



TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP

BUILDING CULTURAL CAPACITY



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In order to maintain the integrity of this work, Kevin only authorizes those who have experienced the exercises directly from Kevin or his partners to use them for their own organizations. Thank you for your respect in this matter.

Everybody has culture,
even though some folks think they don't.
It greets you when you and the sun first wake up in the morning and it rests with you
when you get comfortable enough to fall asleep and say the day is over.

Culture is ever present.
Culture is how you love and
who you choose to love.

It's whether you eat cornbread or pumpernickel.
It's how you respond to the dilemmas life offers and how you celebrate living.
It shows itself without you knowing and it tells who you are without you speaking.

Culture includes all your family,
even those who are dead and gone because
they are the ones who set the cultural patterns you follow.

Culture can be vibrant and loud or sometimes quiet and subtle, but it is always there,
shaping the ways in which we view the world.

Adapted from a poem by
~ Mona Lake Jones

FRAMING TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Trans – prefix meaning “across” or “to go beyond.”

Cultural – of or pertaining to the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.

Culture is an expression of shared meaning and identity – the lens through which we experience and understand the world in which we live.

We each have our own distinct ideas about how the world works and the best way to get things done. Organizations, communities, and groups also have distinct and habitual ways of perceiving and working with others.

When a group is mostly comprised of people who carry the same traditions and culture, there are prescribed ways of relating and working together. The road to self-understanding is more apparent, and expectations of what to do and how to behave are more explicit.

But when a group is comprised of people from diverse traditions and cultures, finding ways to relate and work together becomes more complex and difficult. Not surprisingly, the result can be uncertainty, suspicion, frustration, and inability to reach a consensus. More positive, productive and sustainable outcomes require all members to establish trust and create a strong and sustainable community that builds upon the strengths of their individual cultures. In order to do this, each person must develop and draw upon basic skills of communication, facilitation and leadership to build bridges across cultures.

What can you do to build those bridges, or perhaps be the bridge across cultures?

Programs, coalitions, and institutions build cultural capacity by engaging in activities and processes that are inclusive and on-going in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of cultural competency efforts at all levels of the organization. In addition, members are committed to, and active in achieving their own personal levels of cultural capacity. It is a continuous journey, a process of learning and discovery, both internally and externally.

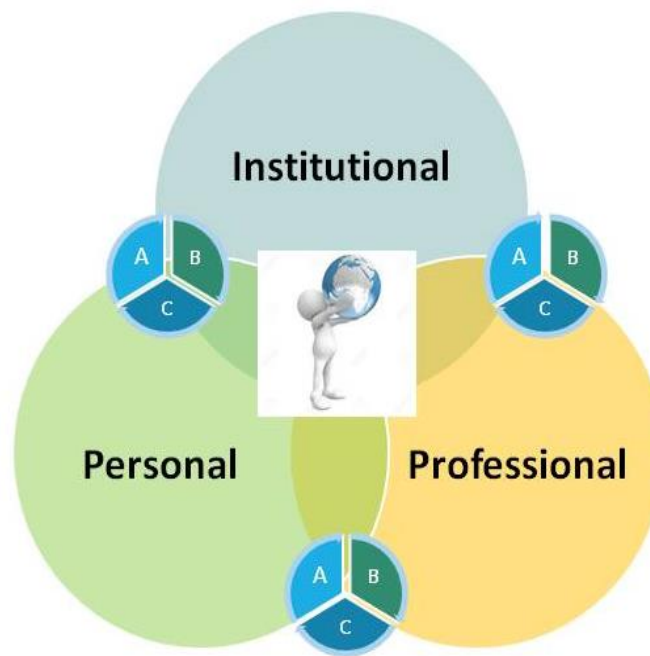
The notion of defining culture in a broad spectrum, and understanding the perspectives and biases we bring is crucial in being compassionate and effective agents of change. This understanding needs to come from both an intellectual and emotional place - the head and the heart – and we will work together to clarify, align and integrate these perspectives.

<u>Attitudes</u>	An attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, awareness, beliefs, biases, appreciations and expectations toward a particular person(s), thing or event. Attitudes may be conscious or subconscious thoughts or feelings. They are often the result of a person's experience or upbringing. Attitudes can be explicit (conscious) or implicit (unconscious).
<u>Behaviors</u>	Your behaviors comprise your direct or indirect actions with an individual, group or situation. The more established your attitude is, the more influence it will have on your behavior. It is noteworthy that your conscious attitudes can intentionally change potentially negative behaviors. It is easier for others to respond to your direct behaviors than your indirect behaviors.
<u>Conditions</u>	It is important to be mindful of the larger environmental conditions when considering sustained change in attitudes and behaviors. If you don't change conditions, the behaviors will likely repeat themselves.

