

Cultural Awareness in Healthcare

Moisés Próspero, Ph.D., M.B.A.

Utah's Healthcare Safety Net Summit

April 5, 2011



International Social Work Program
College of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Identity

- ❖ Question:
- ❖ Who are you?
- ❖ Please describe yourself.



Identity

- ❖ Question:
- ❖ Who are you?

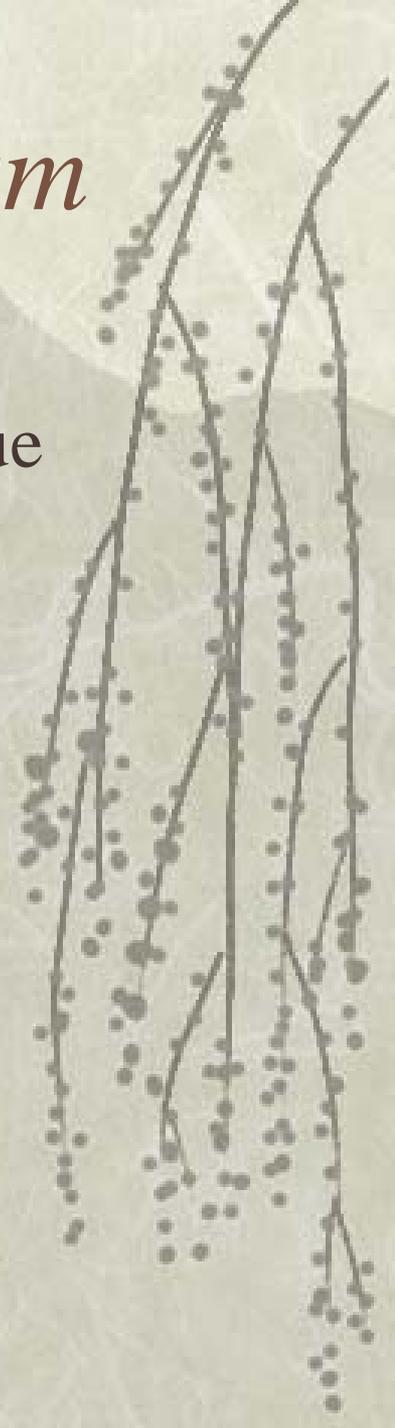
- ❖ Answer:
- ❖ Individual characteristics:
 - Smart, happy, hard worker, athletic, kind, etc.
- ❖ Group characteristics:
 - Father, Utahn, Samoan, social worker, etc.

Individualism v Collectivism

- ❖ Individualism: “It’s all about me!”
 - The “I” factor: Focus on individuality
 - Independence
 - Individual needs & success
 - U.S., Canada, Europe
- ❖ Collectivism: “It’s all about us!”
 - The “We” factor: Focus on the group membership
 - Interdependence
 - Group needs & success
 - Asia, Africa, Latin America

Individualism v Collectivism

- ❖ Conflict between cultural identities
 - How promote preventative health or pursue healthcare?
- ❖ Individualistic values Independence
 - Better health helps achieve personal goals
- ❖ Collectivistic values Interdependence
 - Better health helps achieve familial goals
 - Independent or interdependent children
- ❖ Example:
 - Latina immigrant



Individualism v Collectivism

- ❖ Conflict between cultural identities
 - Independence versus interdependence
 - Perception of mental illness?
 - How promote mental health services?
- ❖ Individualistic
 - Individual “flaw”
- ❖ Collectivistic
 - Family “flaw”
- ❖ Example
 - Asian immigrant woman

