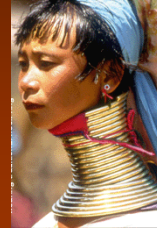


CULTURAL BARRIERS WITHIN MULTICULTURAL HEALTH PROMOTION

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BACKGROUND

- The number of immigrants in Finland has gradually increased since late 1980's.
- More and more often in different fields of everyday life, Finnish people have to consider, what it is that unites people, and on the other hand, what separates them.



Multiculturalism

- The terms 'multiculturalism' and the adjective 'multicultural' in their simplest meanings refer to the fact that several groups differing culturally from each other live side by side in the society.
- This expression may be understood as illustrating the state of things or as a verifying term.

Multiculturalism / Culture

- Laura Huttunen, in her article in the book 'The Finnish guestbook How to handle multiculturalism?', states that when we talk about 'multiculturalism', culture is generally seen as a wide topic analyzing thoroughly the issue concerning the way of life of mankind.

CULTURE ?

- This conception of culture traditionally related to anthropology refers on the one hand to people's everyday practices, food, way of dressing, or music.
- On the other hand, it refers to deeper, less visible matters, as for example values, beliefs, norms and taboos, conceptions of different genders, family, descent, society, or maybe group of trade and the work done for it.

Culture / Multiculturalism

- Consequently, culture is something that analyzes and defines our everyday life and our ways of observing the world.
- While talking about multiculturalism we talk both about minor everyday matters and about questions of values passing through our entire view of the world.



Multiculturalism in practice?

- In everyday life in many professions multiculturalism is, above all, visible in problems to be solved in practice and in questions which people in Finland did not need to think about before.



Multiculturalism and health care?

- In health care, the change of society to a multicultural society involves, among other things, that the actors are particularly sensitive to observe the cultural differences and understand them in their work with clients.

Multiculturalism and health care?

- First of all, it presupposes that the actors within health care are willing to approach the client with different kinds of cultural background.
- Secondly, it necessitates that the actors within health care are aware of their own cultural background, which means that we understand 'who we are'.



Multiculturalism and health care?

- In addition, the change of society to a multicultural society involves knowledge of different cultures and multicultural skills and capacities to act by paying attention to the culture of the client.

Multicultural skills

- **‘Multicultural skills’ in this context refer to the actors’ capacity to react and act correctly in different kinds of situations.**
- **However, this does not refer to tricks that have been learnt by heart and which help us cope in new situations with due control and in restraint manner.**

Multicultural encounters

- **All the facts illustrated before are required for the success of multicultural encounters for health promotion of clients.**
- **While talking about multicultural encounters we have to be aware of the fact that these are not only restricted to meeting people from completely different cultural backgrounds.**

Multicultural encounters

- Every encounter is, as a matter of fact a multicultural encounter.
- Cultural differences may be related e.g. to age, gender, area of living, educational background, profession, or the way of living.



Multicultural society and health care

- This is why it is impossible, in new kinds of situations to offer instructions to behave or prepared answers to complicated questions emerging from distant historical backgrounds.
- Everyday life in multicultural society and in health care challenges the actors to continued dialogue concerning principles of living and acting together.

Health promotion in multicultural environment

- **In my presentation I tackle the issue of health promotion in multicultural environment. Plenty of cultural barriers are existent within multicultural health promotion.**
- **I will concentrate to illustrate briefly cultural barriers in multicultural health promotion through five potential barriers or conceptions.**

Cultural barriers

- **The potential barriers consist of the following:**
- **conceptions of life**
- **cultural values**
- **traditional health beliefs and practices**
- **time orientation and**
- **language.**

Conceptions of life

- It is important for a health promoter to take into account the fact that attitudes regarding health promotion are not positive within a cultural group that believes that life is predetermined and where suffering and illnesses are seen as an inevitable part of life.

Cultural values

- Barriers also exist in multicultural communication and in the breakdown of understanding, while health promoters project their own cultural values for the client or a cultural group different from her own.



Pain as an interesting cultural phenomenon.

- **The values and cultural signs of the society regulate what kind of pain receives attention, in which ways it is appropriate to express pain, how it is interpreted and which measures are taken because of the appearance of the pain.**

Traditional health beliefs and practices

- **Traditional health beliefs and practices vary between different cultural groups. They also differ from the Western biomedical model in explaining health and illnesses and in promoting health. These differences must be perceived, understood and respected in multicultural health promotion. Otherwise, they can prove to be potential barriers to effective health promotion.**

Time orientation

- When people from different cultures interact within the field of health promotion they should understand the ways how other persons perceive the time.
- Time orientation of different cultural groups can be divided into present, past, and future time orientation.

Time orientation

- Different orientations of time also appear in the everyday practices in health care, e.g. in how accurately the given reception times are followed or when they are forgotten.
- The health promoter should take there different orientations of time of different cultural groups into account when planning health promotion programme for the group.



Language.

- Although barriers exist when people speak the same language, more profound barriers arise when different languages are spoken.
- A health promoter being familiar with the language of the clients will be better able to understand their culture. If the he/she does not know well enough the language of the population of the region, he/she should resort to an interpreter.

Language

- In certain cultures nonverbal communication is more important than verbal. If misinterpreted, it can lead to cultural conflicts.

Successful multicultural health promotion

Successful multicultural health promotion involves that:

- **the expert in health care is willing to face with people representing different cultures**
- **he/she has sensitivity to notice the cultural differences**
- **he/she has knowledge of the client's culture**

Successful multicultural health promotion

- **he/she has capacity to communicate openly with the client representing different culture**
- **he/she has flexibility and skills to act so that the client feels that the ways of treatment in his/her culture are respected.**

Successful multicultural health promotion!

