

*Communicating
Across Cultures*
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Rooms 304/305



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Communicating Across Cultures ~ This presentation was initially prepared by the CASBO Sacramento Section Child Nutrition Research and Development Committee (2009) and revised/updated by Ron Pierce (2014).

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Mosaic Icebreaker

- Take piece of paper
- Close your eyes
- Follow instructions from facilitator



Overview/Expectations

- To have a clear understanding as to WHY this topic is relevant today
- To provide an understanding of the human dynamics that cause problems among people who are different
- To generate sensitivity to cultural differences
- To examine differences in communication styles
- To walk away with tools that will help you turn any real or potential obstacles into opportunities.

“Mosaic” Defined

- A surface decoration made by inlaying small pieces of variously colored material to form pictures or patterns (*Merriam-Webster online*)



“Melting Pot” Defined

- A place where a variety of races, cultures, or individuals assimilate into a cohesive whole b: the population of such a place (*Merriam-Webster online*)



Setting the Stage

- Why is this topic important?
 - **Fact:** Today, 44% of Californians speak a language other than English at home (as compared to the national average of 19.5%)

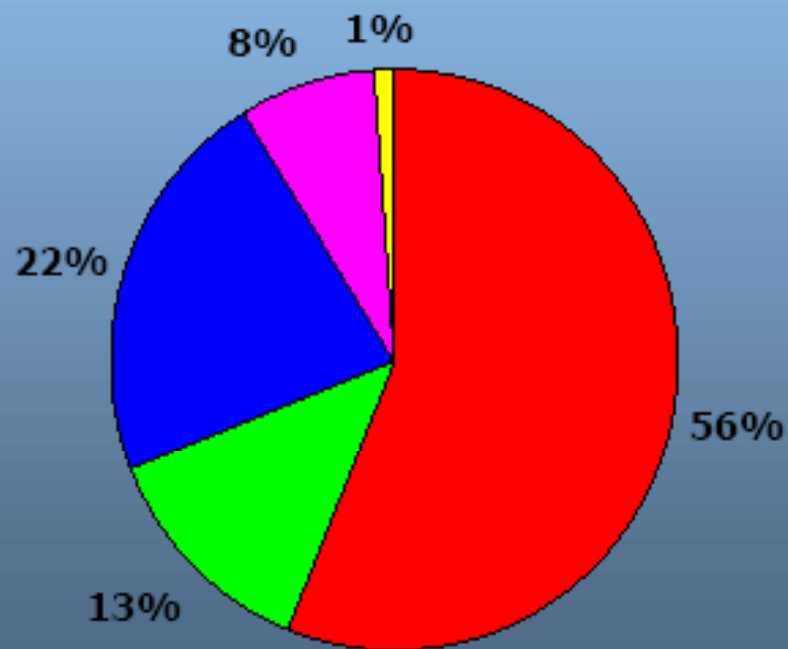


Shifting demographics (2014)

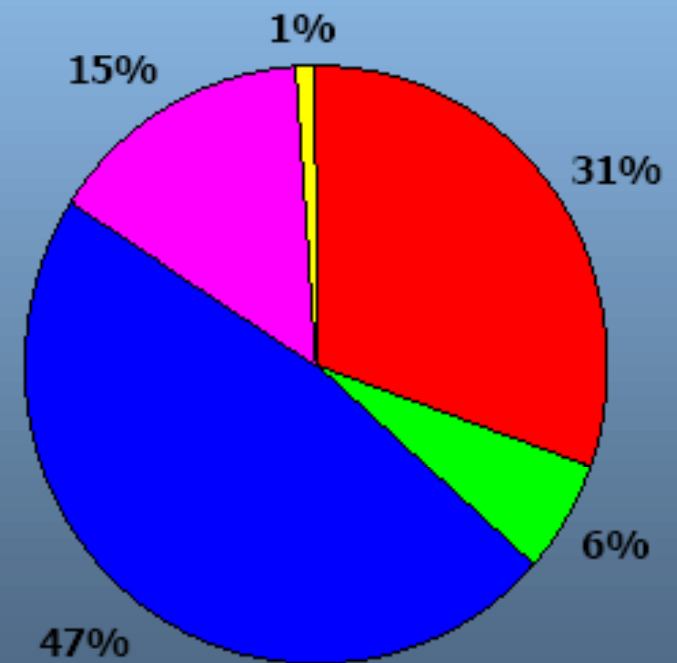
- 16.9% of U.S. population is Hispanic/Latino
- 39% of California population is Hispanic/Latino
- 38.8% of California population is White/Caucasian
- 13% of California population is Asian
- 5.8% of California population is African American

Ethnicity as a Share of Total Population, U.S. and CA, 2040

U.S.



