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# Cultural sensitivity training: Description and evaluation of a workshop

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#### 15 **KEYWORDS** 18 10

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Cultural sensitivity; Training exercises; Levels of cultural sensitivity

Summary We describe the materials used to develop cultural sensitivity within 350 nursing students. These involved a lecture on dimensions of difference between east and west, exercises on names and early memories and the construction of a cultural genogram. In addition, we report the results of an evaluation study which was both quantitative and qualitative. The questionnaire data indicated that the workshop was useful and clear. Using IPA analysis, the interview data indicated seven major themes: a close, safe space in which to talk, increased cultural awareness, freedom to inquire, awareness that cultural self-knowledge is essential for developing cultural sensitivity, impact of cultural sensitivity training on professional work with people, limitations and suggestions for future workshops and wanting more workshops in a similar vein. Second stage IPA analysis indicated four levels of cultural sensitivity: 'Them', 'Us and Them', 'We' and 'Transcendent'. Integrating the findings of both the qualitative and the qualitative data, we conclude that the workshop was highly appreciated and that there is a demand for more training in this area. Implications for further training in cultural sensitivity are considered. © 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

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'I have a vision of an NHS which fully and whole-35 heartedly embraces and welcomes people from

all cultures and in which the services it provides 37

meet all of their health needs.' 38

(Baxter cited in Smith et al., 2006, pg.)

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Introduction

Almost 1 in 10 people in Britain come from a black 41 or minority ethnic background (Census, 2001), but 42 many of these people are reluctant to use healthcare services (Madhok et al., 1992) because they are fundamentally dissatisfied with the type and quality of healthcare provision (Smaje and Le Grand, 1997). A recent study by Vydelingum (2006) concluded that nursing staff showed poor cultural competence with evidence of ethnocentric 49

practices, a denial of racism, limited cultural 50

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knowledge and a tendency to treat all ethnic minority patients in a similar fashion. In the light of events such as the razing of the twin towers and the London bombings last year, cultural sensitivity and competence are an urgent need in the NHS particularly with regard to the spiritual care of people from black and minority ethnic groups (BMEs) (Narayanasamy, 2006).

Additionally, the NHS workforce has been bolstered by large proportions of overseas-trained nurses who have been invited into this country to make up labour shortages (Smith et al., 2006). Research indicates that the experience of coming to Britain is not a pleasant one: at various times overseas students endure humiliation, discrimination, racism and exploitation and undergo a devaluing and deskilling process. Having to study/work in a language that is not one's first language produces a feeling of isolation and many look primarily to members of their own cultural group for support, comfort and strength. Blackford's (2003) study indicates that the culture of care is constructed within a 'culture of whiteness' frame. Papadopoulos (2005) warns against a tendency to pathologise people from different cultures and encourages the dominant group to recognize the resilience of refugees and BME people. He points out that negative reactions from the host country can be as traumatic as the original process of migration or asylum-seeking.

The Department of Health is concerned that a culture-sensitive consideration of differences in religion, culture and language be incorporated into the healthcare system (DoH, 2004). Camphina-Bacote (1994, cited in Fahrenwald et al., 2001) defines cultural competence as 'a continuous process in which the nurse strives to develop an ability to work effectively within the cultural context of an individual, family or community from a diverse cultural/ethnic background'. The process involves the development of cultural awareness, knowledge and skill, and is further enhanced and refined by one's cultural encounters and a desire to consider cultural elements of one's practice (Campinha-Bacote, 2002). It embodies a willingness towards actual encounter with people of different cultures and an on-going desire to further the process of developing cultural competence.

In order to meet the training needs of the white, black and minority ethnic and the overseas-trained student population at the University of Surrey, I (NH), (along with a colleague from the clinical psychology department), devised and ran a cultural sensitivity training workshop for nurses. This workshop was then evaluated by the second author (JG).

The aim of this paper is twofold: I will first describe in some detail the contents of this workshop in the hope that other people may effectively use the tools of the workshop to train students in cultural sensitivity. Then I will report on the results of the evaluation study.

#### Method

# Materials for the workshop

The materials for the workshop were developed through the running of a focus group, through one to one interactions with students in the University and through discussion with colleagues at European Institute of Health and Medical Sciences. An information pack which contained a number of articles from nursing journals about the experiences of black and minority ethnic students was compiled, photocopied and distributed to each of 350 students.

