



The Role of a Cultural Broker/ Paraprofessional

Adapted from Bridging the Cultural Divide in health Care settings The essential role of cultural broker programs. From the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development website. www.culturalbroker.infor/2_role/2_role.html

AGENDA DAY #1 SESSION #1

1. Welcome / Introductions– Greetings from DCFS Administration
2. What's in it for me (Why are we here?)
3. Family 2 Family Values / Goals
 - a. Mission of the Neighborhood Collaborations
 - b. Centro West Metro Collaborative Goals
4. History of Cultural brokering
5. Why is there a need for Cultural Brokering in CWS?
6. The role of the Cultural Broker
 - a. The Tri-Cultural World and Intercultural Communication / A framework for multicultural practice

Fresno County Department of Children and Family Services Mission

Vision:

- To lead an integrated network of community partners that supports, protects and strengthens children and families.

Mission:

- To promote a system of best practice in partnership with the community, committed to prevention and early intervention, that ensures child safety, permanence and stability, family well-being, that is proactive, strategic, outcomes based and fiscally responsible to the children and families served.

[Family to Family Values]

- A child's safety is paramount
- Children belong in families
- Families need strong communities
- Public child-welfare systems need partnerships with the community and with other systems to achieve strong outcomes for children

The concept of Cultural Brokers: A Historical Overview

The concept of cultural brokering is an ancient one that can be traced to the earliest recorded encounters between cultures. The term cultural broker was first coined by anthropologists who observed that certain individuals acted as middlemen, negotiators, or brokers between colonial governments and the societies they ruled. Different definitions of cultural brokering have evolved over time. One definition states that cultural brokering is the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change (Jezewski, 1990). A cultural broker is defined as a go-between, one who advocates on behalf of another individual or group (Jezewski & Sotnik, 2001).

[Who Is the Cultural Broker?]

Cultural brokers may serve as intermediaries at the most basic level—bridging the cultural gap by communicating differences and similarities between cultures. They may also serve in more sophisticated roles—mediating and negotiating complex processes within organizations, government, communities, and between interest groups or countries.

[Who Is the Cultural Broker?]

1. Liaison
2. Cultural guide
3. Mediator
4. Catalyst for change

Cultural Broker as a Catalyst for Change

- Assess and understand their own cultural identities and value systems;
- Recognize the values that guide and mold attitudes and behaviors;
- Understand a community's traditional beliefs, values, and practices and changes that occur through acculturation;
- Understand and practice the tenets of effective cross-cultural communication, including the cultural nuances of both verbal and non-verbal communication; and
- Advocate for the client, to ensure the delivery of effective child welfare services.

[Cultural Brokers Must have:]

- The trust and respect of the community;
- Knowledge of values, beliefs, and child welfare practices of cultural groups; an understanding of traditional and indigenous wellness and cultural practices
- Experience within diverse communities; and
- Experience navigating child welfare service delivery and supportive systems within communities.

Who are Fresno County's Cultural Brokers

Cultural brokers are community members that have received extensive training on the child welfare system, the Family to Family Initiative, including TDM meetings and Family Group Conferences. Ideally (but not always) the brokers will be of the same culture as the family and or have an extensive knowledge base of the family's culture. Cultural Brokers consistently attend one or more of the F2F collaboratives, and have served as a TDM representative for more than 6 months. Some of our Cultural Brokers will also have extensive knowledge of not only ethnic groups but will have knowledge of specialized topic areas such as substance abuse, domestic violence, ICWA, and immigration/undocumented persons and how best to serve folks with issues in these specific areas.

Role of the Cultural Broker in Fresno County

Cultural brokers work to increase the quality of the relationship between the DCFS and the families it serves, so that better outcomes are achieved for the families. The cultural broker helps the agency work with the family and the family work with the agency. Cultural brokers are trained in DCFS program activities and purposes, Child Welfare mandates, and how to work with the Juvenile Court.

