

# Promoting engagement with families in the child welfare system thru humility and cultural humility

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Fostering Change: A New Vision for Family Engagement  
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# Mrs. Lightfoot



[www.sialis.org/runt.htm](http://www.sialis.org/runt.htm)

# Culture

*All cultural groups have a shared history and experiences, transmitted inter-generationally, either implicitly or explicitly, through direct family and community socialization.*

- ❖ Culture includes but is not limited to knowledge and beliefs, values, morals and customs, language, behaviors and practices.
- ❖ Culture reflects the “**intersection of social identities**” (i.e., **intersectionality**) that are negotiated through one’s personal, interpersonal and social experiences.

Cohen, A.B. (2009). Many forms of culture. *American Psychologist*, 64(3): 194-204.

Johnson, Y.M. & Munch, S. (2009). Fundamental contradictions in cultural competence. *Social Work*, 54(3): 220-231.



[amothersjournal.com](http://amothersjournal.com)





Confused patient  
fotosearch.com

*“Praise the Lord and kill a  
chicken...!”*

# A cultural humility perspective...

- ▶ Challenges us to:
  - **learn** from the people with whom we interact,
  - **reserve judgment**, and
  - **bridge the cultural divide** between our perspectives, in order to facilitate well-being, and promote improved quality of life.
- ▶ **Frees the observer from having to possess expert knowledge** in order to maintain knowledge-based power, control and authority over matters about which diverse populations are far more knowledgeable.
- ▶ Tervalon, M. and Murray-Garcia, J. (1998).



"Humility is to make a right estimate of oneself." — Charles H. Spurgeon



[www.artchive.com](http://www.artchive.com)



[www.curseoftheself.com](http://www.curseoftheself.com)

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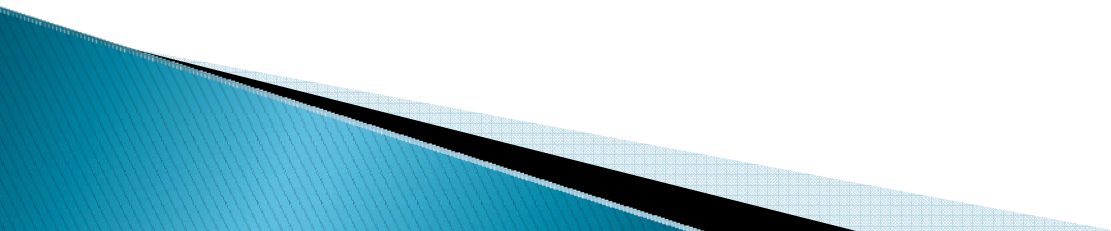
# Cultural humility...

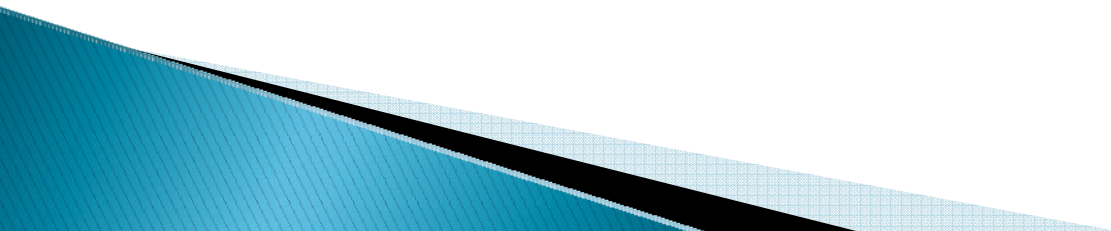
- ▶ Draws attention to the unique (and complex array of) differences that families and family members bring into the service setting
- ▶ Honors their own cultural perspective (sometimes referred to as their “world view”).

**“if you are  
humble,  
nothing will  
touch you,  
neither  
praise nor  
disgrace,  
because you  
know what  
you are.”** mother  
teresa



We demonstrate humility by actively listening and reserving judgment rather than engaging in professional behaviors that are aimed at convincing the family or individual members that our way of thinking is more appropriate or that their way is “defective.”



- Humility influences our professional (and ethical) behavior by moving us toward other-enhancing rather than self-enhancing efforts
  - Humility guards professionals from needing to be the expert even about matters such as a family's cultural background
  - Humility contributes to our professional performance by inviting our families to be part of the helping process; having this collaborative relationship frees us from exerting power and authority as part of our helping, and contributes to our professional learn
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# Cultural humility requires...

