

Exploring Cultural Identity from a Strengths Perspective: Implications for Social Work Practice

Learning Objective:

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

Abstract: Following a brief discussion of the strengths perspective's benefits in recovery (Hong et al., 2021; Rapp & Sullivan, 2014; Rapp & Goscha, 2012), we will explore cultural identity as a strength. Reflecting membership in and support from a social group with specific values, practices and norms (Heersmink, 2021), cultural identity includes, but is not limited to, age, generation, religion/spirituality, gender identity and expression, race and ethnicity, language, profession, class, nationality, rural/urban residence (Heersmink, 2021; Harris et al., 2024). Therapeutic approaches have evolved to a multi-cultural approach, focused on professional development and cultural humility. As social workers, being aware of one's own cultural identity and curious about/respectful of others' is consistent with ethical principles (NASW, 2021), enhances relationships, and supports effective practice. In this interactive workshop, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the role of strengths in recovery, explore their own multi-cultural identity, and discuss how cultural identity is related to social work practice.

References

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Bio: Dr. Betty Walton, Associate Research Professor, Indiana University School of Social Work, Indianapolis, conducts translational research to support behavioral health services for children, youth, and adults. Since 2010, Dr. Walton and a team have provided continuing education and technical assistance to support the implementation of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) and Adult Needs and Strengths Assessment (ANSA) tools in public service systems. The technical assistance team supports the routine use of practice-based data to inform planning and to monitor progress at direct service, program, and system levels. Her research interests include co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders, child mental services (access, utilization, and outcomes), system of care implementation, and continuing education. Previous experiences as a clinician and mid-level manager in community mental health centers and in state hospitals inform her research

Bio: Dr. Hong is an Assistant Research Professor at the Indiana University School of Social Work. His ongoing projects involve utilizing the integrative data system of the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration-Division of Mental Health and Addiction to enhance quality improvement initiatives. Dr. Hong's research interests primarily revolve around equity, quality improvement, and racial/ethnic disparities in education and behavioral health services. He completed his doctoral degree in Educational Psychology at the University of Minnesota in 2005.