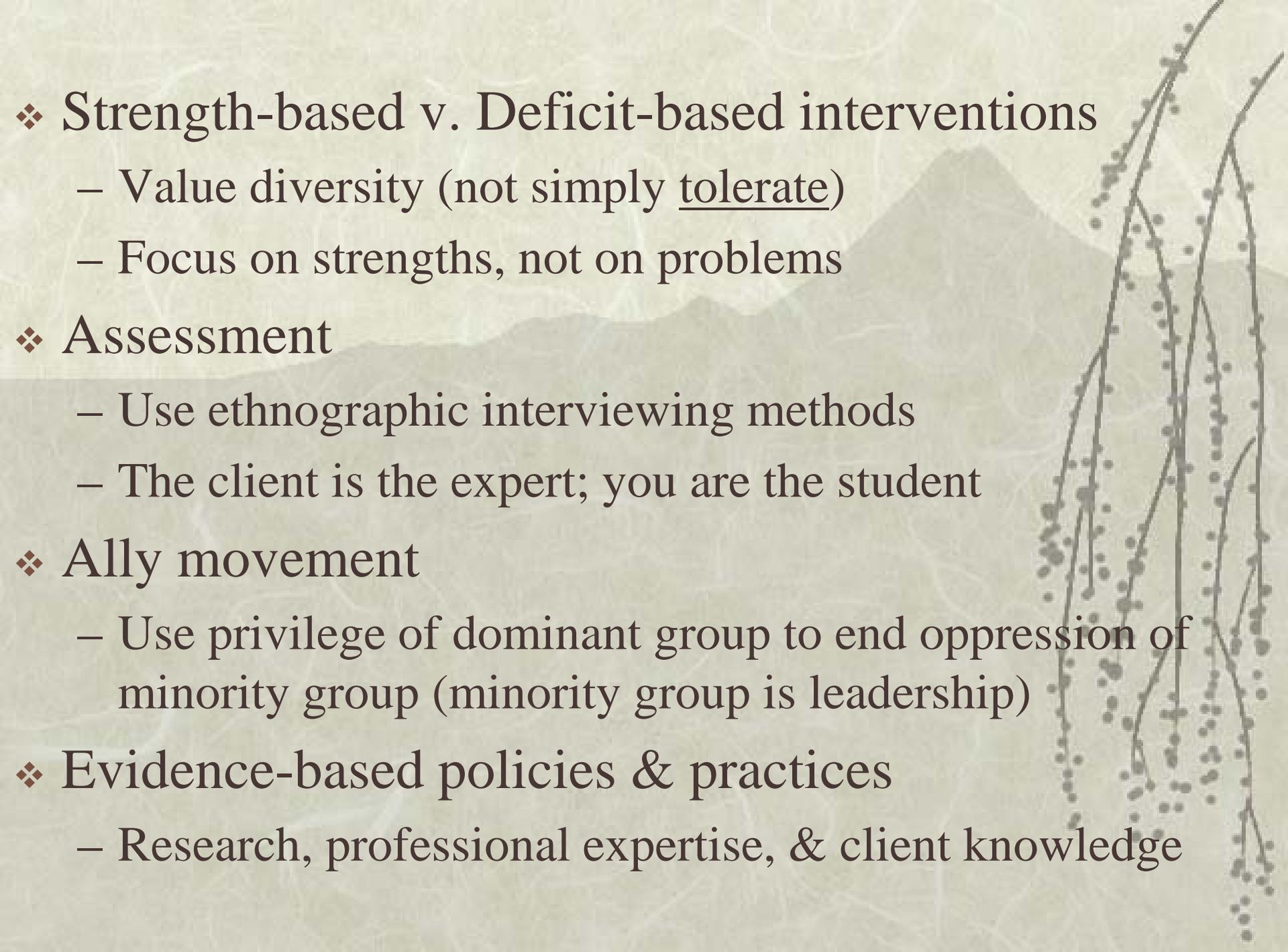


Reactions to Professionals

- ❖ Minority groups responses may include:
 - Anger from past discrimination
 - Distrust from past betrayal
 - Worry about perception of deviance
 - Tired of being “saved” (assimilation)
 - Tired of being “the rep” for the minority group
 - Responses may seem “secretive”
 - Fear of being “outed” if “hidden population”
 - Gay/lesbian, plural family, undocumented, disabled

Working with groups outside your culture: Recommendations

- ❖ Go through leadership
 - Formal & informal (gov't, spiritual, cmtty, etc)
- ❖ Use liaisons
 - Provide rules (formal & informal)
 - Individuals from the hidden populations (plural families, gangs, sex workers, etc)
- ❖ Be flexible
 - Perception of time, taboos (e.g., left-hand), etc
- ❖ Acculturation rather than assimilation
 - Diversity of cultures improves innovation/ideas

- 
- ❖ Strength-based v. Deficit-based interventions
 - Value diversity (not simply tolerate)
 - Focus on strengths, not on problems
 - ❖ Assessment
 - Use ethnographic interviewing methods
 - The client is the expert; you are the student
 - ❖ Ally movement
 - Use privilege of dominant group to end oppression of minority group (minority group is leadership)
 - ❖ Evidence-based policies & practices
 - Research, professional expertise, & client knowledge

The background features a light beige, textured surface. A dark silhouette of a mountain range is visible in the upper half. On the right side, a dark silhouette of a willow tree branch with small, dark buds hangs down.

Thanks!!!

moises.prospero@socwk.utah.edu