





SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Exploring Cultural Identity from a Strengths Perspective: Implications for Social Work Practice
Betty Walton & Saahoon Hong
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Introductions

Betty Walton, PhD, LCSW
Associate Research Professor

Saahoon Hong, PhD
Assistant Research Professor




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Learning objectives


- Participants will be able to explain the strengths perspective
- Participants will describe their own cultural identity from a multicultural perspective.
- Participants will be able to explain how identifying cultural identities can enhance understanding and engagement between social workers and clients.

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SECTION 1

Strengths

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Strengths-based approach

1. A person who experiences problems has capacity to grow
2. Social workers need to move beyond deficits and emphasize strengths
3. Person focuses on the context and natural resources.
4. Clients set their own goals.
5. Th relationship between therapist helps foster hope.

(Hong et al., 2023a; Rapp & Sullivan, 2014)

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Having & building strengths supports recovery

1. Family strength development	7. Educational/Vocational
2. Interpersonal relationships	8. Natural Supports.
3. Optimism	9. Resilience
4. Spirituality	10. Community Involvement
6. Talents & Interests	11. Cultural Identity
7. Job History	(Hong et al., 2023a; Lyons & Fernando, 2023)

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Cultural Identity
SECTION 2




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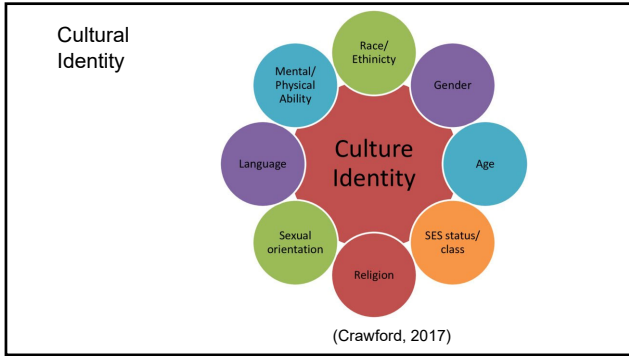
Culture

- Refers to a large and diverse set of ...aspects of social life
- Consists of values, beliefs, language, communication and products that people share ... and can be used to define them as a group
- Includes material objects that people make and use

(Cole, 2020; Harris et al., 2024; Heersmink, 2021)



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Multicultural Identity

Aspects of each person's cultural identity include multiple aspects!

Personal & Professional

- People belonging to more than one cultural group have to manage diverse norms and values from different cultural affiliations – possibly clashing cultural identities.
- Depending on circumstances, cultural aspects may be stronger

(Harris et al., 2024; Heersmink, 2021; Yampolsky et al., 2013)

- Examples.....

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ACTIVITY

Use the Cultural Identity worksheet describe your own multi-cultural identity, considering multiple personal and professional group connections and roles.

Collaboration & Coaching

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Disparities

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Health Disparities

- “Physical and behavioral health care disparities are differences in health care quality, affordability, access, utilization, and outcomes between groups.
- Literature exploring issues of health care disparity states that race and/or ethnic group membership may be a primary influence on health outcomes” (Lyons & Fernando, 2023, p. 46).
- In the CANS and ANSA holistic assessments, culture is described broadly to include cultural groups that are racial, ethnic, or religious, or are based on age, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status and/or geography. (Lyons & Fernando, 2023)
- **What else could be considered as related to cultural identify and factors?**

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Cultural Factors

Three cultural factors (needs that could interfere with an individual's functioning) are included in the CANS & ANSA.

1. Language
2. Traditions and Cultural Rituals
3. Cultural Stress

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Cultural Identity & Cultural Stress

Two of the most important factors for differentiating Asian Americans from White or Black people in terms of behavioral health needs are **Cultural Identity** and **Cultural Stress**. Asian Americans in behavioral health services report 10 times as likely to experience these factors compared to White or Black people (Hong et al., 2023b).

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Cultural Identity Reframed as a Strength

“**Cultural identity** refers to the individual's view of self as belonging to a specific cultural group. This group may be defined by number of factors including race, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientate, gender identity and expression” (Lyons & Fernando, 2023, p. 43).

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Activity

How does cultural identify relate to social work and other human service practice?

Be prepared to share with larger group.



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SECTION 4

Cultural Humility: A Journey

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Understanding perspectives, customs, & values

- When we understand people's perspectives, customs, and values, we can better understand their behavior, the meaning of their behavior, and how they express happiness, joy, distress, etc.
- A shared understanding will help us find ways to better engage children, youth, adults, and families to partner with us and become involved in the care process.

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Responsive and Respectful Care

Culturally responsive services (the practice)

- Culturally responsive services are a pathway to equity.
- To provide culturally responsive or culturally grounded care, a culturally humble approach is recommended.

Cultural humility (the approach)

- As helping professionals, we hope to recognize and understand that (as cultural beings), we hold values and beliefs that can impact our perspectives of and interactions with others as well as our understanding and clinical conceptualizations.
- We try to go beyond assumptions and biases based on limited knowledge about other people and communities. An approach based on cultural humility normalizes our limitations.

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Tips

- Be curious
- Acknowledge limited knowledge, understanding
- Create a shared understanding of strengths, challenges, and goals
- Identify and address barriers
- What else?

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References & Resources

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Contact Information

Betty Walton, PhD, LCSW
beawalto@iu.edu

Saahoon Hong, PhD
saahong@iu.edu



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