As you build your cultural capacity, you need to consider all three of these factors, and how they influence and balance each other.

THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Community and organizational leaders are uniquely positioned to navigate the challenges of culture in the workplace. This is especially true in an age where cultural norms and social media have blurred the lines between the personal and the professional. Traditional workplace ethics of keeping topics like politics and religion at home are no longer standard practice. This presents a unique challenge for organizational leaders, as depicted in the diagram below.



In order for leaders to work transculturally, they must strike a balance between their personal beliefs and biases, their professional position and influence, and their institutional values and policies. A leader who can stand in the middle, aligning their attitudes, behaviors and conditions in all three circles, will have the greatest chance at sustaining a healthy and principled workplace.

STEPS TOWARD BUILDING CULTURAL CAPACITY

Adapted from Sue and Sue

"A culturally competent professional is one who is actively in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, preconceived notions, personal limitations, and so forth.

Second, a culturally competent professional is one who actively attempts to understand the worldview of culturally diverse populations. In other words, what are the values, assumptions, practices, communications styles, group norms, biases, experiences, perspectives and so on, of culturally diverse clients, families, communities and colleagues you interact with?

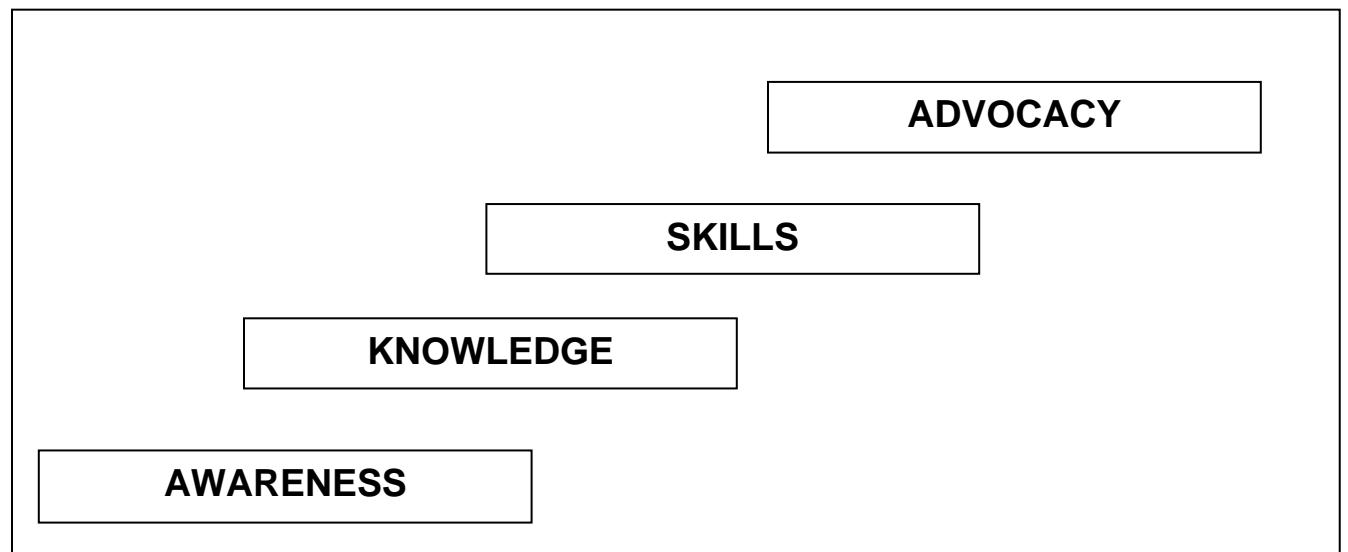
Third, a culturally competent professional is one who is in the process of actively developing and practicing appropriate, relevant, and sensitive strategies and skills in working with culturally diverse clients, families, communities and colleagues.

Fourth, a culturally competent professional is one who advocates on behalf of the needs of clients, families, community and colleagues. They take action in their workplace, community and society to create a culture of respect and equity.

Thus, cultural competence is active, developmental, an ongoing process and is aspirational rather than achieved."

Steps Toward Building Cultural Capacity

Sue and Sue



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Adapted from Potapchuk – Racial Equity Tools

Organizations and communities are recognizing that the three pillars of diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential in achieving and sustaining conditions for social justice. These concepts are at once unique and inter-related.

