

# PREFACE

## INTRODUCING CULTURE-INFUSED COUNSELLING

*Nancy Arthur and Sandra Collins*

Our intent in developing this book was to provide a resource to advance theoretical understanding about multicultural counselling and practical skills in a way that recognizes our uniqueness as Canadians as well as our connection to the broader international professional communities. The contributions of our Canadian colleagues showcase the growing national expertise in multicultural counselling. We wanted to highlight Canada's uniqueness while acknowledging the depth and breadth of research and practice considerations and resources beyond our national borders.

The title of the book, *Culture-Infused Counselling*, reflects the theoretical perspective we adopt in this book. It is our belief that culture is a fundamental component of human experience and that no person or group can be fully understood in the absence of a purposeful inquiry into culture. In keeping with the national political and professional stance in Canada, we broadly define culture to include ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, socio-economic status and social class, religion, and other salient dimensions of culture that are important for counsellor-client interactions. This broad conceptualization of culture is essential to ensuring that the multiple and dynamic dimensions of each individual's personal culture are honoured in the counselling process. Beyond counsellor-client interactions, cultural dimensions may be important considerations in other professional roles.

The risk of continuing to talk in terms of professional practice as multicultural counselling is that the underlying theoretical and practical models may be interpreted as applying only to certain groups in our society. Although Canadian public policy clearly supports the idea that we are part of a multicultural society in which all cultures are equally honoured, the reality is that many Canadians continue to see culture as something belonging to someone else. Our choice of the term *culture-infused counselling* reflects our belief that culture is a core construct for understanding all human beings. It follows that each of us is a cultural being and that we must approach our understanding of ourselves as professionals and each of our clients from this perspective. To this end, as writers, we have attempted to provide glimpses into our own experience of culture as a means of modelling both the diversity of experience and the importance of acknowledging the influence of our own cultural experiences on our roles as teachers, counsellors, and researchers.

This book is also based on the premise that cultural inquiry must be incorporated into all areas of professional practice of counselling and psychology. Much of the literature to date has focused on applied counselling practice. We will also use this as a starting point for developing our conceptual framework for enhancing multicultural counselling competence, but wish to broaden the focus to social justice. Multicultural competence extends to other critical areas of practice, such as teaching, research, consultation, and supervision. While it is impossible to address each of these areas effectively in one book, we hope that the coverage provided will serve as a starting point for students and practitioners to seek out additional resources to enhance their competence in these areas.

The emphasis on social justice in this book also provides part of the conceptual framework for our writing. It is our belief that the professions of counselling and psychology in Canada stand in a crucial position of influence at the grass roots level; in our work with individual clients, groups, and organizations; and at broader socio-political levels, with provincial or national forces. While we stand proud to be Canadians and attempt to highlight the globally recognized position of this country in terms of advanced multicultural policy, we also recognize that the reality of many non-dominant populations in Canada falls far short of the ideal of inclusiveness and mutual respect. It is our hope that reading this book will also inspire you to respond to your broader professional obligation to act on behalf of the less powerful in our society to effect lasting change.

## The Editors



**Nancy Arthur** is a Professor in Applied Psychology, Faculty of Education, and holds a Tri-Faculty Canada Research Chair in Professional Education at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She received her Masters degree in Sociology from the University of Alberta before specializing in counselling psychology in Masters and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Calgary. Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Calgary in 1996, Nancy worked in post-secondary education as a counsellor. During her 15 years as a counsellor with the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT), she worked with a diverse range of adult learners from Canada and from other countries. Her involvement with international projects fostered a keen interest in the counselling and teaching implications of the internationalization of higher education. She is a chartered psychologist and continues to work with clients through consulting and private practice.

Nancy's current research interests include professional education for cultural diversity and social justice, cross-cultural transitions, and career development. She has developed curriculum for both classroom and online delivery of courses on career development and multicultural counselling. She has been an active member of the Canadian Counselling

Association, serving as the President of the Career Development Chapter and an Associate Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Counselling*.

Nancy has published several books related to the topics of career development and multicultural counselling. The book, *Counseling International Students: Clients From Around the World*, examines the roles of counsellors for working with international students in higher education. Her co-edited book, with Dr. Sandra Collins, *Culture-Infused Counselling: Celebrating the Canadian Mosaic*, received the Canadian Counselling Association Book Award in 2006. Her book, *Case Incidents in Counselling for International Transitions*, co-edited with Dr. Pedersen, involved collaboration with authors from 12 countries. This book focuses on transition issues of international workers and students, immigrants and refugees, and military and peacekeeping personnel. Nancy has written extensively about professional education and practice issues regarding multicultural counselling, social justice, and career development.