CA



White Black Hispanic Asian Native Am.

“Culture” Defined

- The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group ; *also* : the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time (*Merriam-Webster online*)
- Culture is a word for people’s “way of life”, meaning the way that they do things. A group of people has a separate culture when that group sets itself apart from others through its actions.
- Culture is learned. It is the basis for how we tell the world who we are and what we believe.



“Diversity” Defined

- The condition of being diverse: variety; *especially* : the inclusion of diverse people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization (*Merriam-Webster online*)
- For purposes of this presentation, we are going to primarily focus on ethnic and cultural “diversity”.



Cultural Viewpoints

- Acculturation is the process by which a person or a group of people adopts the culture of another group.
 - Acculturation can be a conscious or unconscious process.
 - Ethnic identity is the sense of being who you are, how you are perceived, and how you differ from others.
- being who you are, how you are perceived, and how you differ from others as wrong and inferior.



Cultural Viewpoints (continued)

- **Cultural relativism**, the opposite of ethnocentrism, is the learning about and applying the standards of another person's culture to activities within the culture.

If we are to manage diversity effectively, we must suspend ethnocentric judgments and begin to question why particular things are done.



Terminology of Ethnic Background

Is it okay to refer to an ethnic group or a person's ethnic background as:

- “Hispanic”, “Latino”, “Latina”, “Chicano”, “Mexican”, “Mexican American” or other?
- “Asian”, “Asian American”, “Oriental” or other?
- “African American”, “African”, “Black”, “Black American”, or other?
- “White”, “Caucasian”, “Anglo” or other?



Where Do We Draw the Line?

“If you can’t say something nice, don’t say nothing at all.” I really can’t put it any simpler than that. Just be good to each other, people. It doesn’t take much. *Bambi, 1942*

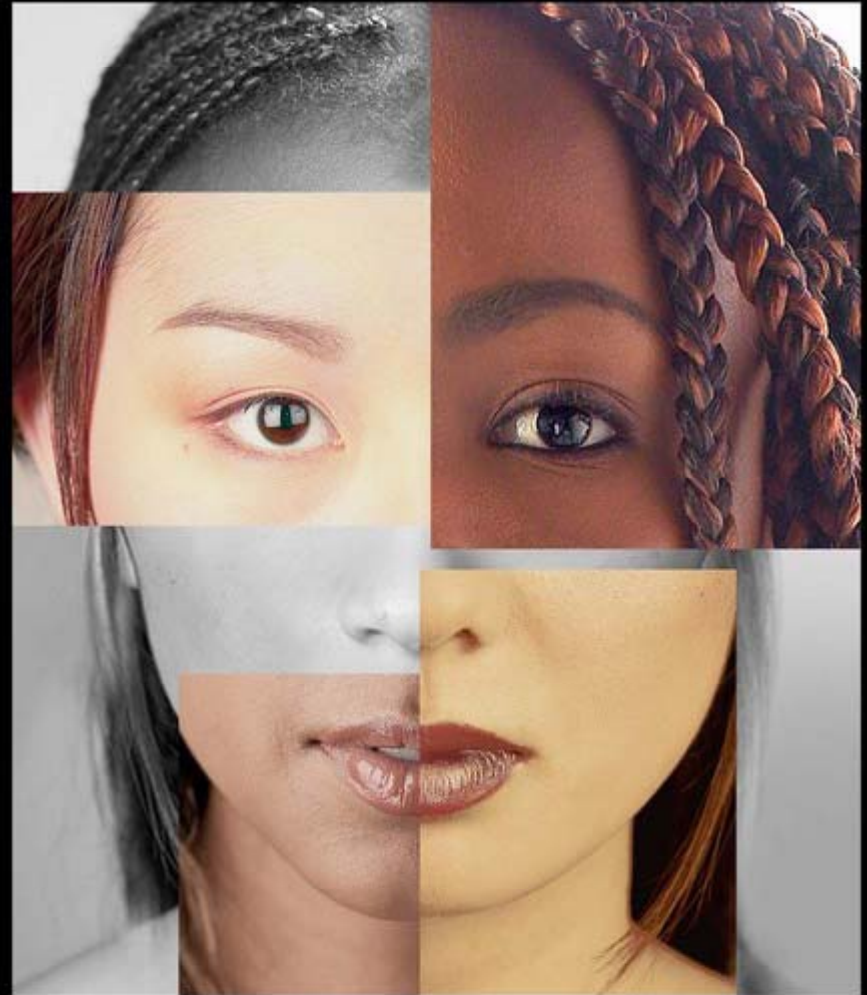
- Mixed messages
- Humor in the workplace
- Non-verbal communication



