

Practice Guidelines for Psychologists Working with Culturally Diverse Groups

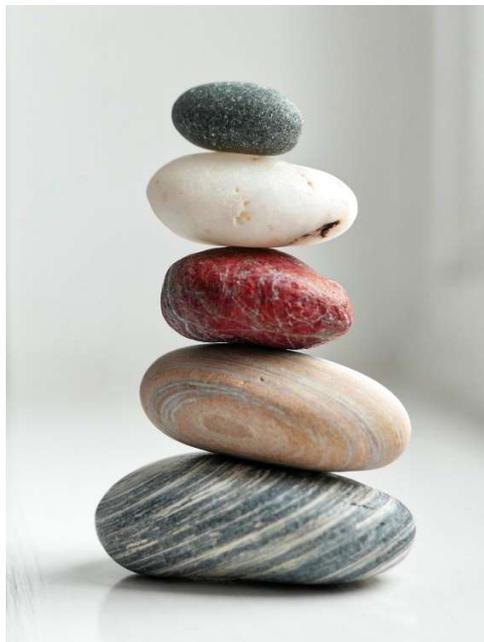
The profession of psychology recognises the critical role of diversity and multiculturalism, in terms of how people and groups define themselves and how they approach and engage with others. Not surprisingly, there have been significant developments in multicultural theory, research, and professional practice guidelines over time (American Psychological Association [APA], 2017).

The following multicultural practice guidelines have been collated from past and recent versions by the APA (1990, 2017). They are intended to provide psychologists with a guide for delivering multiculturally competent services across all areas of practice. The clients referred to here may be individual clients, organisations, community and/or government agencies.

1. Psychologists seek awareness and understanding of how developmental stages and life transitions intersect with the larger biosociocultural context; how identity evolves as a function of such intersections; and how these different socialization and maturation experiences influence worldview and identity.
2. Psychologists recognize and understand that as cultural beings, they hold attitudes and beliefs that can influence their perceptions of and interactions with others as well as their clinical and empirical conceptualizations.
 - a. Psychologists strive to eliminate biases, assumptions, prejudices, and discriminatory practices and avoid making formulations based on limited knowledge about individuals and communities.
 - b. ***Illustrative Statement:*** Psychologists might routinely ask themselves, *“Is it appropriate for me to view this client/organization any differently than I would if they were from my own ethnic or cultural group?”*
3. Psychologists acknowledge relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of the population being served.
 - a. ***Illustrative Statement:*** Depression may be associated with frustrated attempts to climb the corporate ladder in an organization that is dominated by a top tier of white males.

4. Psychologists recognize and understand the role of language and communication through engagement that is sensitive to the lived experience of the individual, group, community, and/or organizations with whom they interact. Psychologists seek to understand how they bring their own language and communication to these interactions.
5. Psychologists aspire to understand historical and contemporary experiences with power, privilege, and oppression. As such, they seek to address institutional barriers and related inequities, disproportionalities, and disparities of law enforcement, administration of criminal justice, educational, mental health, and other systems as they seek to promote justice, human rights, and access to quality and equitable mental and behavioural health services.
6. Psychologists endeavour to be aware of the role of the social and physical environment in the lives of clients, students, research participants, and/or consultees.
7. Psychologists seek to promote culturally adaptive interventions and advocacy within and across systems including prevention, early intervention, and recovery.
8. Psychologists strive to conduct culturally appropriate and informed research, teaching, supervision, consultation, assessment, interpretation, diagnosis, dissemination, and evaluation of efficacy.
 - a. Psychologists seek out educational and training experiences to enhance their understanding to address the needs of these populations more appropriately and effectively.
 - b. Psychologists recognize the limits of their competencies and expertise, and seek consultation or make referrals to appropriate experts if they do not possess the knowledge and training required to work effectively with a particular client group.
 - c. Psychologists consider the validity of a given assessment/procedure and interpret data, keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the client. Psychologists are aware of the test's reference population and possible limitations of such instruments with other populations.

9. Psychologists actively strive to take a strength-based approach when working with individuals, groups, communities, and organizations that seeks to build resilience and decrease trauma within the sociocultural context.
10. Psychologists respect clients' religious and/or spiritual beliefs and values, including attributions and taboos, since they affect world view, psychosocial functioning, and expressions of distress.



“...Cultural competence does not refer to a process that ends simply because the psychologist is deemed competent. Rather, cultural competence incorporates the role of cultural humility whereby cultural competence is considered a lifelong process of *reflection* and *commitment*.”
(APA, 2017, p. 8)

Content extracted from:

1) American Psychological Society. (1990). *Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services to Ethnic, Linguistic, and Culturally Diverse Populations*.

<https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/policy/provider-guidelines>

2) American Psychological Association. (2017). *Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality*.

<http://www.apa.org/about/policy/multicultural-guidelines.pdf>