#### (1) Dimensions of Difference

A presentation was made outlining some dimensions of difference between Eastern and Western cultures (Hutnik, 2003; Laungani, 1999). Four major dimensions of difference were highlighted: syncretistic vs. antithetical logic; circular time vs. linear time; relationship orientation vs. task orientation and We vs. I orientation. These dimensions which are available in Hutnik (2003) were explained using many cultural examples. In addition, Drego's model of the Cultural Parent (Drego, 1983) was explained and Hutnik's quadripolar model of ethnic minority identity was used to indicate some of the complexities of cross cultural communication (Hutnik, 1991).

#### (2) Exercise on Names

The students then participated in a Names exercise where in pairs they discussed the narratives around the names that had been given to them at birth. In this exercise they were encouraged to look at cultural practices prevalent within their primary families and cultures around the identities of newborn babies. Examples were given from the first author's own background. For example, she explained that one of her names is Judith after St. Jude, patron saint of hopeless cases, who her mother had prayed to after having been unable to conceive for the first five years of her marriage. Some students shared their insights and experiences in the large group.

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#### (3) Exercise on Early Memories 156

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Next they were asked to remember back to their earliest memory/memories of contact with a person of a 'different' background. While the focus of the workshop was on issues of culture and ethnicity, students were encouraged to look too at other dimensions of difference for example, age, gender, sexual orientation and level of ability. A key question that students were encouraged to answer was as follows: What early decisions did you come to as a result of this experience and can you see any relationship with how you practice as a healthcare professional. Again, after they had discussed this in pairs, students were invited to share what the process had been like for them in the large group. No pressure was exerted to share the content of their experience. However some of the students did this freely and of their own volition. The first author shared how when she was three and living in China a little Chinese boy became her friend and wanted to 'dress up' in her party clothes. Her interaction with other Chinese people at this stage was explored, and in particular a close relationship with a Chinese nanny was looked at. She then discussed how this early cultural experience had a profound influence on her academic work in later years.

# (4) The Cultural Genogram

Students were facilitated in the construction of a three generation cultural genogram. This is not unlike a family tree but the major difference is that enables participants to trace inter-generational patterns of inter-marriage and migration across boundaries of sexual orientation, religion, race and ethnicity. (Details of how to do this are given in Hardy and Laszloffy, 1995). Students were given coloured felt pens which were used to identify different cultures, languages and religions. They were challenged to identify some organising principles of their particular culture, e.g. hospitality in Indian culture, money in British culture, a sense of persecution in Jewish culture, guilt in Catholic culture, etc. They were also asked to identify issues of shame and pride (e.g. divorce or homosexuality as examples of shame, academic achievement or political contribution as examples of pride) within their families and encouraged to 'own' and to discuss these. This exercise was conducted in dyads. I then constructed my own cultural genogram explicating inter-cultural and inter-religious marriages and divorces, exploring publicly patterns of migration, discussing organising principles such as

care for the elderly and openly owning matters 212 of pride and shame (such as those mentioned 213 above). By 'owning' one's own cultural issues 214 freely and openly, I hoped that students would 215 gain an example of openness and freedom from 216 shame and guilt. Rather than drawing their own genogram, participants were asked to interview each other and to construct the genogram of the other person. This way a discussion of cultural issues rather than a monologue was engaged in.

#### Materials for evaluation

## (1) Evaluation Questionnaire

A questionnaire which comprised a series of Likert scales assessed whether the workshop was interesting, useful, clear and comprehensive and how applicable it was to present and/or future professional practice. Students completed the Evaluation Questionnaire immediately after they had attended the workshop.

### (2) Semi-structured Interview

In addition to the questionnaire, volunteers 234 participated in an in-depth qualitative interview which covered topics related to whether they felt they had increased in cultural sensitivity as a result of the workshop and how this could affect their practice as healthcare professionals in the NHS. Interviews were run 8-20 weeks after the completion of the training (mean 10.8 weeks). They were audiotaped and subsequently transcribed with permission. Transcripts were then analysed using Interpre-Phenomenological Analysis tative (Smith et al., 1999).

#### Ethical considerations

The workshop proposal and materials, along with 248 information sheets and consent forms for participants were submitted to the Ethics Committee of the University of Surrey and was granted approval.

#### **Participants**

Approximately 350 nursing students from a large 254 variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds participated in one of the four Cultural Sensitivity Work-256 shops held from October 2004 to October 2005. 257 Most of these students were foundation year stu-258 dents, while a few of them were training to be 259 mental health nurses. Of this sample, 191 students 260

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filled in the Evaluation Questionnaire. Eleven were interviewed in depth, 3 men and 8 women reflecting roughly the proportion of males to females in the group of nursing students. These included white African, black African, British-Arabic and white British people.

