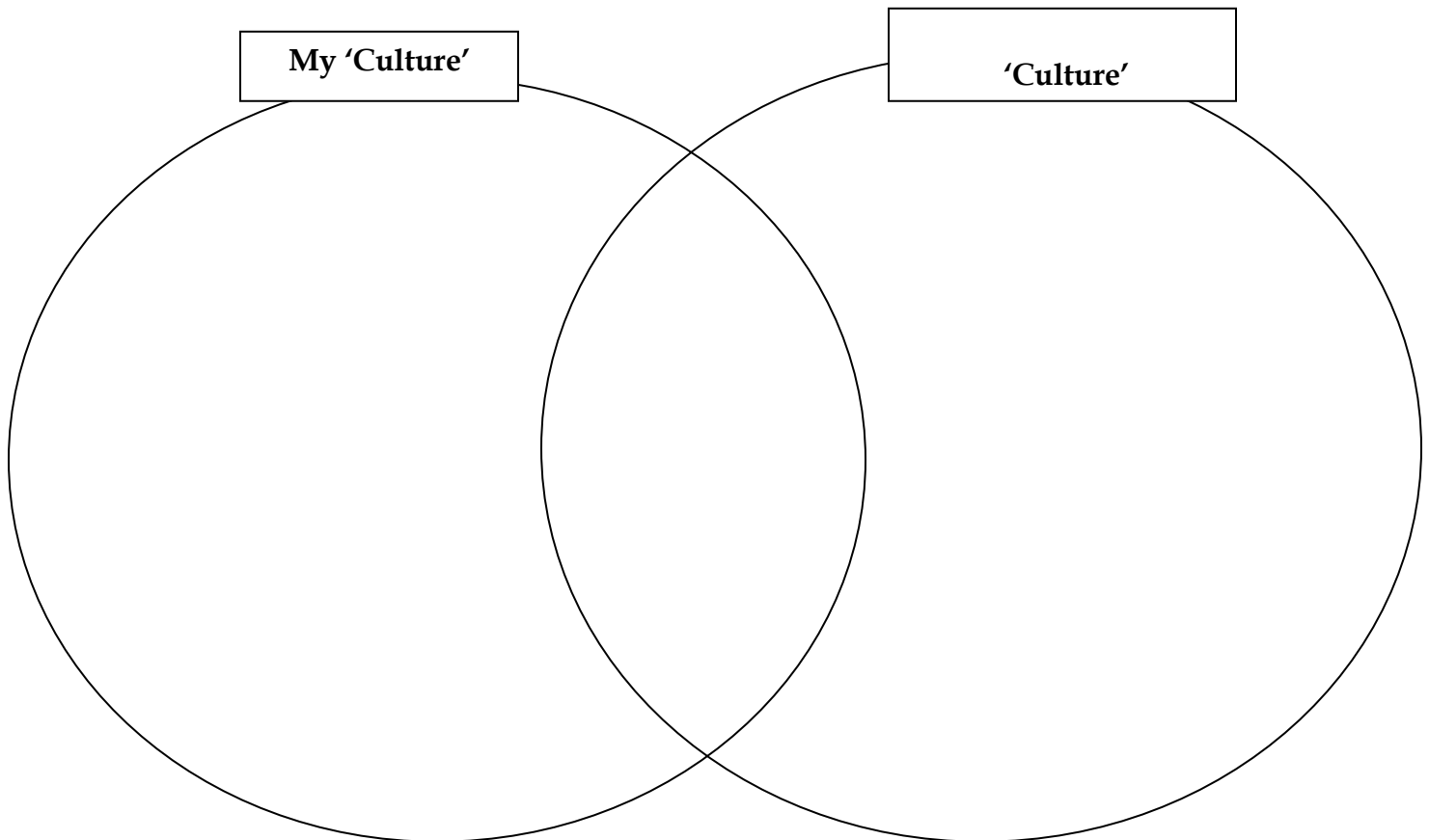




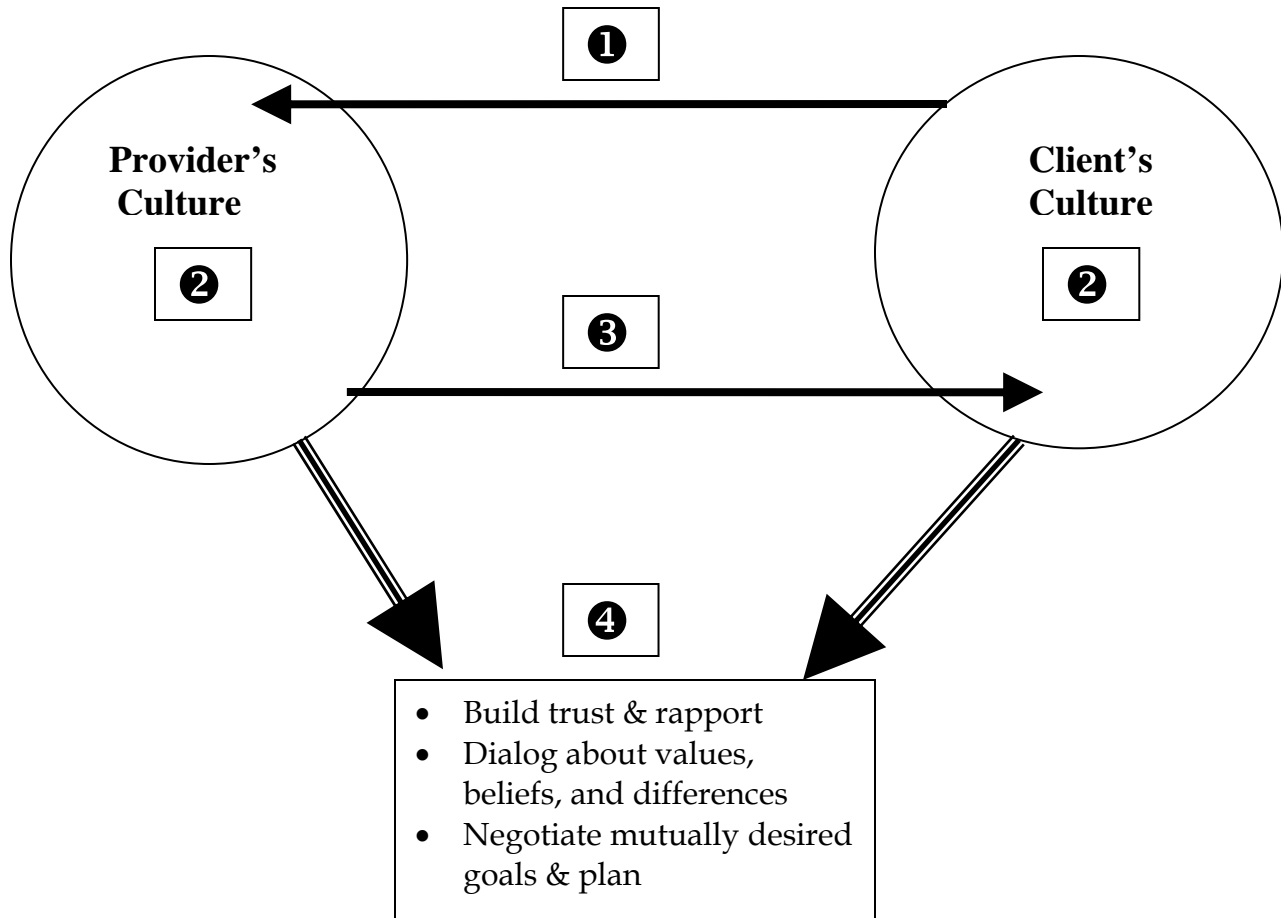
'A First Glance' at Culture

- I. Culture:** A body of learned beliefs, traditions, and guides for behavior that are shared among members of a particular group.
- II. Cultural Group:** People with common origins, customs and styles of living. The group has a sense of identify and a shared language. Their shared history and experiences shape the group's values, goals and expectations, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors from birth until death.
- III. Variations WITHIN Cultural Groups:**
- age • social class • socioeconomic status • religion • education • language
 - gender identity • occupation • length of time in US •
 - location in country of origin • location in US: urban vs rural •
 - amount and type of contact with elders • assimilation • legal status





Framework for Cross-Cultural Communication*



The LEARN Model*

L Listen with empathy (active listening) ...and look for strengths and resources.

E **Elicit client world-view. Access client perception of the problem/need.**
Explain your perceptions of the problem/need.

A **Acknowledge and discuss the differences and similarities.**

R Recommend action/intervention.