**Sandra Collins**, Ph.D. R.Psych. (Alberta), is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Centre for Graduate Education in Applied Psychology at Athabasca University. She received her Masters and Doctoral degrees in Counselling Psychology from the University of Calgary. She began working for Athabasca University in 1998 and has been instrumental in the development of the university's graduate programs in Counselling Psychology. As part of her commitment to social justice and the mission of the university, she specializes in distributed delivery of graduate education to reduce barriers to education and professional development. The programs support students from rural areas, students with various forms of physical disability, women with multiple role demands, and mid-career practitioners who must balance work and learning. She is committed to making graduate education accessible in spite of geographic, cultural, and other system barriers.



Sandra's areas of research interest include cultural diversity, counselling women and lesbians, counsellor education and supervision, distributed and online learning, program planning and evaluation, and career development. One focus in her writing is the importance of culture in counselling and psychology. As a lesbian and hence a member of a non-dominant population in Canada, Sandra brings both personal and professional experiences to that writing. She also has a passion for creativity in the delivery of educational services and focuses much of her current writing and research in that area. She strives to promote the infusion of culture and social justice into all aspects of counsellor education.

Sandra is a chartered psychologist and has worked with a diverse range of clientele. She has been actively involved in both provincial and national counselling and psychology organizations. She has served on the board of directors and been president of the College of Alberta Psychologists, as well as a Director of the Canadian Career Development Foundation. She is currently the President of the Counsellors for Social Justice Chapter of the Canadian Counselling Association. Sandra is interested in the evolution of the professions of counselling and psychology in Canada and in the connection between shifts in the profession and the focus of university education. She is particularly interested in ensuring that the principles of social justice espoused for applied practice are effectively translated into the broader systems.

## Contributing Writers

We have been privileged in writing this book to have worked with a number of colleagues who have provided a wealth of expertise in both the broad understanding of multicultural counseling and the specific application of culture-infused counselling to particular non-dominant populations in Canada. We have simply listed the credentials and professional affiliations of these writers here since each has provided a personal introduction at the beginning of her or his chapter. We asked writers to describe in those introductory sections of each chapter who they are and how they have come to write about the particular chapter content. It is our hope that these personal introductions will provide a glimpse into the personal cultural identity of the writers and the worldviews from which they write. This knowledge should provide a frame of reference for integrating your learning. We respectfully acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals:

**Kevin Alderson**, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary. He is a registered psychologist and a member of the Canadian Psychological Association and the Canadian Society of Clinical Hypnosis, Alberta Division. He is the author of three books dealing with sexuality and two books focusing on self-hypnosis. Kevin is currently the Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Counselling*.

**Arthur Blue** is a retired professor of Native Studies at Brandon University. He was trained as a Clinical Psychologist and practiced at the Open Arrow Clinic. He was the first President of the Native Psychologists in Canada and Chairman of the Board of Editors for the *Journal of Canadian Native Studies*.

**Wes Darou** is Senior Risk Analyst at the Canadian International Development Agency. He holds a D.Ed. in educational counselling from McGill University and an MSc. in environmental engineering from the University of Waterloo. Dr. Darou has 25 years of experience in counselling, psychoeducation, and training. His other interests include vocational training in Africa, gender equality, and organizational counselling. Recent articles concern Ibrahima Sow's African personality model and violence against girls in southern African schools.

**Ivana Djuraskovic** is a doctoral student in the Division of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Education, University Calgary. She received a BA in Psychology and an MSc. in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary. She is currently working as a registered psychologist for Alberta Health Services. Ivana's research interests include acculturation and ethnic identity development, counselling immigrants and refugees, and multicultural counselling competencies.

**Monica Justin**, Ph.D., is an instructor, clinician, and trainer. She holds a Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology from McGill University and is a member of the Order of Quebec Psychologists. Her teaching, training, and research interests lie in the areas of multicultural counselling and diversity issues, ethnic women, ethnic and cultural identity, and biculturalism.

**Vivian Lalande**, Ph.D., is a consulting psychologist with interests including counselling women, career development and counselling, and program evaluation. She was formerly an Associate Professor in the Division of Applied Psychology at the University of Calgary and served as the Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Counselling*. She has worked in the mental health field for over 30 years, primarily in the area of post-secondary student counselling, and was awarded the Canadian Counselling Association Professional Contribution Award in 2008.

