

Region 10 Skills Symposium Presentation

Friday, May 3, 2019 @ Miramar College (L-309)

Topic: Cultural competence

Presenter: Dr. Mike Dudley, Palomar College Department of Psychology

Description: Participants will increase their cultural competence by learning about the psychological research associated with how stereotypes are created and maintained, and then apply this knowledge through several hands-on activities to demonstrate how to combat automatic stereotype activation. These skills are broadly applicable in any situation where interactions among individuals of differing races, ideologies, cultures, et cetera are common.

Presentation outline:

- 9:40 AM – Welcome and introductions

- 9:50 Minimal groups paradigm discussion

- 10:00 Stereotypes exercise (Exemplars)

- 10:10 IAT demonstration

- 10:20 Application to cultural competence

- 10:25 Rewind and Replay Activity

- 10:30 Discussion of resources

- 10:35 Questions, comments, feedback

Exemplary Examples of Exemplars

Directions: For each of the following sets of persons, choose the answer that “most people” might choose, with no repeat answers. For example, under Sex—one person is a male, the other is a female. You must decide how most people would distinguish them.

Sex

Person A: likes football, mows the yard, handles the finances	Male	Female
Person B: emotional, bad driver, cooks/cleans at home	Male	Female

Race

Person A: wealthy, Republican, volunteers in the community	Black	White
Person B: on welfare, wears gold chains, has nice rims on car	Black	White

Religion

Person A: attends church weekly, large family, votes pro-life	Buddhist	Catholic
Person B: reads Tao poetry, burns incense, vegan	Buddhist	Catholic

Age

Person A: activist, no health insurance, limited work experience	Younger	Older
Person B: bakes pies, has lots of family photos, named Gertrude	Younger	Older

Sexual orientation—males

Person A: wears designer clothes, moisturizes, sleeps around	Gay	Straight
Person B: has a girlfriend, discusses sports, bathes infrequently	Gay	Straight

Sexual orientation—females

Person A: wears an engagement ring, reads Cosmo magazine	Lesbian	Straight
Person B: owns power tools, wears Birkenstocks, looks “butch”	Lesbian	Straight

Lifestyle choice

Person A: watches TV, eats at Mickey Ds, rides the elevator	Slim	Overweight
Person B: drives a Hybrid, likes tofu, owns a tennis racket	Slim	Overweight

Hair color

Person A: ditzy, chews bubblegum, says “Oh my gosh” a lot	Blonde	Brunette
Person B: conservative, doesn’t date, likes mathematics	Blonde	Brunette

Politics:

Person A: voted for the candidate that you just voted for	Intelligent	Stupid
Person B: voted for ‘that other guy’	Intelligent	Stupid

Historical persons

Person A: vegetarian, didn’t drink alcohol, good to his dog	Hitler	Churchill
Person B: womanizer, alcoholic, war hawk	Hitler	Churchill

Counterfactual Thinking

Many of my clients struggle with what is known as Counterfactual Thinking. Also known as a "What if?" approach to life, some people's minds almost seem programmed to sadly focus on events that never occurred. Very often I hear, "If I had only gotten this job I'd be happier," "if I had asked this woman out on a date life would be better," or "had I not gotten into that car accident I'd be in a much better spot." They assume that certain unrealized outcomes would have led to happiness, or at least to a greater sense of life satisfaction. This is due to our innate drive to seek out as much pleasure and self-actualization as possible.

Cognitive therapists will challenge this way of thinking and encourage clients to more consider all possible results - and hold contradictory ideas simultaneously (also known as Cognitive Dissonance) - not just happiness. For example, it doesn't cross many people's minds that the dream job might not have been as fulfilling as originally thought, or required too many hours, or would have simply caused them to miss the next job opportunity that came or will come along. They don't consider that if they had gone out with that woman they might have gotten married and then suffered a painful divorce, or not have met a current or future partner. Could the car accident have served as a wake-up call so the client drove a bit more safely and avoided the more tragic collision that might have occurred a week later? We can't state with certainty that any of these things would have been the result but the same can be said for the initial assumption: that life would be better. Fortunately, when clients begin let go of Counterfactual Thinking they start to focus more on what's in front of them rather than what is already over and out of their control.

Unfortunately, this type of thinking can be difficult to alter. New ways of thinking require practice to have positive results that are long-term. In fact, many clients reject the very notion that Counterfactual Thinking is, in fact, a bogus way of looking at the world. They can't get their minds around the idea that an unrealized outcome could possibly be a good thing.

