

# CULTURAL HUMILITY



Cultural humility "requires that we take responsibility for our interactions with others, by actively listening to those from differing backgrounds while at the same time being attuned to what we are thinking and feeling about other cultures; cultural humility encourages self-reflection and self-awareness" (Clark et al, 2011) over the achievement of cultural knowledge/awareness.

## 4 ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL HUMILITY

(adapted from Sufirin, 2019)

1

### We are part of several cultures.

Culture is often experienced by engaging in different daily aspects of everyday life. As an example, in our daily lives we experience different aspects of culture in our home versus our work environments. These cultures have unique qualities and place diverse expectations on our engagement in our interactions.

The purpose of cultural humility asks us to be aware of our own values while understanding that we encounter multiple notions of culture from the combination of experiences in everyday interactions. Therefore, to understand the constructs of culture we need to be aware and reflective of groups' contexts and the history of the culture in the given situation.

2

### Cultural humility is different from cultural competency.

Cultural humility is a tool for balancing power dynamics by understanding the 'other,' and asks that we move beyond learning about other cultures and reflect on our own history. Cultural humility asks that we consider the 'other' an expert in their own experiences.

Cultural humility is reflexive, and people engage with it to discover themselves and their beliefs in order to become more aware of bias, stereotypes, and judgement.

3

### Cultural humility implores historical awareness.

The full essence of cultural humility cannot be attained by self-reflection within relationships that occur in the moment. Cultural humility is a practice that is grounded in sensitivities that are embedded in the history of our culture, such as oppression of particular societies and mistrust that was experienced. In order to re-establish trust, the underlying systems of mistrust need to be brought to the surface and made visible.

Historical systems of racism, segregation, and slavery for example, shape the current experiences and disrespect faced by cultural peoples. In order to move forward as global citizens, cultural humility acknowledges the catastrophes of the past.

4

### Cultural humility is life-long

Unlike competency models cultural humility is an approach that asks us to be life long learners with no end goal or result, but to be in process with learning and listening to each other. This process requires us to be self-reflexive and to redress issues of power imbalances.

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