**Ann Laverty**, Ph.D., is a psychologist and Associate Director (Counselling) at the University of Calgary, SU Wellness Centre. Her practice focuses on individual and group counselling with areas of interest including counselling women, grief and bereavement, eating issues, and post-secondary student development. In addition to her counselling work, she is involved with supervision of practicum and internship students and applied research initiatives.

**Noorfarah Merali**, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor and the Coordinator/Director of the Counselling Psychology Graduate Program at the University of Alberta. She is a specialist in the areas of cross-cultural adjustment and immigrant and refugee mental health, and acts as a consultant to settlement agencies. She is a Registered Psychologist with the College of Alberta Psychologists and a member of the Canadian Psychological Association, American Psychological Association, and the Society for the Psychological Study

of Social Issues (International).

**Kathy Offet-Gartner**, Ph.D., is a Registered Psychologist (AB) with Student Counselling Services at Mount Royal College in Calgary. Her practice interests include cross-cultural counselling, surviving personal trauma, improving communication and relationships, and career-life planning through a feminist, strengths-based lens. Her research interests and publications focus on the lived experience related to these counselling concerns, especially as they relate to Aboriginal peoples. Kathy has presented at provincial and national conferences on these topics. She also teaches in a variety of graduate programs.

**Jane Oxenbury**, M.Ed., R.Psych. (Alberta) has a private practice in Calgary, Alberta, where she works with individuals, couples, and families, specializing in the areas of family violence, sexual abuse, depression, and anxiety. She works extensively with the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered communities, especially in the areas of same-sex domestic violence, the bullying and harassment of GLBT youth, and Gender Identity Disorder. She consults with and trains groups and professionals about the issues faced by this population and serves on many committees, working to increase knowledge and services for these communities.

**Jean Pettifor**, Ph.D., C.Psych. (Alberta), Past President of the Psychologists' Association of Alberta, the Canadian Psychological Association, and the College of Alberta Psychologists, and Adjunct Professor at the University of Calgary, has received many awards for her lifetime contributions to the profession of psychology. She has served in professional organizations as well as being a clinician, consultant, educator, and researcher. She continues to work provincially, nationally, and internationally to promote a value-based ethical decision-making model.

**Carlos Ruano** holds degrees in linguistics and history from the University of Ottawa and M.Sc. and Doctor of Education degrees in Sociology of Education from Georgia State University and the University of Toronto [OISE/UT]. His research centres around policy development, implementation, and assessment of learning processes in multicultural and multilingual societies, as well as the impact of administrative decision-making processes on students from bilingual and/or multicultural backgrounds. As an expert in international education, he has served as Senior Education Specialist and Program Manager with CIDA, ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank.

**John Stewart**, Ed.D., C.C.C., taught at the University of New Brunswick, in Fredericton, New Brunswick, as a professor of Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Education. He retired in December 2007, but continues to teach graduate courses in counselling part-time. He has also worked as a high school teacher and school counsellor and has provided consultancy services in Asia. His research interests involve the career decision-making process and the role of culture in mediating interpersonal behaviour. He is a certified member of the Canadian Counselling Association. In 2009, John completed a Master of Theological Studies with a focus on Spirituality, awarded by the Toronto School of Theology.

## Intended Audiences

We have received feedback from students and instructors across Canada who have used this book in graduate level counselling programs and undergraduate and college programs in other helping professions. This feedback has been extremely valuable in helping us to shape the direction of the second edition of this book. We continue to emphasize broad theoretical understanding of the role and importance of culture in professional practice and to target specific attitudes, knowledge, and skill development in working with particular non-dominant populations. However, we have placed more emphasis on multiple cultural identities to recognize the complexities through which many Canadians navigate the intersections of their identities across different contexts. We have also incorporated more writing about social justice as a foundation for culture-infused counselling.

Along with supporting preservice programs in counsellor education and as a resource for practicing counsellors, this book may be used as a foundation for professional development activities in organizations or professional associations. Many practitioners have told us that the book has been helpful in planning ways to enhance their competence for practice. This is encouraging, as we consider cultural competence to be something that is aspirational in nature, requiring ongoing learning and professional development.

## Awards

We are very pleased that our first edition of the book, *Culture-Infused Counselling: Celebrating the Canadian Mosaic* (2005) was awarded the Canadian Counselling Association 2006 Annual Book Award. It was rewarding to see our work acknowledged by our professional colleagues at the joint conferences of the Canadian Counselling Association and American Counselling Association held in Montreal.