When logic fails, therapists will sometimes utilize stories and parables to highlight therapeutic points. For years I couldn't come up with a good tale to highlight how problematic Counterfactual Thinking is. Most of my yarns involved me getting accepted to Harvard and becoming a world famous Psychologist who can pick the winning Powerball numbers daily, which would have probably precluded the client and I working together that very day. "And wouldn't that be just *horrible??*" I'd ask. Rarely did the idea of not having me as a therapist seem as unbearable as I made it out to be.

One day, however, a client told me an apparently famous story that she used to overcome Counterfactual Thinking. I've since shared it with good success:

A man in a village is given a horse. All of the people in the village tell him, "This is wonderful! You'll get so much more accomplished on your land with this horse."

The man says, "I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing."

The horse runs away a few weeks later. "Oh, this is awful," the people say. "Your friend and worker is gone."

The man says, "I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing."

A few days later his son finds not only the horse, but a half-dozen other stray horses and returns to the village with them. "Hurrah!" the visitors shout. "We are truly fortunate!"

Again the man says, "I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing."

Weeks later the son is thrown from one of the horses, breaking both legs, and the people are completely despondent. "Your poor son!" they say.

The man says "I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing."

While the son is recovering the village is attacked by a hostile neighbor. The village is able to defeat the enemy but some of the people are killed. "It's fortunate your son was unable to fight due to his legs. He could have been eliminated like some of the others."

And again, the man says "I don't know if this is a good thing or a bad thing."

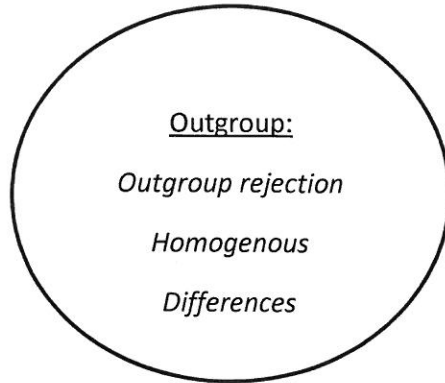
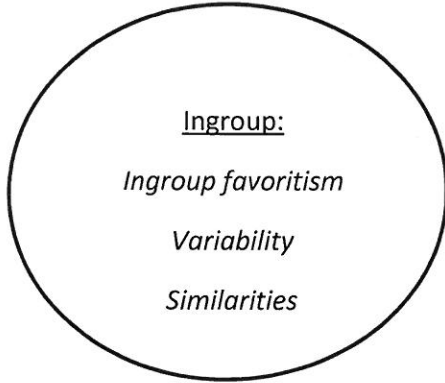
"And so on, Dr. Dobrenski," she said.

When I asked her what that story meant to her she said, "The man doesn't assume that because something 'good' or 'bad' happens that similar consequences will follow. It might be good or bad in the moment but no one knows what will happen later because of it. When you look back on failures or bad luck you can't ever claim with perfect accuracy that your life would be better had the past been something other than what it is. You can only state that your life would be *different*. Whether it would be better or worse is something you'll never know."

Source: <http://stanford.wellsphere.com/mental-health-article/counterfactual-thinking/447452>

Rewind/Replay

Minimal group paradigm



Emphasizing <i>differences</i>	Emphasizing <i>similarities</i>
Where are you from?	
Your English is really good!	

References/resources:

Minimal group paradigm

- Understanding how we form intergroup biases, we can apply techniques including minimizing differences as well as education of these biases to minimize potential bias.
- <https://www.dowellwebtools.com/tools/lp/Bo/psyched/12/Minimal-Group-Paradigm>

Counterfactual thinking

- “Counterfactual thinking is a term of psychology that describes thoughts about an option that was not selected, usually with regret. Humans are predisposed to ask “what if,” regarding both real and imaginary alternatives. A person may imagine the opposite of a given event and contemplate the consequences. The effects of such thinking depend on the consequences the person imagines, and whether the consequences are better or worse than reality.”
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterfactual_thinking
- <http://stanford.wellsphere.com/mental-health-article/counterfactual-thinking/447452>

Implicit Association Test

- “Here you will have the opportunity to assess your conscious and unconscious preferences for over 90 different topics ranging from pets to political issues, ethnic groups to sports teams, and entertainers to styles of music. At the same time, you will be assisting psychological research on thoughts and feelings.”
- <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- Teaching Tolerance Website: <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/test-yourself-hidden-bias>

Racial microaggressions

- <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2009/02/microaggression.html>

Thanks for attending today’s session! If you would like to keep in touch, or if you have additional materials that you would care to share with me to include in future similar sessions, please contact me (Mike Dudley) at mdudley@palomar.edu. Thanks!