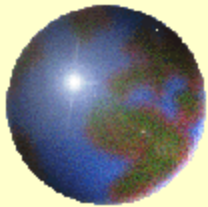
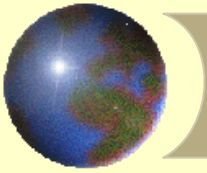


# *Cultural Competency Training*



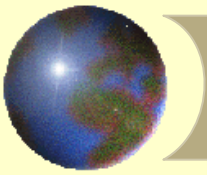
Tom Reese © Seattle Times

Western Kentucky  
Refugee Mutual  
Assistance Association,  
James Robinson, 2008



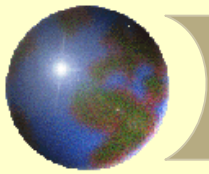
# *Introduction*

- ✚ Where are you from?
- ✚ What is your native language?
- ✚ What can you tell about us?



*What we literally see or hear may  
not be the real picture...*





## *The Burundi Three*

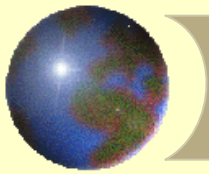
Three young Burundi students entered school in Bowling Green for the first time, a new experience for the students and the school. Prior to starting school, the siblings worked with Case Managers for weeks on ESL classes planned around their specific needs. However, it was still not enough.

The children were scared. This was not the first time they had been taken to a strange place. They sat anxiously in their desk. When the class left the room, the Burundi Three were skeptical. They moved to a larger, noisier room. It seemed familiar.

*What is happening?*

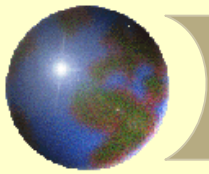
They realized: *This is where we eat.*

When it was time to get their food, the others in the room noticed something different about the Burundi Three. It was not their color, dress, or language. It was their hands. The three stood in line with their hands cupped and arms stretched out to receive their food. Tears filled nearly all eyes. The Burundi Three were given trays of food and sat down to eat. The children smiled saying, *We like it here. We eat well. We're not in danger.*



# *Learning Objectives*

- ⊕ To understand and become more culturally competent
- ⊕ To be better informed and prepared to interact with diverse populations
- ⊕ To be more familiar with some Do's, Don'ts and Maybes when addressing unfamiliar cultures
- ⊕ To expand current sensitivity skills in dealing with foreign-born families and children
- ⊕ To recognize or avoid cultural accidents
- ⊕ To communicate without frustration (tips and pointers)
- ⊕ To identify supports and resources available for foreign-born victims of neglect or abuse



# *Cultural Competency*

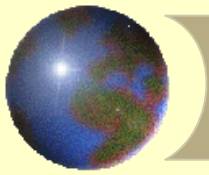
## Sensitivity

The degree of response to an incoming signal

Cultural Sensitivity  
+  
Diversity  
≠  
Competency

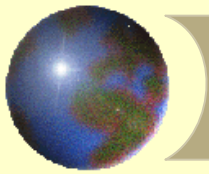
## Diversity

The political and social policy of encouraging tolerance for people of different backgrounds



## *Defining Cultural Competency*

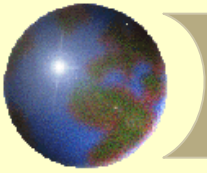
To understand, value and recognize a set of behaviors, attitudes, and norms of different cultures, enabling one to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.



## *Five Points about Culture*

- ✚ Everyone has a culture
- ✚ Diversity exists within cultures
- ✚ Cultures are evolving
- ✚ Culture is not determinative
- ✚ Cultural differences are complicated because of differences in status and power between cultures

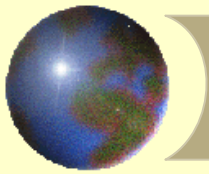




## *What Do You Need to Know?*

Where is the client from?

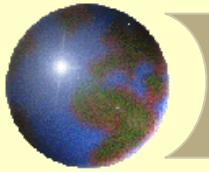
- ❖ You cannot make assumptions about where a person is from based on color or language. You must specifically ask. They will tell you.



## *What Do You Need to Know?*

What language does the client speak?

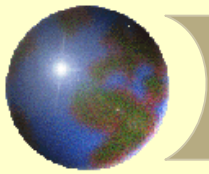
- ❖ Just because the client has black skin and is from Africa does not mean the client speaks French.
- ❖ Identifying the language of the client allows you to cut through the greatest barrier: Language.



## *What Do You Need to Know?*

What is the status of the client?

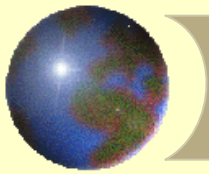
- ⊕ Recognize the elephant in the room!
- ⊕ Ask the client if s/he is affiliated with a certain agency. This may be a way of calming the situation.



## *What Do You Need to Know?*

How long has the client been in the U.S.?

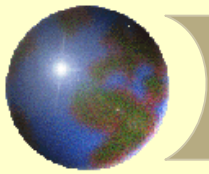
- ❖ You may need to be specific when asking this question; be aware that the client may not recognize the name of the town, the county, the state, or the United States.
- ❖ The length of the client's stay often determines the depth of their assimilation to the community.



## *What Do You Need to Know?*

What about the client's culture is different?

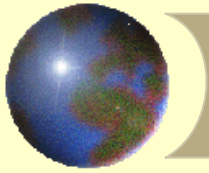
- ❖ Dress
- ❖ Age
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Perceptions of mental health, illness, general health, disability, etc.



# *What Do You Need to Know?*

What about the client's culture is different?

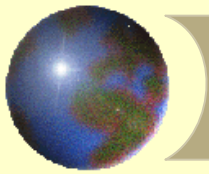
- ✚ Communication
- ✚ Facial expressions
- ✚ Body language
- ✚ Cleanliness



## *What Do You Need to Know?*

What about the client's culture is different?

