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**From:** Fernando Gutierrez [drfjgutierrez@att.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 09, 2011 3:13 PM  
**To:** bopmail@DCA  
**Subject:** Need for Mandatory Multicultural Psychotherapy Training

Please Forward to Miguel Gallardo, D. Psy., Chair of Continuing Education Committee and to Chair, Board of Psychology

Dear Dr. Gallardo and Chair of the BOP:

I am writing to you to make you aware of the need of requiring Continuing Education for Psychologists and also requiring a course in multicultural counseling for all psychologists wishing to be licensed in the State of California. Presently, Licensed Professional Counselors, and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists are the only therapists required to have such a background, despite the fact that California is a majority minority state. Ironically, the two oldest branches of therapy, licensed psychologists and licensed clinical social workers are the only two branches without such requirements, making us dinosaurs in the field, as far as I'm concerned.

To illustrate the need for the requirements of continuing education and multicultural competency of newly licensed professionals I would like to share a recent experience that I had when I took a continuing education course:

On August 28, 2011 I attended a Law and Ethics for Mental Health Professionals workshop required for all mental health professionals every two years in the State of California. I taught this workshop at UC Berkeley for several years when I was in Northern California. The instructor, who shall remain nameless, is a professor at UC - who is a Ph.D., Psy.D. and ABPP. The workshop was sponsored by LAGPA, the Los Angeles Gay Psychotherapists Association. He is the author of many books on law and ethics, supervision, sexual conduct by psychotherapists, etc., and I recently found out that he also teaches the multicultural counseling course at his university!

The workshop started OK with multicultural images on the Power Point Screen. There was also a variety of ethnic music. But then when it came to the actual presentation, the instructor stated: "They have asked us to include diversity issues in the workshop but I don't know how you can do diversity in a Law and Ethics workshop so this is [my attempt]". He then proceeded to present a cartoon like children's book story about Cesar Chavez, which actually elicited some chuckles in the audience. This thing went on for several minutes and I was getting more and more offended as it went along because of the child-like treatment of a very adult subject. I almost walked out of the lecture at least for this portion of it. At the end of the story a therapist in the audience yells out: "Viva La Huelga" and everyone laughed. I went up to her at lunch to see her name tag to see if she was Hispanic and she turned out to be Irish. The instructor mentioned that he has this children's book in his waiting room.

My first thought about the Cesar Chavez book in the waiting room was : "What does he know what to do with the Hispanic client once the client leaves the waiting room and enters his office for therapy?" If he doesn't know the issues of law and ethics for minorities, what business does he have trying to address their issues?

This presentation was followed by a second presentation after lunch on Diversity. This time it

was a children's book story of two Penguins named Tango and Silo. The moral of the story was acceptance of uniqueness in others.

Ethical issues he could have addressed were competency of the counselor to address minority issues. Other issues would be language proficiency of the counselor when counseling a Spanish-speaking client ( I worry when a therapist tells me that s/he can understand 70% of what the client is saying- what about the other 30%?). Another would be knowledge of the culture and its limitations on the diagnosis of the client. Another issue would be appropriateness of tests selected to evaluate minority clients. Another would be knowledge of the therapist in assisting the LGBT client in incorporating his/her sexual orientation or gender identity into his/her ethnic culture and family.

In 1991 I was the CE coordinator for Div. 44 for the 100th anniversary celebration of APA so I invited Betty Berzon, a famous LGBT couples' therapist to be the keynote for Div.44's celebration. The White-Anglo President of the Texas Family Psychologists' Association presented a case for her to consult on of an interracial gay male couple where one of the partners was Mexican . Her conclusion was that the Mexican member of the couple wasn't "ready for therapy". I intervened and gave my take on the case and put it in the cultural context. One of the issues was that the Mexican spouse was sending money to Mexico to his parents and his White-Anglo partner was resentful of what he saw as dependency on the Mexican spouse's parents' side. When I explained the culture to the therapist he was able to put what I said in context for his clients and several people came up to me afterward (including the Texas President) and complimented me on the way that I handled the consult.

You are in a better position than I am to continue the cause toward multicultural competency so I wanted to share this anecdote to show that even in 2012 we are still dealing with this as an issue. In CA we have to take mandatory continuing education on domestic violence, elder long-term care, and chemical dependency issues. I think it is time for there to be mandatory multicultural competency training.

It is now almost 2012 and I think professionals need to go beyond saying a couple of words in Spanish, serving Tacos and Burritos, playing mariachi music, and feeling as if you have met the standard and requisite for multiculturalism.

It seems as if the instructor violated his own "Psychotherapist's Litany for the New Millenium" #5: "We must know and utilize expert consultants". If he was unsure as to how to cover diversity in a law and ethics course, perhaps he needed to reach out to the colleagues he knew who might have been able to assist him with these issues in the same way that he would reach out to a colleague to address a supervision issue, just as I reached out to him before this workshop to request that he cover the issue of how to handle a request by the client to view a copy of a psychological evaluation made on his/her behalf. As he was able to see from my signature when I first contacted him, I am not only a psychologist but an attorney by background.

Dr. X comes from a psychoanalytic framework. He frames the "complainant's" personality as having "deep and destructive pockets of psychotic terror and rage [which] may later be unexpectedly opened and aimed at you". I would like to propose that the professor's treatment of diversity in such an elementary school fashion is a form of regression in which a person retreats to an earlier level because of fear in order to reduce anxiety. In this way the individual can address the subject matter in a way that doesn't threaten him. The complainant may just be reacting to the presenter's own inadequacies and it has nothing to do with the audience member's psychotic terror...

As educators and trainers, we must address all client needs not just those of those who can afford to go to therapists. California is a majority minority state. It is time to give our needs the same attention as the minority of those who are chemically dependent, victims of domestic violence and the elderly. The case I just presented to you is a perfect example of how even a renowned, well-trained and professionally

validated therapist can still be lacking knowledge and skills in addressing issues, which, by his own admission, he attempts to address by inviting ethnic minorities into his practice and providing children's books to communicate "sensitivity" to our issues. My question is; at what millenium will this happen?

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