The extant literature indicates that we as human beings have multiple cultural identities that can be grouped as follows.

- Categorization – people identify with one of their cultural groups over others
- Compartmentalization – individuals maintain multiple, separate identities within themselves
- Integration – people link their multiple cultural identities

Data Sources:

Slide Source: © 2018 - Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence
What the literature is telling us about multiple cultural identity

- Multicultural people often need to navigate the different norms and values associated with their multiple cultural identities.
- More and more people are in a position where they need to negotiate the different cultural identities that are derived from their own belonging to different cultural groups.
- People who belong to more than one cultural group must navigate the diverse norms and values from each of their cultural affiliations. Faced with such diversity, multicultural individuals need to manage and organize their different and possibly clashing cultural identities within their general sense of self.


VIEWS ON DISABILITY IDENTITY

The population of people who experience disability is extraordinarily diverse and, therefore, the idea of a common disability identity isolates disability artificially from intersecting identities related to race, gender, sexuality, class, age, and other axes of social significance.

There is no simple relationship between race and disability.

Some people of color with disabilities have prioritized their identification and affiliation with persons who share their cultural/racial heritage and have had little contact with disability groups.

They tend to see disability in terms of limitation rather than identity. (p.46)


Some people of color have substantial contact with disability groups.

They are more likely to identify as being “disabled” and to reference parallels between race and disability.

Some say that their experiences of race-based oppression have prepared them to understand disability as a social minority experience. This suggests intersectional expressions of identify. (p.46)

What the is literature telling us about multiple cultural identity

College students with disabilities who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) represent diverse cultural minorities with multiple service needs involving disabilities, identities, and adjustment strategies. These students are usually accommodated in the college environment because of their disability while simultaneously marginalized based on their sexual orientation.


Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw used intersectionality to describe overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination specially focused on Black women.

Since this time, the concept of intersectionality has strayed from its feminist, legal, civil rights advocacy, and race theory roots. Intersectionality is currently being embraced by many in academia and human services, including within the network of individuals and organizations concerned with developmental and other disabilities.

How often does your organization integrate concepts of multiple cultural identity and intersectionality, as defined during this forum, in its activities and practices?

- □ Almost always
- □ To a considerable degree
- □ Occasionally
- □ Seldom
Can you share with us how the elements of Crenshaw's conceptualization of intersectionality apply to you and your own identities (e.g. systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination based on race/ethnicity)?

Andy  Lydia  Angel

What have been your experiences as an individual living at the intersection of race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, LGBTQ identity? How often do people with whom you interact only see one of your identities?

Lydia  Angel  Andy
What recommendations do you have to those who provide services and supports, teach, develop policy, and advocate with and on behalf of individuals with developmental and other disabilities to address intersectionality?

Angel

Andy

Lydia

MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES & INTERSECTIONALITY: IN DEVELOPMENTAL AND OTHER DISABILITIES

What is the role of the leader?
Differentiating Technical and Adaptive Work

**TECHNICAL WORK**
- Perspectives are aligned
- Definition of the problem is clear
- Solution to and implementation to address the problem is clear
- Primary responsibility for organizing the work lies with the formal or appointed leader

**ADAPTIVE WORK**
- Legitimate yet competing perspectives
- Definition of the problem is unclear
- Solution and implementation require learning
- Primary locus of responsibility is not the formal or appointed leader


---

Cultural & Linguistic Competence within the Context of Personal and Organizational Change

Does making progress require changes in people’s values, attitudes, and behaviors?

What is the role of the leader?

- Model the way
- Inspire a shared vision
- Challenge the process
- Enable others to act
- Encourage the heart

Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership © Leadership Practices Inventory

CONTACT US

Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence
http://nccc.georgetown.edu
cultural@georgetown.edu

The content of and this PowerPoint presentation are copyrighted and are protected by Georgetown University's copyright policies.

Permission is granted to use this PowerPoint presentation in its entirety and/or individual slides for non-commercial purposes if:
• the material is not to be altered and
• proper credit is given to the author(s) and to the National Center for Cultural Competence.

Permission is required if the material is to be:
• modified in any way
• used in broad distribution.

To request permission and for more information, contact cultural@georgetown.edu.