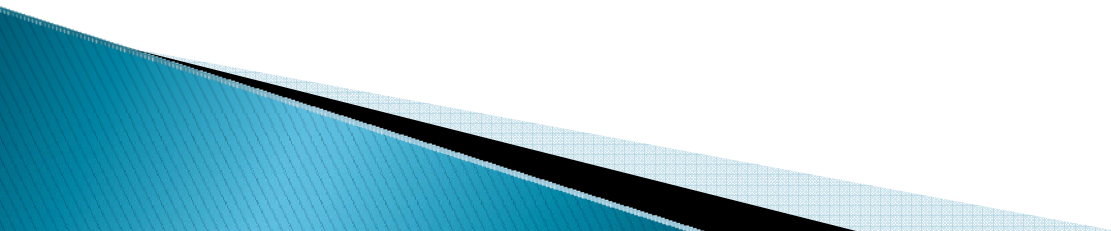
- ▣ **Cultural self-awareness** defined as an enduring ability to accurately appraise ones own cultural knowledge, skills and awareness in terms of strengths and limitations
- ▣ **Cultural openness to the differences of others** reflected in our willingness to allow new ideas and differences to become part of our thoughts, feelings and behaviors
- ▣ **Cultural transcendence** reflected in our capacity to accept ourselves as part of a larger whole; a perspective that encompasses a wide array of cultural similarities and differences

(Adapted from Morris, JA, Brotheridge, CM & Urbanski, JC (2005). Bringing humility to leadership: Antecedents and consequences of leader humility. *Human Relations*, p.13331.)

# Relationship between Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility

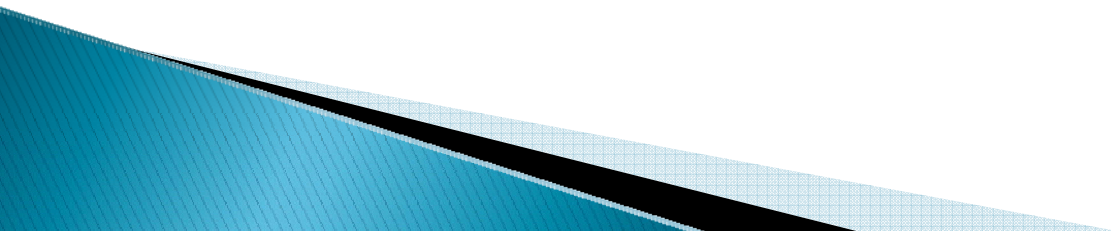
- ▶ **Cultural competence:** calls for expert knowledge about and familiarity with cultural differences
- ▶ **Cultural humility:**
  - Recognizes the daunting task of having to be knowledgeable about all cultural groups.
  - Avoids stereotyping individuals based upon assumptions about their culture.
  - Draws attention to the unique (and complex array of ) individual difference
  - Honors people's own cultural perspective (sometimes referred to as their "epistemic privilege").

Engagement, from a cultural humility perspective, prioritizes our collaboration with families with whom we work.

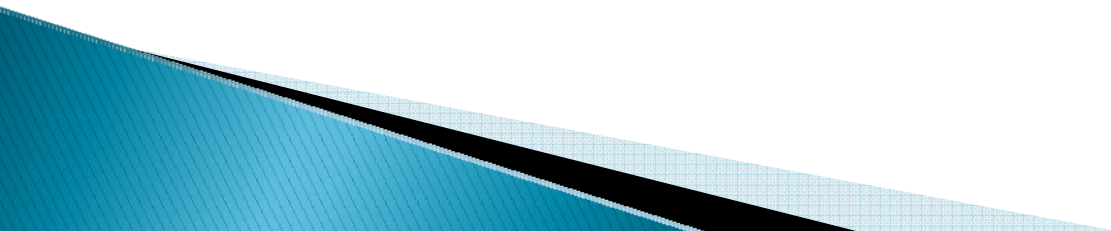




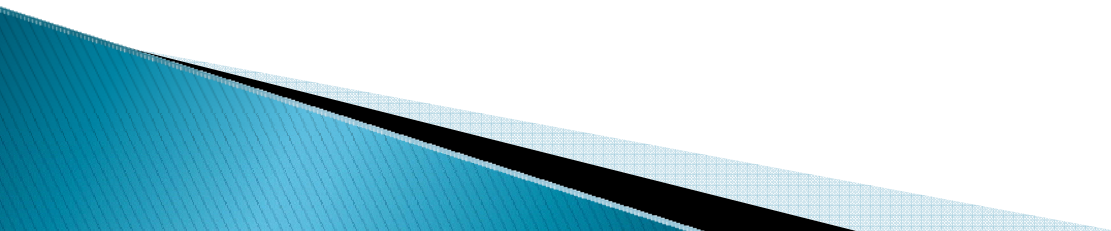
Developing cultural humility is a process of self discipline, ownership of potential biases and stereotypes, a willingness to see the world from the perspective of others as well as the ability to see the world as bigger than oneself.



The culturally humble professional remains secure in seeking insights from the family, fully appreciating what matters to the family, and readily willing to enter their world, and viewing it from the family's perspective.



Cultural humility challenges us to broaden our cultural perspectives and frames of reference – in cultural humility we are asked to see what we do not see.




# What is “cultural humility” in child welfare?

In child welfare, cultural humility challenges us to learn from the people with whom we work, reserve judgment, and bridge the cultural divide between our perspectives, in order to facilitate child safety, security and well-being, and promote permanency



essexcc.gov.uk

Our attunement to the needs and preferences of the family and individual members, remaining in the present throughout their journey to recovery, and accepting our own limitations in understanding their experience are fundamental to cultural humility ...





[local.theoildrum.com](http://local.theoildrum.com)

**Strangers in a new culture see  
only what they know.** Unknown

# Humility is attentive patience.

Simone Weil



<http://thenonconsumeradvocate.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/got-patience-680x510.jpg>

# Without humility there can be no humanity

John Buchan