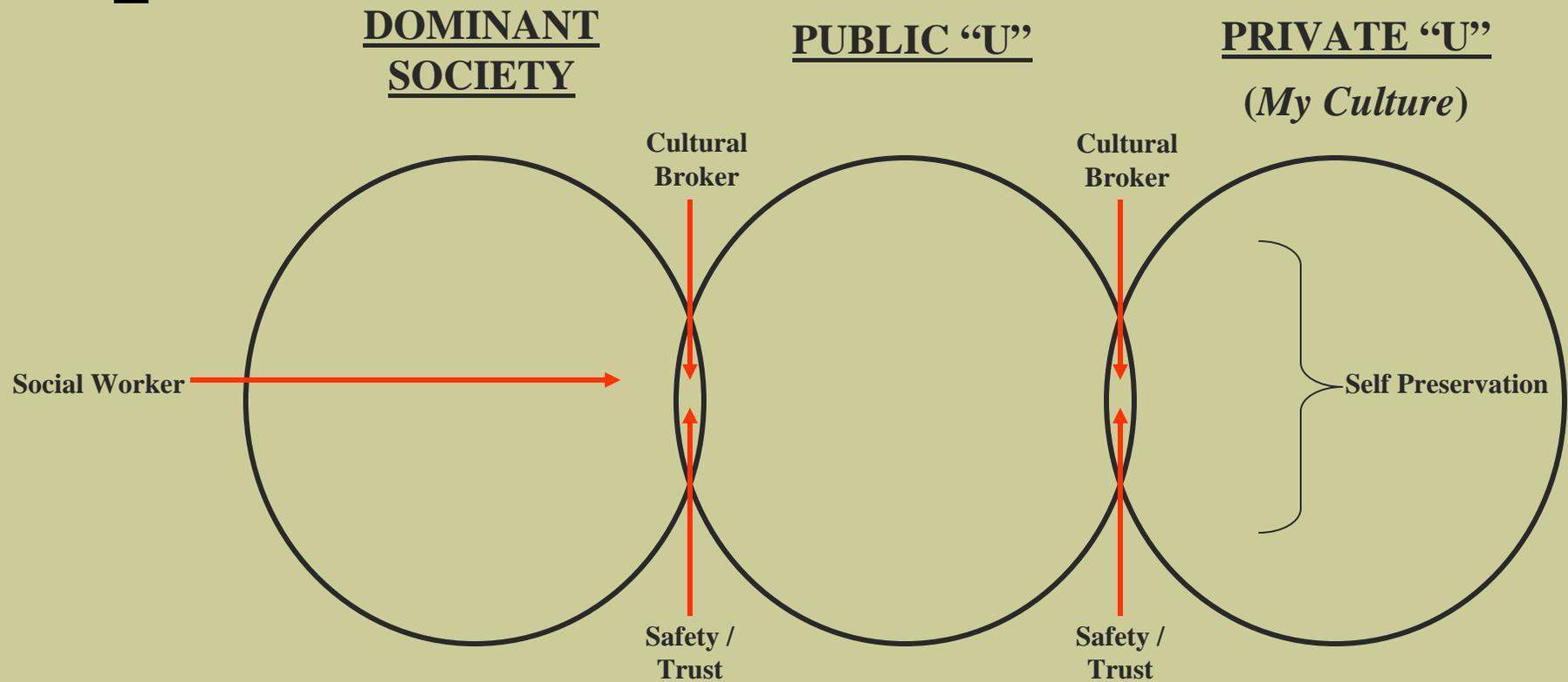
[The Work of the Cultural Broker]

- Under the direction of the Family to Family Neighborhood Collaboratives.
- Provide a variety of support services for families involved with the child welfare system, or at risk of becoming involved.
- Referred to a family at any point in the system, and can be of most assistance to a family/DCFS during key decision points.
- Assists the agency with assessment, support, or the safety plan
- Encourages the family to work with the case manager

The Work of the Cultural Broker Cont.

- Provide support to the family
- Assist with team meetings and provide information about the family
- Helps link the family with supportive resources
- Partners with DCFS on behalf of high risk families to help wrap the family with support, and to alert DCFS if/when the risk begins to increase/decrease
- Attends court with the family
- Provides helpful written reports to the case manager which can provide needed documentation for court purposes

THE TRI-CULTURAL WORLD



THE TRI-CULTURAL WORLD



[INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION]

Intercultural Communication occurs between people based on both the shared and distinct cultural perceptions and symbol systems that influence communication contexts.

WHEN YOU INTERVENE, REMEMBER:

- People in a Tri-Cultural World
- Power Exchanges / Collisions a natural part of your intervention
- A “Dual Consciousness” Always Exists
- Inter-cultural Communication: Transparency) is the key
- Cultural Brokers “Stand in the Gap”
- Success = A merging of all Three Worlds