Multicultural Social Work Practice
SECOND EDITION

Multicultural Social Work Practice
A Competency-Based Approach to Diversity and Social Justice

Derald Wing Sue | Mikal N. Rasheed | Janice Matthews Rasheed

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Chapter Learning Objectives

Overview

Where Do Social Workers Do Social Work?

Monocultural versus Multicultural Organizational Perspectives in Social Work

Lesson 1: A failure to develop a balanced perspective between person focus and systems focus can result in false attribution of the problem.

Lesson 2: A failure to develop a balanced perspective between person focus and system focus can result in an ineffective and inaccurate treatment plan that is potentially harmful to the client.
Lesson 3: When the “client” is an organization or a larger system and not an individual, a major paradigm shift is needed to attain a true understanding of the problem and identify the solution.

Lesson 4: Organizations are microcosms of the wider society from which they originate. As a result, they are likely to be reflections of the monocultural values and practices of the larger culture.

Lesson 5: Organizations are powerful entities that inevitably resist change and possess within their arsenal many ways to force compliance in individuals.

Lesson 6: When multicultural organizational development is required, alternative helping roles that emphasize systems intervention must be part of the role repertoire of the social worker.

Lesson 7: Although remediation will always be needed, prevention is better.

Models of Multicultural Organizational Development
Culturally Competent Social Service Agencies
Antiracist Practice and Social Justice
  Principle 1: Having Intimate and Close Contact with Others
  Principle 2: Cooperating Rather Than Competing
  Principle 3: Sharing Mutual Goals
  Principle 4: Exchanging Accurate Information
  Principle 5: Sharing an Equal Relationship
  Principle 6: Supporting Racial Equity by Leaders and Groups in Authority
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Preface

*Multicultural Social Work Practice* is a text that highlights the need for social workers and other human service professionals to form a balanced understanding of not only cultural differences reflected in worldviews but also the sociopolitical dimensions of culturally competent care. The major thesis of this book is that many theories, concepts, and practices that inform social work and other human service interventions are often rooted in and reflect the dominant values of the larger society. As a result, certain interventions may represent cultural oppression and may reflect primarily a Eurocentric worldview that may do great harm to culturally diverse clients and their communities. To be culturally competent, social work professionals must be able to free themselves from the cultural conditioning of their personal and professional training, to understand and accept the legitimacy of alternative worldviews, to begin the process of developing culturally appropriate intervention strategies in working with a diverse clientele, and to become aware of systemic forces affecting both them and their clients.

Although the field of social work is not unlike that of most helping professions, it has always been distinguished by its greater community focus; work in community-based agencies; and work with ecological approaches that involve individuals, communities, institutions, public policy, and a strong emphasis on advocacy and social justice. The settings where social workers function are much broader than those of psychology and psychiatry, and they offer an advantaged position from which to provide culturally relevant services.

The first edition of *Multicultural Social Work Practice* (written by Dr. Derald Wing Sue) spoke to multicultural social work with clients (individuals, families, and groups) and client systems (neighborhoods, communities, agencies, institutions, and social policies); remediation and prevention approaches; person-environment models; equal access and opportunity; and social justice issues. Two coauthors (Dr. Mikal N. Rasheed and Dr. Janice Matthews Rasheed—both social work professors and practitioners) were invited to collaborate with Sue in writing this second edition, which preserves key components of the first edition to advance a comprehensive understanding of the philosophical, conceptual, and theoretical...
issues that serve as the foundation for multicultural social work with diverse populations. Further, the coauthored second edition extends these vital components with a new chapter that addresses, among other topics, critical race theory, anti-oppressive social work practice models, and the concept of intersectionality (recognizing the intersection and impact of multiple social group memberships on personal identity). These additions contribute to a deeper understanding of the major components of multicultural social work with diverse populations. In addition to this new chapter on social work perspectives, there are two other chapters new to the second edition. The second new chapter is on microaggressions (forms of interpersonal and environmental oppression toward marginalized populations), with illustrations of the different forms of microaggression, along with social work case examples that address the impact of microaggressive actions on diverse client populations. The third new chapter in this edition discusses evidence-based practice and the significance of developing research-supported interventions with diverse clients. This chapter draws attention to the importance of considering a client’s characteristics, culture, and preferences in assessment, intervention planning, and setting therapeutic goals. The second edition also features expanded discussion of religion, spirituality, and worldview. Further, it addresses emerging issues pertaining to diverse populations, such as women in the military. Finally, in this new edition of *Multicultural Social Work Practice*, many new case examples articulate issues, concepts, theories, paradigms, and practice approaches critical to multicultural social work.

The organization of the chapters in the second edition differs from that in the first edition. One change in the second edition is that each chapter begins with learning objectives. These objectives identify what the reader will be able to do after reading and comprehending the chapter’s content. These objectives are measurable and observable outcome statements.

