LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Define and understand the term “cultural intelligence”
• List compelling reasons why cultural intelligence is necessary
• Describe why cultural intelligence is important for health and safety professionals to recognize
• Provide examples of possible health and safety issues if cultural differences are not considered or respected
• Discuss ways that we can all improve our cultural intellectual quotient
DEFINING “CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE”

What does the term “cultural intelligence” mean to you?
DEFINING “CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE”

“The capability of an individual to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity”

- Ang & Van Dyne (2015)
DEFINING “CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE”

“An outsider’s seemingly natural ability to interpret someone’s unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that person’s compatriots would”

WHY A SAFETY PRESENTATION ON CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE?

• We live in a very diverse country (thus the term “melting pot”)
• The global economy continues to grow and strengthen
• Diversity and equal opportunity are not only the law, but the expectation in the American workplace
• Safety professionals are ethically obligated to ensure the health and safety of all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, veteran status, etc.

• Importantly, one must never assume that health and safety is understood and interpreted equally by different people
WHAT IS YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

PEST?

APPETIZER?

PET?
INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES HAVE TAKEN NOTE

Source: Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation
MY PERSPECTIVE ON THE WORLD

- Grew up with grandparents living/working overseas
- Professional experience working abroad – National University of Singapore
- Over the course of my career, specifically sought out opportunities for consultations, projects, presentations, and training initiatives in various international locations
SENIOR SAFETY & HEALTH MANAGER
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
SENIOR SAFETY & HEALTH MANAGER
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
SCENARIOS REQUIRING HIGH LEVEL OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

- You work for a multinational company with locations in foreign countries
- You work for a foreign company with operations in the USA
- You work in the USA! Many companies employ people from around the world – and colleges / universities are particularly diverse settings
EMBRACING DIVERSITY IN THE USA

- According to 2016 estimates, 13.2% of US Citizen population is foreign born (42 million of 318 million total population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Margin of Error</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Percent Margin of Error</th>
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<td>Foreign-born population, excluding population born at sea</td>
<td>42,193,781</td>
<td>+/-109,231</td>
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<td>+/-7,934</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>+/-0.1</td>
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- Source: US Census Bureau (2018)
EMBRACING DIVERSITY IN HOUSTON

• As of 2010, Houston is now considered the most “diverse” city in the USA according to a joint report by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research & the Hobby Center for the Study of Texas

Houston’s changing demographics (1970-2010)

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<td>17.6</td>
<td>52.5</td>
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<td>1990</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
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Source: Minnesota Population Center, National Historical Geographic Information System
EMBRACING DIVERSITY AT UTHEALTH

Reported Ethnicity of UTHealth Employees:

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<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<td>UTHealth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>1,255</td>
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<td>American Indian</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43</td>
<td>70</td>
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Grand Total UTHealth 2,410 4,784 7,194

• Source: UTHealth Fact Book (FY2017)
EMBRACING DIVERSITY AT UTHEALTH

Reported Ethnicity of UTHealth Faculty:

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<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
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<td>Grand Total UTHealth</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>1,792</td>
<td>1,041</td>
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- Source: UTHealth Fact Book (FY2017)
EMBRACING DIVERSITY AT UTHEALTH

Reported Ethnicity of UTHealth Students:

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<th>2014 Number</th>
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<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>695</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>125</td>
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<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>3%</td>
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<td>1,962</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total UHealth</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,489</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,614</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,556</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,811</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,051</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Source: UTHealth Fact Book (FY2017)
CONSIDER CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Let’s forget about where people are from for a moment...

Within an organization:

• Leadership
• Middle managers
• Line workers
• Distinct differences between departments
  – e.g. facilities maintenance personnel, housekeeping, information technology, security, EHS, etc.
CONSIDER CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Within a safety department:

• We can likely all agree – there are distinct differences between the different disciplines of health and safety

• Health physicists, industrial hygienists, biosafety professionals, hazardous waste professionals, risk managers, etc. can be cut from very different fabric, so to speak

• Each of us has different educational backgrounds, professional experiences, and expectations for the workplace
CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS TO CONSIDER

• Relational skills – whether you enjoy talking and interacting with people from other cultures

• Tolerance of uncertainty – whether you are able to tolerate uncertainties, ambiguities and unexpected changes in an intercultural interaction

• Adaptability – whether you can change your behavior according to the cultural demands

