

Practices for Therapeutic Work within a Cultural /Transcultural Framework

M Maldonado-Durán

Practices

- Culture is always present!
- Whether acknowledged or not
- It is a dimension of the person- dyad- family-group
- Complements the individual with other dimensions
- How to work in that dimension?

Working “culturally” is a framework

- Think of cultural dimension of what is in front of you... what you see and what you do not see.
- Find differences in way of thinking, feeling and expressing pleasure, distress, concern
- Find the similarity and universality in the themes presented by the infant/family

Elements that assist transcultural work

- **Knowing** about the country/culture/history/practices/health beliefs/language of “the other”
- Knowing about the person’s frame of reference, religion , health, magic, ancestors, cure.
- Knowing culturally valid ways of expressing oneself : cultural codes

Elements that assist...

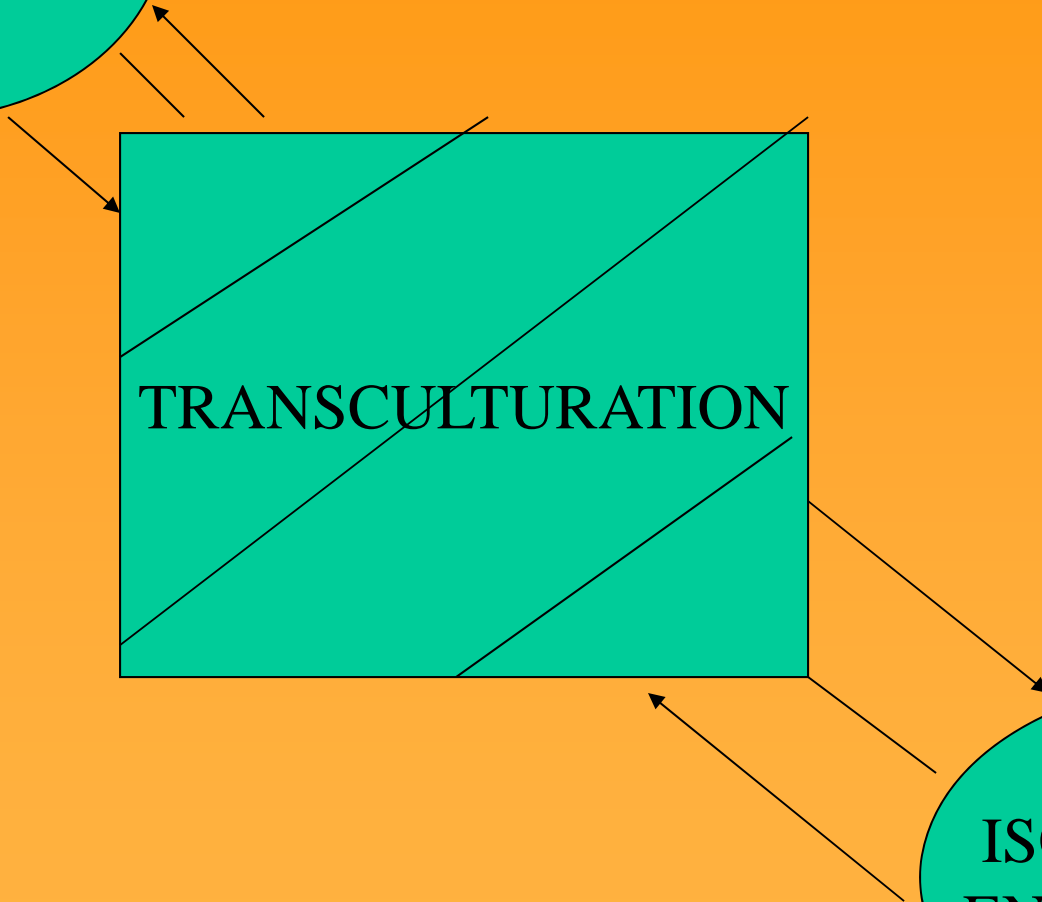
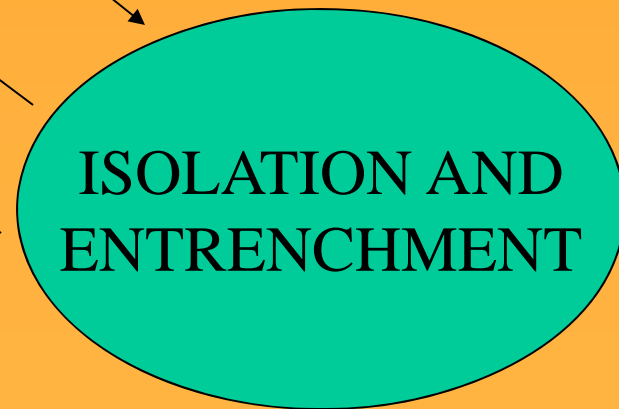
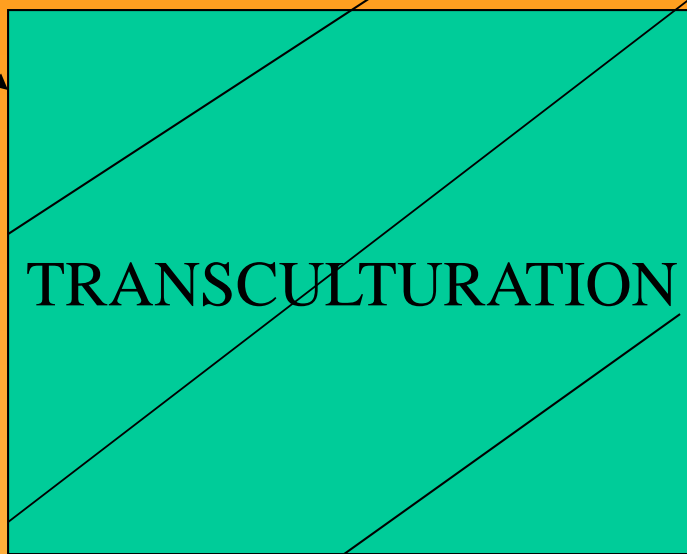
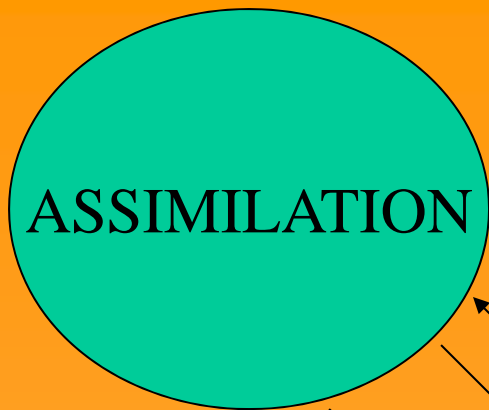
- A member of the staff that can function as a bridge, conduit, translator, facilitator
- A way of communicating with words and to understand somatic expressions
- A frame of orientation to make observations: what is individual and personal and what is “cultural”?

Risk of mis-attribution

- The myth of the “good savage”
- -they think in “simplistic ways”
- -the do not care about certain things or have other priorities
- -they are happy/thankful to have come to this country
- -idealization of community and poverty

Risk of mis-attribution

- -People from a certain country are “all the same”
- If you are a Latino... you think in this way..
- Thinking of degrees of assimilation, transculturation, isolation, entrenchment in cultural values and practices



How can one work “culturally”

- Think of **variations in what people want**, how they think, feel, express themselves, and how they deal with their babies
- Think of issues involved in changing cultures and coming to a new culture I.e. **migration**
- Think of things that are clearly **culture-bound**, e.g. culture bound syndromes.

How can work culturally..

- Think of culture “ from inside”
- World view from inside the other
- Maneuvers of de-centration
- Maneuvers of contextualization
- Open mind to what one does not understand
- Be ready to learn new ways of doing things

Adaptations

- Use of transcultural conduits
- Use of staff/ translators, persons from the “same culture”
- Find ways to make a bridge

Trancultural issues

- Variations in child rearing
- Issues in dealing with immigrants
- Culture bound conditions