Another change in the second edition is the inclusion of the 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Core Competencies, mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Since 2008, CSWE has adopted a competency-based education framework. Given that this book is a social work text, it is important that its content reflect the CSWE standards. There are nine interrelated competencies and component behavior statements in the 2015 EPAS, and this edition of *Multicultural Social Work Practice* gives attention to those competencies relevant to effective multicultural social work practice. The relevant competencies (not the component behaviors) are identified at the beginning of each chapter.
A final change reflected in the organization of the chapters in this edition is that each has an overview and a summary section, and each ends with a list of reflection and discussion questions. These questions allow the reader not only to reflect on the content presented in the chapter but also to examine the broader implications of the content for other domains related to his or her professional development as a multicultural social work practitioner.
About the Authors

Derald Wing Sue is a professor of psychology and education in the Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. He also holds an appointment with the School of Social Work. Sue served as president of the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, the Society of Counseling Psychology, and the Asian American Psychological Association. Sue is currently a consulting editor for numerous publications. He is the author of over 160 publications, including 19 books, and is well known for his work on racism and antiracism, cultural competence, multicultural counseling and therapy, microaggression theory, the psychology of racial dialogues, and social justice advocacy. Three of his books, Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice, Microaggressions in Everyday Life, and Overcoming Our Racism: The Journey to Liberation are considered classics in the field. Sue’s most recent research on racial, gender, and sexual orientation microaggressions has provided major breakthroughs in understanding how everyday slights, insults, and invalidations toward marginalized groups create psychological harm to their mental and physical health and create disparities for them in education, employment, and health care. His most recent book, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race, promises to add to the nationwide debate on racial interactions. As evidence of Dr. Sue’s stature in the field, two studies (1989 and 2012) of multicultural publications and scholars concluded that “impressively, Derald Wing Sue is without doubt the most influential multicultural scholar in the United States.”

Mikal N. Rasheed is a professor of social work and the director of the Master of Social Work Program at Chicago State University. He is also the director of the Urban Solutions Institute at Chicago State; this institute is focused on civic and community engagement initiatives and university-community partnerships.

He has a PhD in clinical social work from Loyola University Chicago and a master’s in social service administration from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. Prior to joining the Chicago State faculty in 2006, he was chair of the undergraduate Justice Studies and Social Work Department at
Northeastern Illinois University. He formerly served on the faculty of the George Williams College of Social Work at Aurora University, and he was the director of the undergraduate social work program at Texas Southern University.

Before entering academe, he was a social work administrator and practitioner in the areas of family services and child welfare in both Chicago and Houston. His special areas of interest and expertise are cross-cultural social work practice; social work ethics; family therapy; and social work practice with men, with a special focus on African American men. He has conducted many workshops and seminars in educational institutions, community organizations, and faith-based institutions on diversity, racial dialogue, and racial reconciliation. He, along with his wife, Janice Matthews Rasheed, has published extensively in the areas just mentioned.

Rasheed is a licensed clinical social worker and has maintained a clinical social work practice for more than twenty years, specializing in men’s issues, practice with people of color, and couples and family therapy.

Janice Matthews Rasheed is a professor of social work at Loyola University Chicago’s School of Social Work. Rasheed received her master’s degree in social work from the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, and her PhD in social welfare from Columbia University in New York City. She was the co–principal investigator for a multiyear research grant funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, evaluating demonstration projects and developing new programs for poor, noncustodial African American men. She has presented papers at professional conferences, written books, and published book chapters and articles in professional journals on qualitative research, program planning, research and social work practice with African American men and their families, family therapy with people of color, family therapy models, and social work practice with veterans and military families. Rasheed currently is conducting a Chicago-wide veterans’ needs assessment and developing community partnerships for social work practice with veterans and military families with a grant from the McCormick Foundation in partnership with the University of Southern California, Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families.

Rasheed teaches courses in family and couples therapy, multicultural social work practice, and research. She also conducts local, regional, and nationwide workshops and trainings in these areas of clinical practice. She is a licensed clinical social worker in Illinois and has maintained a private practice since 1979, specializing in couples and family therapy.
Multicultural Social Work Practice
PART I

Principles and Assumptions of Multicultural Social Work Practice

Chapter 1  Cultural Diversity and Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice

Chapter 2  Theoretical Foundations for Multicultural Social Work Practice

Chapter 3  Becoming Culturally Competent in Social Work Practice
Cultural Diversity and Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice

Chapter Learning Objectives
On completion of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

1. Recognize the complexities of culture and the role of culture in human development in the social environment.

2. Employ a tripartite framework for understanding human identity to examine how culture influences and shapes the multiple dimensions of human identity.

3. Recognize the individual and universal biases that interfere with effective multicultural social work practice.

4. Explain the challenges social workers encounter in providing social services for culturally diverse individuals, families, and communities that face social, political, and economic challenges.

