Consciousness Raising Seminar Series on DEI for OTD Students

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Introduction

Background: In light of the horrific racist events in the summer of 2020, the UF Department of Occupational Therapy resolved to become an agent of change. One focus was to raise cultural awareness in our Occupational Therapy Doctoral (OTD) students, including the concepts of dominant culture and systemic racism.

Dr. Orit Shechtman developed a series of four weekly consciousness raising seminars. The seminars focused on personal-growth and self-awareness in the areas of social justice and cultural humility, based on the rationale that personal growth precedes professional growth. The seminars were introduced in the course OT6209 Professional Development, taught by Dr. Christine Myers, in Fall semester of 2020 and conducted on Zoom.

Students prepared for class by reviewing pre-assigned readings, podcasts, and videos. In addition, students took three Implicit Association (Implicit Bias) Tests.

Unit 1: Cultural Awareness and Knowledge

Topics:
1. What is culture?
   a. Definitions of culture
   b. Levels of culture (regional, institutional, professional)
   c. Models of culture (iceberg, onion)
   d. Manifestations of culture (rituals, symbols, heroes, values)
   e. Culture agreed on list (learned, shared, invisible, drives values)
2. Identifying your own culture: discovering your multicultural identities – intersectionality
3. Identifying dominant culture
4. Comparing your culture to dominant culture

Unit 2: Human Differences that Influence Culture

Topics:
1. Characterizing human differences that affect culture

Unit 3: Privilege, Bias, Prejudice and Oppression

Topics:
1. Defining privilege and identifying your own
2. Identifying bias
   a. Implicit versus explicit bias
3. Distinguishing various forms of oppression
   a. Generalization, myth, stereotype and Xenophobia
   b. Prejudice and discrimination
   c. Macro- and micro-aggressions
   d. Hate crimes

Unit 4: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion; Cultural Humility

Topics:
1. Defining diversity, equality, equity, inclusion, and allyship
2. Defining cultural sensitivity, proficiency, competence, and humility
3. Understanding the life-long learning process of developing cultural humility

A survey regarding the benefits of this series was completed by 22 of 60 students, with 21 positive responses to the question: “Did you find the Diversity Series valuable? Why or why not?”