Multicultural
Social Work Practice
Contents

Preface xv
About the Authors xix

PART I: Principles and Assumptions of Multicultural Social Work Practice 1

Chapter 1 Cultural Diversity and Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice 3
Chapter Learning Objectives 3
Overview 4
Voices of Diversity and Marginalization 4
African American Male 4
Gay American 4
Female Worker 5
Person with a Disability 5
Person in Poverty 6
Individual from an Undocumented Immigrant Family 6
Diversification of the United States and Implications for Social Work 10
The Multiple Dimensions of Human Identity 14
Individual Level 16
Group Level 17
Universal Level 18
Individual and Universal Biases in Social Work 18
Multicultural Challenges in Social Work Practice 20
Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice 22
Summary 23

Chapter 2 Theoretical Foundations for Multicultural Social Work Practice 29
Chapter Learning Objectives 29
Overview 30
Theoretical Perspectives for Competent Multicultural Social Work Practice
Ecological Systems Perspective
Strengths Perspective
Social Justice Perspective
Critical Perspective
Antiracism as a Social Work Agenda
Intersectionality Perspective
Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice
Summary

Chapter 3 Becoming Culturally Competent in Social Work Practice

Chapter Learning Objectives
Overview
Defining Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice
Four Components of Cultural Competence
Competency 1: Becoming Aware of One’s Own Values, Biases, and Assumptions about Human Behavior
Competency 2: Understanding the Worldviews of Culturally Diverse Clients
Competency 3: Developing Appropriate Intervention Strategies and Techniques
Competency 4: Understanding Organizational and Institutional Forces That Enhance or Diminish Cultural Competence
Working Definition of Cultural Competence
Multidimensional Model of Cultural Competence in Social Work
Dimension 1: Group-Specific Worldviews
Dimension 2: Components of Cultural Competence
Dimension 3: Foci of Cultural Competence
What Is Multicultural Social Work Practice?
Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice
Summary
PART II: Systemic Oppression and Social Justice 87

Chapter 4 Understanding the Sociopolitical Implications of Oppression and Power in Social Work Practice 89

Chapter Learning Objectives 89
Overview 90
A Clash of Expectations 90
Effects of Historical and Current Oppression 95
Ethnocentric Monoculturalism 96
  Belief in Superiority 96
  Belief in the Inferiority of Others 97
  Power to Impose Standards 97
  Manifestation in Institutions 98
  The Invisible Veil 98
Historical Manifestations of Ethnocentric Monoculturalism 99
Impact of Ethnocentric Monoculturalism in Helping Relationships 102
Credibility, Expertness, and Trustworthiness in Multicultural Social Work Practice 105
  Credibility of the Social Worker 105
Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice 110
Summary 111

Chapter 5 Microaggressions in Social Work Practice 117

Chapter Learning Objectives 117
Overview 118
What Did He Really Mean? 118
Microaggression as a Form of Oppression 121
  Microaggressions and the Clash of Sociodemographic Realities 122
  Microaggressions and the Invisibility of Unintentional Expressions of Bias 131
  Microaggressions and the Perceived Minimal Harm 133
  The Catch-22 of Responding to Microaggressions 133
Categories of Microaggressions 133
  Social Work Practice and Microaggression 136
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microinsults and Direct Social Work Practice</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microinvalidations and Direct Social Work Practice</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PART III: Racial/Cultural Identity Development | 149

| Chapter 6 | Racial/Cultural Minority Identity Development | 151 |
| Chapter Learning Objectives | 151 |
| Overview | 152 |
| Who Am I? | 152 |
| Racial/Cultural Identity Development Models | 154 |
| Black Identity Development Models | 156 |
| Other Racial/Ethnic Identity Development Models | 157 |
| Feminist Identity Theory | 158 |
| Working Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model | 158 |
| Conformity Stage | 159 |
| Who Am I—White or Black? | 160 |
| Dissonance Stage | 165 |
| Resistance and Immersion Stage | 166 |
| Introspection Stage | 168 |
| Integrative Awareness Stage | 170 |
| Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice | 172 |
| Summary | 173 |

| Chapter 7 | White Racial Identity Development | 179 |
| Chapter Learning Objectives | 179 |
| Overview | 180 |
| “What Does It Mean to Be White?” | 180 |
| Forty-Two-Year-Old White Businessman | 180 |
| Twenty-Six-Year-Old White Female College Student | 181 |
| Sixty-Five-Year-Old White Male Construction Worker (Retired) | 181 |
| Thirty-Four-Year-Old White Female Stockbroker | 182 |
| Twenty-Nine-Year-Old Latina Administrative Assistant | 182 |
| Thirty-Nine-Year-Old Black Male Salesman | 183 |
| Twenty-One-Year-Old Chinese American Male College Student (Majoring in Ethnic Studies) | 183 |
PART IV: Practice Dimensions of Multicultural Social Work