Diversity has come to refer to the various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other grouping. In many cases the term diversity does not just acknowledge the existence of diversity of background, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and so on, but implies an appreciation of these differences.

Equity: Equity establishes and maintains just and fair conditions which all, including all racial and ethnic groups, and reach their full potential, despite historic patterns such as racial, gender, and economic exclusion.

Inclusion: Inclusion assures that traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups are authentically brought into processes, activities and decision/policy making.

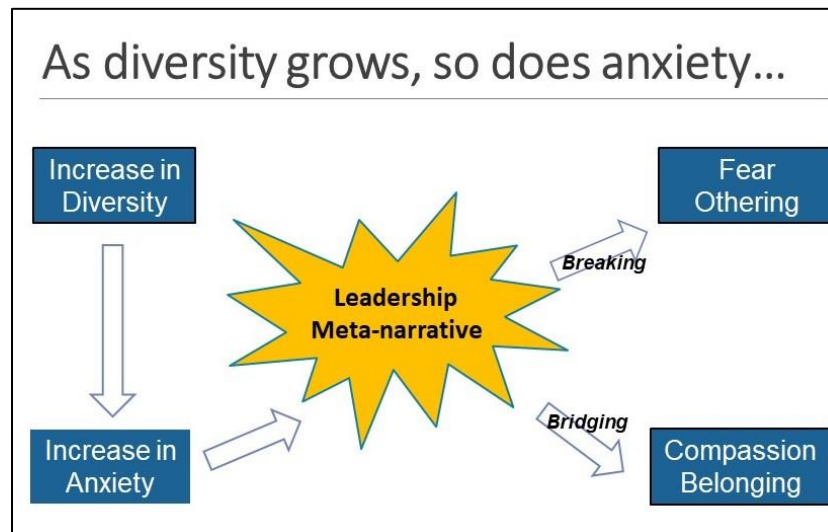
Diversity	Equity	Inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on composition.• Who is present?• Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on outcomes.• Who has power?• Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on experience.• Who is participating?• Engagement

It is important to note the difference between equity and equality. In the words of Amy Sun, “Equity and equality are two strategies we can use in an effort to produce fairness. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equality is treating everyone the same. Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help.”

BREAKING, BONDING & BRIDGING

Adapted from john a powell – Othering and Belonging Institute

As diversity (in any form) increases, so does anxiety. As leaders, you play a key role in influencing how the community responds to this change.



Source: Haas Institute

The response, as defined by john a. powell of the Haas Institute, may consist of a narrative of *Breaking*, *Bonding*, or *Bridging*.

Breaking – when a group turns inward and explicitly pushes away from other groups who are seen as less than, dangerous, a threat and less than. This narrative tends to sow seeds of Fear, Othering, and Isolation.

Bonding – connecting to people like you in some important way without disparaging others.

Bridging – connecting to people who are unlike you in some important way through stories, structures, common purpose and work.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, hate groups are on the rise in Utah (4 in 2014; 9 in 2018 – see <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map?state=UT>). As recently as this past week, we have seen how individuals and groups inciting hate and separatism have caused violence and tragedy for everyone in a community. In a sense, no one is safe.

As leaders of this community, what will your narrative be?



Kevin Kahakula'akea John Fong is a nationally respected cultural translator, facilitator, trainer in transformative justice, racial healing, leadership development, organizational design, and community healing. Kevin has extensive experience in working with clients in the public and private sector, especially with diverse, multicultural/multi-lingual groups. His mission is to weave people with possibilities to cultivate communities of belonging.

Prior to starting his consulting practice in 1995, Kevin spent five years in executive management at Macy's CA, and nine years as the Founder and Director of the Clinical HIV Program and Teen Clinic at Asian Health Services, a community health center in Oakland, CA. In addition, Kevin was awarded a three-year fellowship from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. During his assignments in East Africa, Brazil, Guatemala, Turkey, Central and Eastern Europe, and throughout the U.S., Kevin paid particular attention to the effects of globalization on families, neighborhoods and villages from the context of community and citizen leadership.

In recent years, Kevin has been called to facilitate community healing circles around the country, including: St. Louis|Ferguson, MO; Flint, MI; Dallas, TX; New Orleans, LA; Baltimore, MD; Charleston, SC; and Los Angeles, CA, and throughout rural communities in Mississippi, New Mexico, California, and Colorado.

A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, Kevin resides in San Francisco with his partner and their two sons



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