



# MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON SUPERVISION

Ana Cox presentation at Metanoia, June 2016

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE POWER



# POWER



- Power imbalances in society inevitably play out in professional relationships including supervisor/supervisee and supervisee/client (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2012)
- Power dynamic is inevitable in every supervisory relationship.
- Inherent power/authority + power dynamics resulting from difference & pre-transference = asymmetry of the supervisory relationship (Page & Wosket, 2015)

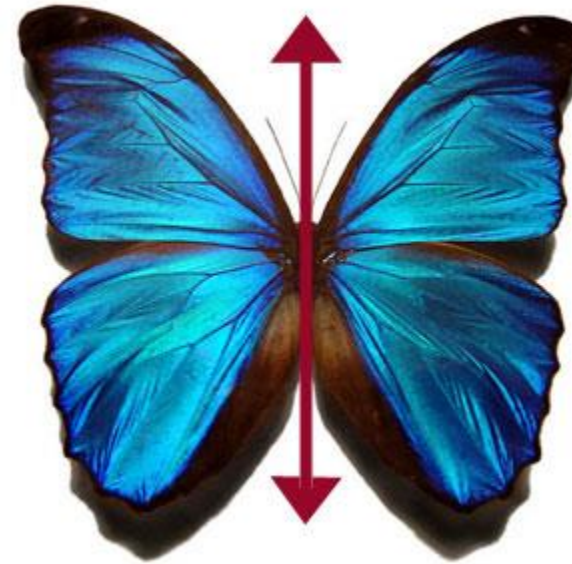


# POWER

## Ways to address power asymmetry:

- Making asymmetry explicit
- Shared responsibilities:
  - Acknowledge and consider difference
  - Asking questions
  - Self-disclosure
- Be open to direct conversations re:
  - Addressing diversity
  - Addressing conflict

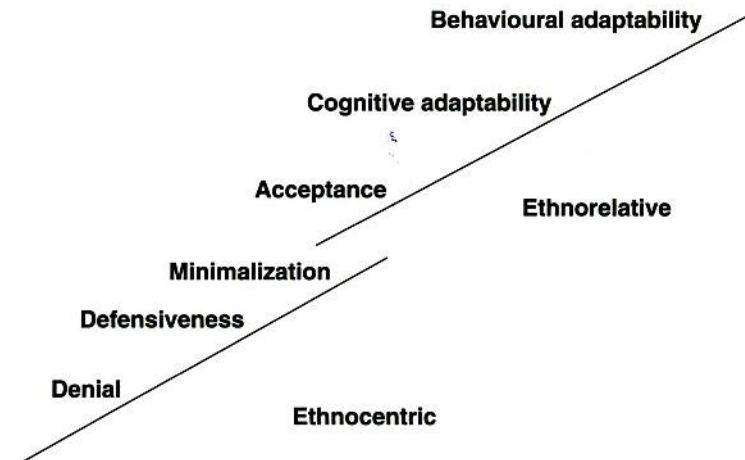
(Page & Wosket, 2015)



# WORKING WITH DIFFERENCE

(Hawkins & Shoet, 2012)

- Weerdenburg: Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity
- The more we can understand the ways in which the world looks different through different cultural lenses, the more able we are to work well across cultures



**Figure 8.2** From ethnocentric to ethnorelative

Source: Van Weerdenburg (1996)

# WORKING WITH DIFFERENCE

(Rapp, 2000)

- Awareness of power relationship:
  - Race
  - Ethnic group
  - Cultural backgrounds
  - Classes
  - Genders
  - Sexual orientations
  - Levels of ability



# WORKING WITH DIFFERENCE

(Rapp, 2000)



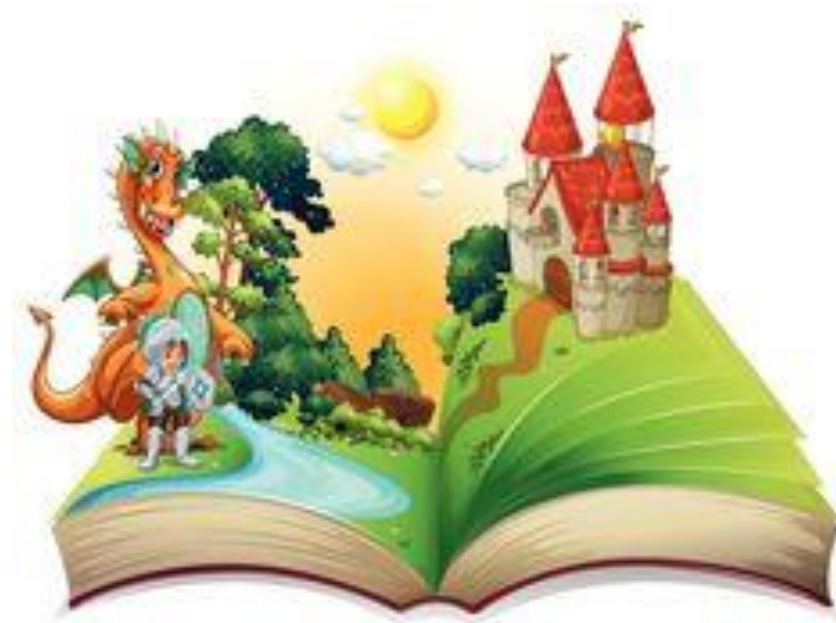
**ASSUME  
NOTHING**

- Difference within cultures is as important as differences between cultures
- Do not presume what is important to people but ask them
- Would be wise to assume as little as possible about another individual's very personal understanding of themselves and their world
- Need to develop a sound awareness of our own assumptions and prejudices

# WORKING WITH DIFFERENCE

(Rapp, 2000)

- Counselling and supervision is centrally concerned with being open to experience
- In supervision we invite trust and encourage people to show their limitations
- Supervisors should model how to encourage the other person to tell us what we need to know in order for us to be helpful



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# AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH



# APPRECIATIVE ENQUIRY

González (1997)



- Telling it like it is
- Telling it as it may become
- Invitation to see anew
- Facilitate learning of new knowledge
- Create scenarios of future actions
- Overcome areas of rigidity

# SUPERVISOR AS PARTIAL LEARNER

González (1997)



- Informed uncertainty
  - Allows for innovation and re-substantiation
- Genuine learning from supervisees without pretending that power differentials do not exist
- Balance of acquired wisdom of supervisor with attitude of respectful enquiry
- Acknowledgement that the supervisor will also be learning about the culture and background of the supervisee and their clients

# SUPERVISOR AS PARTIAL LEARNER

González (1997)



- Supervisor does not deny her expertise
- Supervisor as teacher in response for direction
- Feigning clinical naiveté
  - Disengage
  - Undermines
  - Hinders collaboration



# SUPERVISOR AS PARTIAL LEARNER

González (1997)



When there is equal participation

- Full participation
- Full engagement
- No onus to be an oracle
- No masquerade that one is in one-down position
- Supervisee does not have to pretend to buy into a socially constructed reality that contradicts their personally constructed clinical reality

# REFERENCES – Q&A

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