Chapter 8  Barriers to Effective Multicultural Clinical Practice

Chapter Learning Objectives

Overview
Cultural Barriers: A Case Example
Generic Characteristics of Counseling and Therapy
Sources of Conflict and Misinterpretation
  in Clinical Practice
  Culture-Bound Values
  Class-Bound Values
  Language Barriers
Generalizations and Stereotypes: Some Cautions
Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice
Summary

Chapter 9  Cultural Styles in Multicultural Intervention Strategies

Chapter Learning Objectives

Overview
“Speaking from My ‘Cultural Space’”: A Case Example
Communication Styles
Religious Affiliation and Ethnic Identity 306
  Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and
  Religious Identity 307
  African American Religious Identity 307
  Latino/Hispanic Religious Identity and Affiliation 308
  Native American Religious Practices 309
  Muslim Americans and Religious Affiliation 309
Spiritual Assessments in Social Work Practice 310
Indigenous Spirituality and Healing 311
Spirit Attacks: The Case of Vang Xiong 312
The Legitimacy of Culture-Bound Syndromes: Nightmare
  Deaths and the Hmong Sudden Death Phenomenon 314
Causation and Spirit Possession 318
Shaman as Therapist: Commonalities 320
Principles of Indigenous Healing 321
  Holistic Outlook, Interconnectedness, and Harmony 324
  Belief in Metaphysical Levels of Existence 325
  Spirituality in Life and the Cosmos 327
Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice 330
Summary 333

Chapter 12 Multicultural Organizational Change: Antiracist
Practice and Social Justice 341

Chapter Learning Objectives 341
Overview 342
Monocultural versus Multicultural Organizational
Perspectives in Social Work 345
Lesson 1: A failure to develop a balanced perspective
  between person focus and systems focus can result in
  false attribution of the problem. 348
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. 349
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. 349

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. 350

Lesson 5: Organizations are powerful entities that inevitably resist change and possess within their arsenal many ways to force compliance in individuals. 350

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. 351

Lesson 7: Although remediation will always be needed, prevention is better. 351

Models of Multicultural Organizational Development 352
Culturally Competent Social Service Agencies 355
Antiracist Practice and Social Justice 359

Principle 1: Having Intimate and Close Contact with Others 360
Principle 2: Cooperating Rather Than Competing 361
Principle 3: Sharing Mutual Goals 362
Principle 4: Exchanging Accurate Information 363
Principle 5: Sharing an Equal Relationship 364
Principle 6: Supporting Racial Equity by Leaders and Groups in Authority 366
Principle 7: Feeling Connected and Experiencing a Strong Sense of Belonging 367

Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice 368
Summary 369

Chapter 13 Evidence-Based Multicultural Social Work Practice 373

Chapter Learning Objectives 373
Overview 374
From “Doing Good” to “Doing Well” 374
What Is Evidence-Based Practice? 375
Evidence-Based Practice with Clients of Color 376
   Evidence-Based Practice and Empirically Supported Treatments 378
   Integration of EBP and EST to Enhance Cultural Sensitivity 379
Empirically Supported Relationships 385
   The Working Alliance 386
   Emotional or Interpersonal Bond 388
   Empathy 389
   Positive Regard, Respect, Warmth, and Genuineness 392
   Self-Disclosure 393
   Management of Countertransference 393
   Goal Consensus 394
Implications for Multicultural Social Work Practice 395
Summary 396

PART V: Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with Diverse Populations 403

Chapter 14 Profiles of Diverse Populations 405
Chapter Learning Objectives 405
Overview 406
Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with African Americans 407
   Important Dimensions 407
Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders 412
   Important Dimensions 413
Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with Native Americans/First Nations Peoples and Alaska Natives 420
   Important Dimensions 422
Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with Latinos/Hispanics 430
   Important Dimensions 432
Culturally Competent Social Work Practice 
with Immigrants and Refugees 440
  *Important Dimensions* 443

Culturally Competent Social Work Practice 
with Biracial/Multiracial Persons 449
  *Important Dimensions* 450

Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with Women 460
  *Important Dimensions* 462

Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with LGBT 
Individuals 469
  *Important Dimensions* 470

Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with 
Older Adults 475
  *Important Dimensions* 476

Culturally Competent Social Work Practice with 
Persons with Disabilities 485
  *Important Dimensions* 486

Summary 491

Author Index 503

Subject Index 515
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
Northwestern 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
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
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,