N **Negotiate action/intervention.**

* 'Communication Framework' adapted from model developed by M. Kagawa-Singer and S. Kassim-Lakha (2003)

* LEARN Model developed by E. Berlin and W. Fowkes (1983) and modified by Tafoya and Wirth (1992)



Learning About the Community

By Elizabeth Randall-David, PhD.

The three components to learning about the cultural values, beliefs and practices of the community you are trying to reach include:

- 1) Conducting a community assessment
- 2) Developing relationships with key persons in the community
- 3) Marketing your services to community groups and to your target population

Steps for Conducting a Community Assessment:

- **Best first step is to look and listen before asking or acting.**
- **Identify possible areas to conduct community assessment and build relationships. Make a list of:**
 - ✓ All institutions the target population uses, such as schools, churches, hospitals and clinics
 - ✓ Social services agencies that serve community
 - ✓ Key community businesses patronized by the target population, such as grocery and clothing stores, beauty parlors/barber shops, restaurants, etc.
 - ✓ Community leaders, such as clergy/pastoral care, local minority legislators, city and county commissioners, youth leaders, business owners, sports figures, teachers, leaders of community groups, musicians.
- **Review ways to gather information:**
 - ✓ In-depth interviews
 - ✓ Informal conversations
 - ✓ Survey research
 - ✓ Observations (everyday life and/or specific events)
 - ✓ Secondary research (study newspapers, documents, books, movies to gain an understanding of culture)
 - ✓ Experimental research (e.g., set up situation, carry out planned changes and observe results)
 - ✓ Case studies (intensive study of certain aspects of one person, family or situation)
- **Determine the special areas you want to learn more about.**
 - ✓ *Possible topics:* community views of health, chronic illness, disability, views towards biomedical medicine, mental health counseling, and family support. (See separate handout for possible questions.)



- **Identify a 'cultural broker', a close confidant to help you 'bridge the gap' between cultures.**
 - ✓ Be sure that person is still in touch with his/her culture.
 - ✓ Be aware that in all communities, cliques or subgroups exist.
 - ✓ Gather information and generate referrals to other community members from people representing various subgroups, age groups and both sexes.
- **Follow the guidelines below when formulating your questions:**
 - ✓ Check out your questions with a few key community members before starting.
 - ✓ Try asking yourself the same questions about your own culture.
 - ✓ Learn how to interview within the local area – the do's and don'ts of interviewing may vary greatly from place to place.
 - ✓ Learn *when* to ask questions and when not to ask them.
 - ✓ Learn what questions to ask and what ones not ask . What topics are considered taboo, too personal?
- **Interview:**
 - ✓ Other professionals or agency staff who have worked with the target population
 - ✓ Find out who the informal opinion leaders are.
 - ✓ Talk with those who are considered 'wise' within the community.
 - ✓ Talk with as many people as possible.
 - ✓ Remember that all information contains both subjective and objective aspects. So verify and cross check the information you collect.
- **Review the following list of typical problems in gaining accurate information:**
 - ✓ Mistrust or reserve may be the typical response within the culture until the questioner moves out of the category of 'stranger.'
 - ✓ Mistrust may prevail because you haven't yet proved yourself trustworthy; the 'proof' that makes trust possible may vary from situation to situation.
 - ✓ Interviewees may wish to tell you what they think you want to hear.
 - ✓ You may be asking the wrong people.
 - ✓ Your interviewees may mistake the ideal for the real.
 - ✓ You may be asking the wrong questions.
 - ✓ You may be asking questions at the wrong time or place.
 - ✓ People may have difficulty describing and explaining things that are second nature to them.
 - ✓ What an interviewee says may be altered during translation.
 - ✓ Your own characteristics may influence the response.



- **Avoid the pitfalls of stereotyping and making generalizations due to:**
 - ✓ Forming impressions too soon
 - ✓ Drawing incompletely formed conclusions before you understand the viewpoint of the community you are learning about
 - ✓ Generalizing from a non-typical group to the entire community
 - ✓ Forgetting that the individual variations exist within the community

- **Above all, be sincere, open and honest.**
 - ✓ When appropriate, share your own experiences, beliefs, and practices with those you talk with as a means of building rapport. Most people prefer mutual exchanges to one-sided interviews.

Reference:

Randall-David, E. (1989). Strategies for working with culturally diverse communities and clients (1st Ed). Washington, D.C.: The Association for the Care of Children's Health.