Mixed Messages

Barriers to Communication

- Differences in styles
- Stereotypes and Assumptions
- Difficulty talking about differences
- “Hot Buttons”



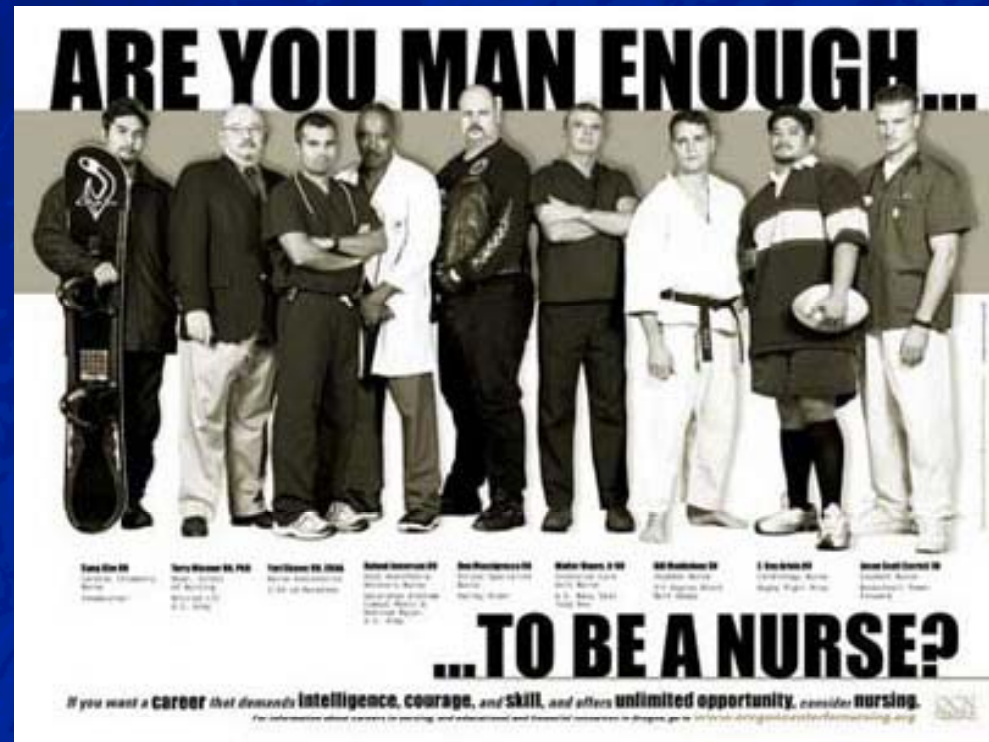


Differences in Styles

- Conventions for courtesy
 - Sequence
 - Phrasing
 - Objectivity
 - Specificity
 - Assertiveness
 - Candor
 - Simplicity
 - Accents
 - Telephone
- The word "no" has harsh implications in India. Evasive refusals are more common, and are considered more polite. Never directly refuse an invitation, a vague "I'll try" is an acceptable refusal.
- VS.
- Australians are friendly and open, but directness and brevity are valued.