## 267 Data analysis

The Evaluation Questionnaire was subject to frequency analysis, reliability analysis and factor analysis.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to extract themes from the transcriptions of the semi-structured interview (Smith et al., 1999).

#### 274 Results and discussion

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#### The evaluation questionnaire

276 Reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach's alpha of277 0.938, which is very high.

A factor analysis revealed two factors above an eigenvalue of 1, accounting for a total of 63.4% of the variance. The first factor, *Usefulness* contained items related to how useful the students found the course, and included items about the applicability of the workshop to work, whether the material was interesting and useful and well-timed within the nursing course. The second factor, *Clarity* included items about the extent to which lifespan issues and diversity were covered as well as a question on the clarity of the presentation.

The quantitative evaluation of the course was overwhelmingly positive. On a five-point scale, 5

being the most and 1 the least, the mean evaluation for 'usefulness' was 3.89, and the mean score for 'clarity' was 3.91. The frequencies of these two factors are represented in Figs. 1 and 2 below.

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# Interpretative phenomenological analysis of interview data

By engaging with the interview data, we first developed an 'insider's' perspective. What did participants think about the workshop? Did it touch them or change them in any way? Next we looked at the data from an 'outsider's' perspective (Reid et al., 2005). How did the participants come across to us as they talked about the workshop? What struck us a significant? Finally we will consider the implications of these findings for future workshops.

#### The insider's perspective: lived experience

Several important themes emerged. These were: a close safe space in which to talk, increased cultural awareness, freedom to inquire, awareness that cultural self-knowledge is essential for developing cultural sensitivity, impact of cultural sensitivity training on professional work with people, limitations and suggestions for future workshops and wanting more workshops in a similar vein.

# A close, safe space

The presentation had emphasised that confidentiality was of paramount importance and that nothing should be shared with the larger group without permission. Breaking up into pairs to discuss personal lives and cultural backgrounds seemed to create within the most people a sense of safety and willingness to self-disclose.



Figure 1 Evaluation of course usefulness.

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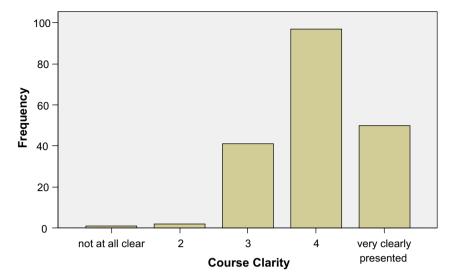


Figure 2 Evaluation of course clarity.

I think what that actual awareness [training] did, 326 327 was actually brought us closer together. Because, we- I was sitting next to somebody who I hadn't 328 spoken to before, I know it sounds a bit weak, for 329 over a year, but there's just not enough time some-330 times to speak to these- you generally keep to your 331 332 own group, you know... But it was really interest-333 ing to find out some of his background, and what had been going on in his life, and why he'd come 334 here...after that people started opening up a bit 335 more, you know, we started to mingle a bit bet-336 ter...it was very good, it was sort of what we 337 338 needed. A2:49-69

#### 339 Increased cultural awareness

All of the participants interviewed reported an 340 improvement in their cultural awareness following 341 342 the course. Thus one of the main aims of the work-343 shop has been achieved. The students were able to 344 use some specific examples from the lectures, in order to deepen their understanding the behaviour 345 of clients and colleagues:

When I met a man the other day who had- ah, he 347 was from an Indian background, um, I was aware 348 349 of one hand for eating, one hand for- for you know, going to the toilet sort of thing, and those things 350 were things I did learn on the workshop because I 352 didn't actually know that before. C1:95-99 I've got a bit more awareness of- of the fact that 353 people do have different, you know, beliefs and

#### 356 Freedom to inquire

values. C1:105-106

357 The presentation on dimensions of difference had emphasised that it was important for the development of cultural sensitivity to acquire the inner 359 freedom to ask questions of people from different cultural backgrounds, questions of information, questions for clarification, questions born out of curiosity and interest in another person's culture. This effort was reflected in some of the statements the students made:

What I've realised also is that people don't mind you asking a question about their culture, and I've realised that you know, friends and stuff who are Muslim, they don't mind if you're quite intrigued about what goes on and what's acceptable, as long as you phrase it in a nice way, and say, you know "oh, I'm not meaning to be rude, but can I ask you..." people don't mind answering questions, in fact, it's probably a good thing to do. C4:128-134

on my last placement I was a bit more bolder, if you like, and I would ask a little bit more about [a colleague's] home... I would ask you know "what was it like where you lived before?" And you know I don't feel worried to ask guestions about it, because I am genuinely interested. C1:139-146

I'll be more prepared to ask people about how things are done where they come from, and what they think about those things. As opposed to just expecting them to be another local person, to acknowledge they're different. D1:228-231

This freedom to inquire is considered a second 388 major achievement of the workshop.

