Culturally Competent Leadership: Embracing Your Authentic Self

Dr. Narketta Sparkman-Key
Academic Affairs Director of Faculty Diversity and Retention
Associate Professor of Human Services
Objectives

❖ Discuss Key Terms
❖ Outline What Authentic Leadership Means
❖ Identify the relationship between authenticity and cultural competence
❖ Outline steps to being a culturally competent leader
The boss inspires fear; the leader inspires enthusiasm.

~John C. Maxwell
"Every boss started as a worker"
~Moosa Rahat
Key Terms

Cultural Competence “A process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures…races, …religions and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values their [inherent] worth [and dignity]” (NASW, 2001).

An authentic leader is someone who is genuine and true to what they believe in. They understand the purpose of leadership, they lead with very consistent values, and with their heart, as well as their head. (George, 2016)
What are the characteristics of being culturally competent?
Disclaimer: cultural blindness is an outdated term that we do not agree with and should read cultural ignorance.

**Continuum of Cultural Competency**

- **Cultural Blindness**
  - Explore cultural issues, are committed, assess needs of organization and individuals
  - Differences ignored, “treat everyone the same”, only meet needs of dominant groups

- **Cultural Incapacity**
  - Racism, maintain stereotypes, unfair hiring practices
  - Forced assimilation, subjugation, rights and privileges for dominant groups only

- **Cultural Pre-Competence**
  - Recognize individual & cultural differences, seek advice from diverse groups, hire culturally unbiased staff

- **Cultural Competence**
  - Implement changes to improve services based upon cultural needs

- **Cultural Proficiency**
  - Cultural Blindness is an outdated term that we do not agree with and should read cultural ignorance.
What are the characteristics of being an authentic leader?
What does it mean to be authentic?

- Authentic leaders are self-aware and genuine.
- Authentic leaders are mission driven and focused on results.
- Authentic leaders lead with their heart, not just their minds.
- Authentic leaders focus on the long-term.

Source: George, B., 2003, Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value, Wiley, Hoboken, NJ

FIGURE 2: Authentic action wheel.
Relationship between Authenticity and Cultural Competence

• **self aware** you must be **aware** of your **biases**
• possess the ability to bracket (set aside) those biases.
• you must understand how your biases can **influence** your **leadership** and be willing to address it.
How do you become a culturally competent leader and be authentic?
Thorough self-reflection

- Understanding of self
- Familial involvement in beliefs
- Discomfort with culture
- Biases and why they exist
- Tracing the origins of feelings, views and examining experiences
Intentional Relationships

Development of and engagement in authentic cross-cultural relationships
Resistance

Resisting inequality of the current power hierarchy
Embracing Discomfort

It is often an uncomfortable process
Knowing Your Contribution

Recognition of our contribution to the marginalization of culturally diverse populations
Ongoing Evaluation

Engaging in an evaluation of both individual and systemic practices
Create an Inclusive Environment

• By **Valuing Diversity**. Accepting and respecting differences—different cultural backgrounds and customs, different ways of communicating, and different traditions and values.

• Remaining **Culturally Self-Aware** in decision making
Understands the Dynamics of Difference

Dynamics of Difference. Knowing what can go wrong in cross-cultural communication and how to respond to these situations.
Knowledge of Employee’s Culture.

Leaders must have some base knowledge of their employee’s culture so that employee behaviors can be understood in their proper cultural context.
Culturally competent leaders and the institutions they work in, can take a step further by institutionalizing cultural knowledge so they can adapt to diversity and better lead diverse populations.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge and Adapting to Diversity
“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”

-John F. Kennedy
References


Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (n.d.) Retrieved from https://samhsa.gov/