- ✦ Justice (law enforcement)
- ✦ Social interaction and personal space
- ✦ Time and scheduling
- ✦ Parenting and discipline of children

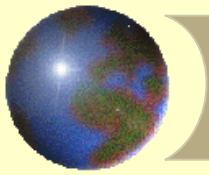


# *What Do You Need to Know?*

What about the client's culture is different?

- ⊕ Modesty
- ⊕ Subordinates and roles concerning:
  - ⊕ Class
  - ⊕ Religion
  - ⊕ Region of origin

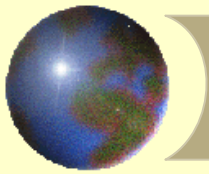




*When addressing unfamiliar cultures ...*

***DO:***

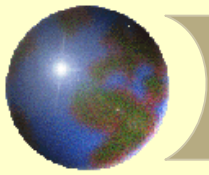
- ✦ Be self-reflective.
  - ✦ Are you learning all you can about new populations?
  - ✦ Make your environment/space welcoming.
  - ✦ Smile. It is the path to good communication.
  - ✦ Show respect even when in doubt.
  - ✦ Advocate for their social well-being.



*When addressing unfamiliar cultures ...*

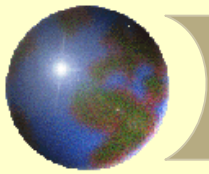
***DO:***

- ✦ Allow the client to participate in sharing ideas and thoughts.
- ✦ Give the client time to ask questions.
- ✦ Show respect and value to the client's opinion
- ✦ Use visual aids when possible.
- ✦ Utilize peers or family members to communicate when possible.



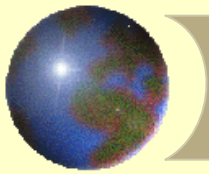
*When addressing unfamiliar cultures ...*  
***DO NOT:***

- ❖ Be too assertive or loud.
- ❖ Use negative expressions or criticisms.
- ❖ Mock.
- ❖ Relate the individuals to other sub-cultural groups.
- ❖ Express religious beliefs.



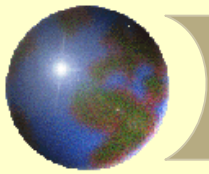
*When addressing unfamiliar cultures ...*  
***DO NOT:***

- ❖ Assume physical gestures mean the same thing for all populations.
- ❖ Make judgments characterizing/labeling all refugee and immigrant education, intelligence and real-world experience.
- ❖ Assume something about financial or social status, based on previous experiences or hearsay.



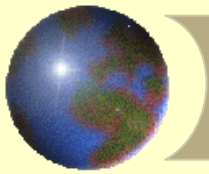
## *Recognize/Avoid Cultural Accidents*

- ❖ Remember that all people are different and change as their environment changes
- ❖ Just because a person looks or speaks differently does not mean they understand less, are not educated, etc.
- ❖ The clothes do not make the person
- ❖ Don't guess or assume, but ask appropriately when in doubt.



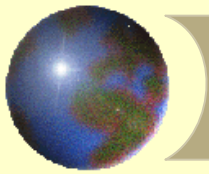
## *Recognize/Avoid Cultural Accidents*

- ❖ Don't try to impose morals and values upon the client. Just because people choose to live in the U.S. does not mean they choose to live a different lifestyle or change their beliefs. If new populations assimilate too much to the U.S. culture, they are potentially subject to criticism by their own group and jeopardize other peaceful situations.



## *Recognize/Avoid Cultural Accidents*

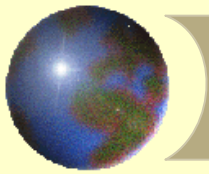
- ✚ Don't be so sensitive that you find yourself walking on eggshells.
- ✚ Different does not mean meek or confrontational. It just means different.
- ✚ Respect the differences. Don't succumb to the differences.
- ✚ Take the time to understand the culture of the people with whom you are likely to work.



# *How can we communicate without frustration?*

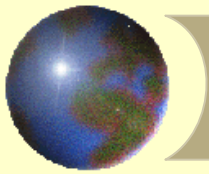
- ✚ Listen
- ✚ Speak clearly
- ✚ Observe
- ✚ Check for understanding
- ✚ Be patient
- ✚ Be flexible





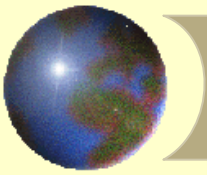
# *U.S. Refugee Admissions in 2009*

- ❖ Somalians, Eritreans in Shimelba, Congolese, Sudanese Darfurians in Iraq
- ❖ Burmese in Thailand (Karen, Karenni, Burmese Muslims) and Malaysia (Chin, Rohingya), Vietnamese
- ❖ Religious minorities from the former Soviet Union
- ❖ Cubans and Columbians
- ❖ Iraqis, Iranian religious minorities, Bhutanese in Nepal



## *What might be some resettlement problems?*

- ✦ Different standards of personal hygiene
- ✦ Inability to detect early signs of illness
- ✦ Lack of financial skills (e.g. budgeting for monthly bills)
- ✦ Inadequate grocery shopping skills
- ✦ No driver's license (difficult to train)
- ✦ Mental health issues (e.g. Post Traumatic Stress)
- ✦ Concerns for friends and family left behind
- ✦ Inappropriate dress (including preventing illness by dressing according to the weather)
- ✦ Alcohol and/or drug use and abuse
- ✦ Lack of understanding of U.S. school system and involvement
- ✦ Poor home management (e.g. cleaning, laundry, heating and cooling)
- ✦ Inattention to recreation and healthy living (including exercise and hobbies)



*Questions?*