# Cultural self-knowledge as essential to developing cultural sensitivity

The cultural genogram is a potent tool in the acquisition of cultural sensitivity because it applies to

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people from every ethnic (including white), class, 395 religious and sexual orientation background. The effort of the workshop was for each person to develop an awareness of their own cultural issues thereby to develop and increased cultural sensitiv-399 ity to people of other cultural groups:

I mean like, your [genogram]. You know, looking at 400 401 that, it did quite help a lot, you know, sometimes you're not aware of, you know, what values are 402 403 mostly in your family...just looking at that it did help me guite a lot...if I need to counsel some-404 405 body, I really have to understand myself, you know. Yeah, because there are a lot of, you know, value 406 407 judgments that you can make, actually, without you being aware that you are making those judg-409 ments, so it's very important actually. B1:44-57

Clearly B1, a mental health nurse, felt that the genogram was a valuable exercise. He suggests that if an individual is unable to understand the impact 412 of their own culture then by default almost it is impossible to understand people (clients) of other cultures.

...if you're really not aware of it yourself, then you 416 do not know much about other cultures as well, it's quite a difficult thing to help a client. B1:174-177

#### 419 Impact of cultural sensitivity training on professional work with people 420

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The workshop had aimed to heighten people's 421 awareness of and sensitivity to difference when dealing with clients/patients of different cultural backgrounds. Difference in the following excerpt 425 is the awareness that not all white skinned people are English. 426

... (the workshop) in conjunction with the communication thing, the communication skills that we've been taught over the last year, that ability to really 429 430 listen, you know, not to assume that just because the person is white, that they're English, that they can hear, that they can understand. You know, I 432 just, I had, I'm completely aware that they come from a different background, a different social 435 structure, a different value system. C2:167-173

This newly acquired cultural sensitivity enabled people to respect and try to meet the cultural needs of people from very different cultural backgrounds. For example some people believe that it is unethical to eat anything but halal meat and normally halal is not available on hospital wards:

442 and not have an idea of what might happen in a hospital, so also it's good to realise they're from 443 a different culture, and not alienate them, to actu-

ally talk to them and say "yeah, you know, have you got acceptable food?" So like, we have a child who wanted halal meat, so kind of we have to-you know it's their culture, their belief, so we got them halal meat when they have their food. C4:85-92

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Students began to be self-reflexive rather than victim-blaming:

it's not him who's got the problem, it's me who's 452 got the problem. You know, it's my approach. So, let's just be open, let's just see how things go. I took on board everything he told me, how he wanted things done, if he wanted things done specifically, in a specific way in the morning. A2:216— 221

# Limitations of the workshops and suggestions for improvement

A few critical comments were made about some aspects of the workshop. About the cultural genogram, one person pointed out that people who had been adopted as children would not have much access to the facts of their family of origin and this therefore maybe somewhat sensitive for them. She felt that something needed to be said that acknowledged this possibility.

Another felt that the language used and ideas expressed were too academic, particularly for overseas students for whom English was not their first language. Others felt that only a very limited benefit was to be gleaned from a one day workshop. They did not feel optimistic about people changing the way they think as a result of this workshop:

you can have all the awareness workshops you like. if people are going to be prejudiced they're going to be prejudiced. Um the important thing — cause you're not going to change people's fundamental views on these things — the important thing is that they don't- is that they all behave professionally, impartially when they're at work...teaching awareness is great and maybe some people aren't aware and will become more aware, but fundamentally, uh, you know uh two teaching sessions on awareness isn't going to you know, really really change how people feel. It might make them think, which is I guess the idea behind it, but then the next leap is actually making sort of what you discover, what you think about, into how you behave in practice. D3:81-97

## Wanting more

On the other hand some really felt that more workshops such as these were required and that they

496 needed to tackle myriad cultural issues such as 497 death and dying as seen in different cultures:

I mean, I was hoping that there would be more workshops, seminar workshop type um content, in this next year. There's certainly not any in this module, and this module would be a perfect mod-ule to follow it up on... We're doing, um, palliative and rehabilitation. You know, and for me, palliative and death is part of the cultural experience as well, and how you deal, you know how each culture deals with death, and...[whispers] holy fuck! You know so that's a huge emotional minefield anyway, never mind the diversity. Um, and it would be- it would be a really really useful follow up in this- in this module. C2:230-240 