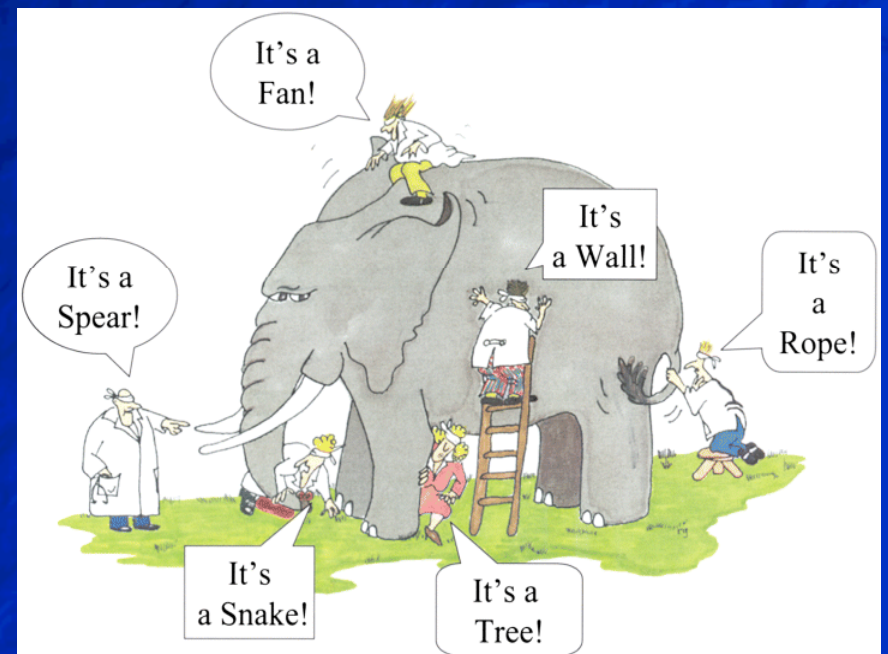
Stereotypes

- We all stereotype. We use stereotypes as a selective device to simplify perception and thinking.
- We must, however, be aware that any stereotype is 1) not necessarily a valid generalization about the group; and 2) never applicable to all individuals in that group.



Assumptions

- Assumptions are as automatic as a knee jerk. We spend a lifetime absorbing assumptions.
- When we meet someone who is different than us often times a radio of assumptions goes off in our minds, blasting us with assumptions.
- Without exposure, our assumptions may never be corrected. Our limited expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies.



“Hot Buttons”



Words and phrases that communicate non-acceptance of the person:

- Ordering, Directing: “You have to....”
- Warning, Threatening: “You’d better not...”
- Preaching, Moralizing: “You should....”
- Evaluating, Blaming: “You’re wrong....”
- Name-calling, Shaming: “You’re stupid....”
- Interpreting, Analyzing: “What you need....”

Quote

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it solely on these accounts.” ~ Mark Twain

WRAPP – The Written Word

- Written communications are often easier to understand when English is not a person's native language.
- It is always a good idea to write things down as back up.



WRAPP - Respect



The foundation of all intercultural communications is respect.

By demonstrating respect, a reciprocal relationship is built creating a more open and fruitful relationship

WRAPP – Ask Questions

- Asking questions prevents making incorrect assumptions and shows the questioned you did understand them.
- “What” questions will gain a better response.
- Learn to use reflective/active listening.



WRAPP – Be Patient!



- Be patient with yourself and others when working in an intercultural environment under challenging circumstances.
- Slow down, enunciate clearly, do not speak too loudly or show irritation.
- Summarize points frequently.
- Should I speak or should I not?

WRAPP – Be Positive

- When faced with communication challenges stay positive, analyze the problem areas and work as a team to build strategies and solutions.
- Opening and closing
- Taking turns speaking
- Appropriate topics of conversation



WRAPP

Using the WRAPP concepts you can be a
Global Listener!

- Knowledge of cultural values and behaviors
- Attitude - open and respectful to differences
- Skill – Ability to modify listening style



QUESTIONS??

Special Thanks

- **Linda Mattson**, formerly of San Juan USD: For her support, hard work, and commitment to this presentation.
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