• Empathy – whether you can put yourself in a culturally different person´s shoes and imagine the situation from his or her perspective

• Perceptual acuity – whether you understand other people´s feelings and subtle meanings during intercultural interactions

Source: Liao (2015)
EXAMPLE: SAFETY TRAINING

- “Localization” is required to ensure safety training is effective for a diverse audience

- Examples include:
  - Training must reflect what worker will see and experience in their own workplaces
  - Language differences, but also cultural differences must be considered
  - US-centric rules and regulations may not be applicable
  - Differences in measurement (imperial versus metric) and temperature (Fahrenheit versus Celsius) may cause confusion
  - Driver’s safety training (left versus right hand drive)

Source: Murphy (2018)
SAFETY TRAINING - SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

- Localize for language and culture
- Ensure consistency of training between geographic locations
- Cater to local regulatory requirements
- Ensure accessibility of training materials to all workers
- Provide the ability to measure results of training efforts

Source: Murphy (2018)
DIVERSITY TRUMPS HOMOGENEITY

Source: The Inclusive Leader (Korn Ferry Institute)
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AS IT RELATES TO SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Benefits come from combination of high diversity and high inclusion

High Diversity
- Low work satisfaction
- High employee turnover
- Weak employer brand
- Low creativity and innovation
- Poor safety record

High Inclusion
- High work satisfaction
- "Healthy" employee turnover
- Strong employer brand
- High creativity and innovation
- High adaptability/agility
- Good safety record

Low Diversity
- High work satisfaction
- Too low employee turnover
- Strong but narrow employer brand
- Low creativity and innovation
- Low adaptability/agility ("Group think")
- Good and poor safety record

Low Inclusion

Source: The Guide to Inclusive Leaders (Nancy Curl and Joerg Schmitz)
WHAT IS YOUR PERSPECTIVE?
HOW CAN WE ALL IMPROVE OUR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT?

• The good news is that cultural intelligence can be developed!
• Awareness of cultural differences and willingness to understand about other cultures is key
• Recognize the potential benefits in both personal and professional life from increased cultural intelligence
HOW CAN WE ALL IMPROVE OUR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT?

We can dive into complex theory to understand more about cultural quotient:

• **Metacognitive** – an individual’s cultural consciousness and awareness during interactions with those from different backgrounds

• **Cognitive** – an individual’s knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultural settings

• **Motivational** – an individual’s capability to direct attention and energy toward cultural differences

• **Behavioral** – an individual’s capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different backgrounds

Source: Ang & Van Dyne, 2015
HOW CAN WE ALL IMPROVE OUR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT?

But more practically, go out of your way to:

• Understand your own cultural history
• Experience different cultures
• Learn new languages
• Talk to people, listen attentively, and genuinely show interest in different people (plus, as a bonus, most folks like to talk about themselves!)

• “There is no substitute for on the ground experience”
  - Colonel Bernard Banks (retired US Army; associate dean for Leadership Development at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management)
HOW CAN WE ALL IMPROVE OUR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT?

Or put another way:

• Don’t be afraid to admit you don’t know about other cultures
• Suspend judgements
• Be empathetic
• Systematically check your assumptions
• Become comfortable with ambiguity
• Celebrate diversity

Source: Quappe and Cantatore, 2018
HOW CAN WE ALL IMPROVE OUR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT?

Courses available on UTHealth’s Learn 2 Succeed that you might not know about:

• Understanding unconscious bias
• Overcoming your own unconscious bias
• A manager’s guide to diversity and inclusion

https://www.uth.edu/hr/department/learning-and-development/
HOW CAN WE ALL IMPROVE OUR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT?

“Implicit Association Tests” through Project Implicit:

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
CULTURAL DEXTERITY

“Rather than a static learning specific to only one national, ethnic, generational, or other group, cultural dexterity combines cultural knowledge, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills that can be adapted to achieve improved business results in any cross-cultural situation.”

Source: Korn Ferry Institute (2012)
MEDICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT & HEALTHCARE WORKER TRAINING – TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
MEDICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT & HEALTHCARE WORKER TRAINING – MONGOLIA
REFERENCES


• Quappe, S, Cantatore, G. What is Cultural Awareness Anyways? Accessed online: http://www.culturosity.com/articles/whatisculturalawareness.htm#_ftnref1