5. Recognize, appreciate, and respect cultural differences.

Content in this chapter supports the following Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Core Competencies (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015):

Competency 1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Competency 3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
OVERVIEW

In this chapter we discuss a conceptual and philosophical framework for understanding the meaning of multicultural social work and cultural competence. We present an overview of the changing ethnic and cultural demographics in the United States, providing a foundation for developing culturally competent social work practice. Further, we introduce a tripartite framework for understanding individual uniqueness; individual differences related to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and so on; and universal similarities among human beings.

VOICES OF DIVERSITY AND MARGINALIZATION

African American Male

It gets so tiring, you know. It sucks you dry. People don’t trust you. From the moment I wake up, I know stepping out the door, that it will be the same, day after day. The bus can be packed, but no one will sit next to you . . . I guess it may be a good thing because you always get more room, no one crowds you. You get served last . . . when they serve you, they have this phony smile and just want to get rid of you . . . you have to show more ID to cash a check, you turn on the TV and there you always see someone like you, being handcuffed and jailed. They look like you and sometimes you begin to think it is you! You are a plague! You try to hold it in, but sometimes you lose it. Explaining doesn’t help. They don’t want to hear. Even when they ask, “Why do you have a chip on your shoulder?” Shit . . . I just walk away now. It doesn’t do any good explaining. (D. W. Sue, 2010a, p. 87)

Gay American

I became aware of my sexual orientation only in my late teens. When I first experienced a same-sex attraction, I labeled it a “close friendship” and proceeded to deny my true self. My upbringing told me that being gay was wrong, “morally depraved.” As an only son, I was expected to get married and have a son to perpetuate the family name. How could I disappoint my family? How could I allow myself to give in to “moral weakness”? . . . For several years, I struggled to
VOICES OF DIVERSITY AND MARGINALIZATION

maintain a heterosexual identity. I dated women but could never gain intimacy with them. Deep down, I knew “the unspeakable truth,” that I was a gay man . . . Yet I had a deep-seated fear of how the process of coming out would impact relationships with my family . . . After coming out, my worst fears initially came true. I lost the support of my parents and initially did not have contact with them . . . Ultimately, the relationship settled into an uncomfortable silence about my life as a gay man. “Don’t ask, don’t tell” was the only way to maintain a connection with them. (O’Brien, 2005, p. 97–98).

Female Worker

Every day, when I come to work, I do my best to show I’m competent and hardworking. I want that promotion as well. But my male co-workers never seem to recognize that I do much more work than they do. Yet, when I wear my hair differently or wear a new dress or sweater . . . I get remarks . . . “Oh, you look different, I like it . . . you really look sexy today, what’s the occasion?” Or “that dress really shows off your body well . . .” What gives them the right to comment on my body anyway? Is it so hard to say, “you’re doing a fine job . . . that last report was outstanding”? Do they even notice? No, only my body and appearance matter to them . . . What gets me is other women do the same thing, but usually in a negative way. “Boy, that’s a terrible outfit she has on. It makes her look frumpy.” (D. W. Sue, 2010a, p. 170)

Person with a Disability

In 1988, I became obviously disabled. I walk with crutches and a stiff leg. Since that time, I no longer fulfill our cultural standard of physical attractiveness. But worse, there are times when people who know me don’t acknowledge me. When I call their name and say, “Hello,” they often reply, “Oh, I didn’t see you.” I have also been mistaken for people who do not resemble me. For example, I was recently asked, “Are you a leader in the disability movement?” While I hope to be that someday, I asked her, “Who do you believe I am?” She had
mistaken me for a taller person with a different hair color, who limps but does not use a walking aid. The only common element was our disability. My disability had become my persona. This person saw it and failed to see me. (Buckman, 1998, p. 19)

Person in Poverty

Over and over, I came face to face with people's prejudice against me because my family was poor. My best friend all through school told me in the third grade that she couldn't come home and spend the night with me because her daddy said that I was “white trash.” I was incredibly hurt and confused by this, though I didn't know what it was about. That's when I first started feeling bad about myself, feeling I had done something wrong. (Stout, 1996, p. 19)

Individual from an Undocumented Immigrant Family

I can remember having to hide when I was a kid. . . I would come home and my parents would be maybe 20 or 30 minutes late, and I would cry until they got home because I was afraid they had been deported. (Modie, 2001, p. A6)

* * *

These voices of diversity and marginalization tell stories of the many hurts, humiliations, lost opportunities, and experiences of social invisibility; of the need for change; and of the herculean efforts that socially devalued groups have had to undertake in their struggles against an unwelcoming, invalidating, and even hostile social environment. These brief quotes tell stories of isolation and loneliness, and reveal experiences of prejudice and discrimination. It does not matter whether the slights and indignities visited upon these individuals were intentional or unintentional, because they were painful and became a part of each person's lived reality. In many ways, these quotes strongly suggest that obstacles to equal access and opportunity are firmly embedded in individual, institutional, and cultural assumptions and biases.

• For the African American male, his voice speaks of the pain and humiliation of being treated as a lesser being, a plague to be avoided, and a criminal. But more important, it is about the pervasiveness of racial prejudice,