## Organization of the Book

In this second edition of the book, we have left in foundation material and the classic sources that have informed our writing, teaching, research, and other professional practices. We have focused a major portion of the book on our expanded model of culture-infused counselling. Based on our experience in using the model in graduate education and training workshops, we have gained valuable feedback from students and practitioners. We continue to emphasize the importance of self-awareness and awareness of client cultural identities in the context of a culturally sensitive working alliance. However, we have enhanced our model with additional competencies related to social justice. This addition to our model shows our commitment to integrating social justice as a foundation for counselling practice. In this edition, we have also expanded our competency framework to help readers translate the concept of social justice to practical approaches in counselling. We invited our colleagues who contributed to the second edition to revisit their original chapters to decide what they wanted to include as foundational knowledge and to provide updates about current research and practice.

The book has been structured into four parts. Part I includes the first six chapters and focuses on the conceptual and theoretical foundations of culture-infused counselling. In Chapter 1 we begin by providing an overview of multiculturalism in Canada and defining our use of the key constructs that form a foundation for our approach to counselling. Chapter 2 provides a rationale for the infusion of culture into the practice of counselling and psychology. Chapter 3 then introduces our conceptual framework for culture-infused counselling competence, which is organized according to three core competence domains: (a) self-awareness of personal assumptions, values, and biases; (b) awareness of the cultural worldview of the client; and (c) development of a culturally sensitive working alliance. In chapters 3 through 5, we expand upon the core domains of competence, describing their unique features and their relationships in supporting cultural competence. The culture-infused model of counselling emphasizes the working alliance as the foundation for linking the first two competency domains to applied practice. Our purpose in these chapters is to address the *how to* of culture-infused counselling practice.

In Chapter 6, we expand our conceptual framework for infusing culture into professional practice by emphasizing social justice. We believe that it is critical for counsellors to work towards addressing the social conditions that lead to distress and towards making a positive difference in the lives of our clients. Whereas other writers have discussed social justice as an additional role of counsellors, we take the stand that social justice is a core value and responsibility for *all* counsellors. In Chapter 6, we introduce the process of cultural auditing as a form of reflective practice for working with *all* clients. The cultural auditing process demonstrates how the principles of culture-infused counselling connect with social justice in practice. These first six chapters form the theoretical foundation for all that follows in the book.

Part II of the book focuses on concepts and applications in counselling ethics, assessment, and research. Chapter 7 is devoted to exploring ethics and culture-infused counselling. Chapter 8 outlines some of the issues related specifically to assessment with client populations from diverse cultural backgrounds. Chapter 9 examines the process of conducting research across cultures. These chapters provide theoretical and practical information to support counsellors in applied practice and in research.

Part III focuses on culture-infused counselling with non-dominant populations in Canada. We introduce this section of the book with a chapter that addresses multiple and intersecting identities. This addition to the book positions our belief that clients cannot be defined solely by group membership. Counsellors require skills to assess worldview and the salience of various dimensions of culture considered by their clients as relevant for their presenting issues. Part of the challenge for us has been to honour the complexity of cultural identity while providing readers with content knowledge about common issues faced by many members of non-dominant populations in

Canada. It is impossible to do justice to the wide range of populations that forms part of the Canadian cultural mosaic. We have selected a number of areas of focus that we see as broad enough to enhance an overall understanding of approaching applied practice from a culture-infused perspective. At the same time we recognize the limitations of transferring culture-specific knowledge from one non-dominant group to another, and want to emphasize the importance of counsellors recognizing the heterogeneity of groups and need to assess individual identities. The contributions to these chapters by our Canadian colleagues illustrate the expertise required for becoming knowledgeable about working with specific populations, while honouring the core principles of culture-infused counselling.

The fourth and final section of the book contains our wrap-up chapter, in which we attempt to illuminate some of the potential implications of looking at counselling from a culture-infused perspective and to explore the future of culture-infused counselling in Canada. It is our hope that this final chapter will function both as a point of departure for your own continued professional development as a practitioner or student of counselling or psychology and as a guide for the profession in terms of future developments in research, practice, and education.

## **Acknowledgements**

We wish to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions of illustrative material for snapshots in some chapters of the book: Barbara Butchart, Pamela Dos Ramos, Carol McDonald, Marjorie McIntyre.

Both Athabasca University and the University of Calgary have played an important role in providing us with resources and time for academic writing and extensive library services that have facilitated our research.

The foundation for this book has developed from many sources of learning throughout our lives. In particular, countless students and clients have helped to shape our worldview and our views of professional practice.

We gratefully acknowledge Jennifer Lussier for her creativity, evidenced in our book cover design. We also wish to thank Jennifer Lussier for his visual design work on the book cover and the figures throughout the text, and Brenda Christians for copyediting,

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