Cultural sensitivity is complex and therefore difficult to teach. The quantitative results in this re-port show that this workshop in its current form was both useful and well presented; the qualitative findings tell us that it has the potential to be even better. We have heard the students' voices, and they are telling us that the course has made a stim-ulating start:

519 I didn't think the lecture was going to be-the 520 workshop was going to be that useful, but when 521 I went into it, it was "Wow, this is exciting 522 stuff!"...not only me, but couple of people 523 there, I mean, we went out talking about it, you 524 know. B1:57—61

## 525 The outsider's perspective: levels of cultural 526 sensitivity

It seemed to us as researchers that people who participated in the workshops entered in at different levels of cultural sensitivity.

First level: The most basic level is the level we called 'Them'. It was characterised by an almost complete absence of sensitivity towards people from other cultures and cultural issues. These individuals saw people from another culture as being "wrong" in the context of our society, and thought that they should be conforming to the norms of British society. An analogy here would be that a fish swimming in water is only aware that there is one way of breathing viz. taking in oxygen through the gills. No awareness exists of other perfectly legitimate but different ways of breathing.

Second level: The next level up we called 'Us and Them' At this level, there is the first awareness of diversity and the legitimacy of diversity: however there is a tendency to 'othering'. Difference is acknowledged but not engaged in, thus leaving

people from 'other' backgrounds to live and let live. Using the analogy above, fish live within the water, birds within the air. Neither have much to do with each other.

Third level: The next level, which we called 'We' represents the movement from mere acceptance of diversity to an appreciation of diversity. Here we begin to see the emergence of multicultural values, where there is an initial, rudimentary recognition that all cultures are part of the human endeavour to evolve and diversity is appreciated, celebrated and affirmed. At this stage, within the dialectic of unity within diversity, the emphasis is placed on diversity. In terms of our analogy there is recognition that both fish and birds form part of the animal kingdom, that they are equal to each other but different.

Fourth level: In the fourth level, which we termed 'Transcendent' the difficult issues of multiculturalism, such as clashes of values, are grappled with and a transcendent attitude is developed. In this level, we see a redress of the balance such that the unity within the value of 'unity within diversity' is re-emphasised. Analogically speaking, fish, birds, mammals and humans within mammals are all seen as part of Life and treated with profound respect. While acknowledging the usefulness of categories, the separateness of the various categories is seen as false and the unity among all life forms is experienced.

Our finding that cultural sensitivity develops in levels is reflected in the Papadopoulos, Tilki and Taylor model of developing cultural competence (Papadopoulus, 2006). Papadopoulos identified four levels of development, each distinguished from the previous by the addition of a specific aspect of cultural competence: first cultural awareness, then cultural knowledge, and finally cultural sensitivity. The final achievement is cultural competence: the healthcare behaviour manifested from the culmination of these elements (Papadopoulus, 2006). Unlike the Papadopoulos, Tilki and Taylor model, our results revealed a level beyond mere cultural competence, one in which differences are not only affirmed and embraced but transcended.

Thus, culturally sensitive practice does not derive merely from a catalogue of knowledge about the expectations and behaviours of various cultural groups (Kleiman, 2006), nor is it a destination point (Campinha-Bacote, 2002). It is an on-going process that drives and is driven by the practitioner's self-reflection, embracing and transcending of difference.

#### 603 Conclusion

604 The materials used for this workshop provided 605 stimulus for thought and for change. People who attended the workshop seemed to feel that their 607 work with people from different cultural back-608 grounds was greatly enhanced. However a number 609 of limitations of this study can be outlined. We 610 have no pre-post measure of cultural sensitivity. 611 A scale/interview schedule, which can be admin-612 istered before and after the workshop has taken place, measuring levels of cultural sensitivity 613 614 might be usefully developed to address this lack. 615 Also, more specialised training materials can be 616 developed to address the training needs of people 617 at the various levels of cultural sensitivity. Pro-618 viding people with basic cultural content will con-619 tribute to increased cultural awareness and will produce a healthcare workforce that is culturally literate. However discussion and debate about the relative merits and demerits of multicultural-622 623 ism will then become necessary. If the NHS as-624 pires to dispense appropriate and culturally 625 sensitive healthcare then it will become neces-626 sary for people to internalise an ability not just 627 to tolerate difference but to cherish it and to see difference as a resource that enriches the quality of life. Cultural sensitivity will then 630 emerge, as people learn to engage with these issues in a spirit of freedom and with enthusiasm and respect. 632

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