Proposal for a Poster Presentation
Cross-Cultural Issues in Psychotherapy: An Ethical Perspective
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According to the US Census Bureau, ethnic minorities will become the majority of the US population in the next fifty years (Suinn & Borrayo, 2008). The level of importance of incorporating culture into psychology is rising as the demand to serve this quickly changing population grows. Even with the rapid population growth, the socio-cultural dynamics in our society today have not changed significantly. After the civil rights movement, racism only became more covert against ethnic groups. Sue, et al. (2007) described the current form of racism as microaggressions, "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group." This presentation will explore the impact of microaggressions on relationships in psychology in the context of professional ethics.

Cross-cultural issues are applicable to clients, clinicians, supervisors, supervisees, teachers and students. Professionals should always be aware of the complexities of a person's identity, avoiding the use of stereotypes and assumptions based off the external appearance. Assumptions are made as to what is "normal" behavior, ignoring potential differences in other cultures. The field has started to recognize the importance of including culture into practice rather than attempting to be "culture-free" or "culture-fair" (Federsen & Marsella, 1982). The APA guidelines provide principles for ethical practice and the Ethics Code provides enforceable standards that represent the importance of being culturally aware and knowledgeable.

Cultures change over time and often influence one another. Knapp and VandeCreek (2007) recommend working from a soft universalist perspective by maintaining a moral foundation but allowing different cultural values to influence the ethical decision making process. A review of current literature suggested a main approach to ethical practice by creating an awareness of cross-cultural issues, developing cultural sensitivity, and increasing multicultural competence in the hopes of bringing the field to meet the times.

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