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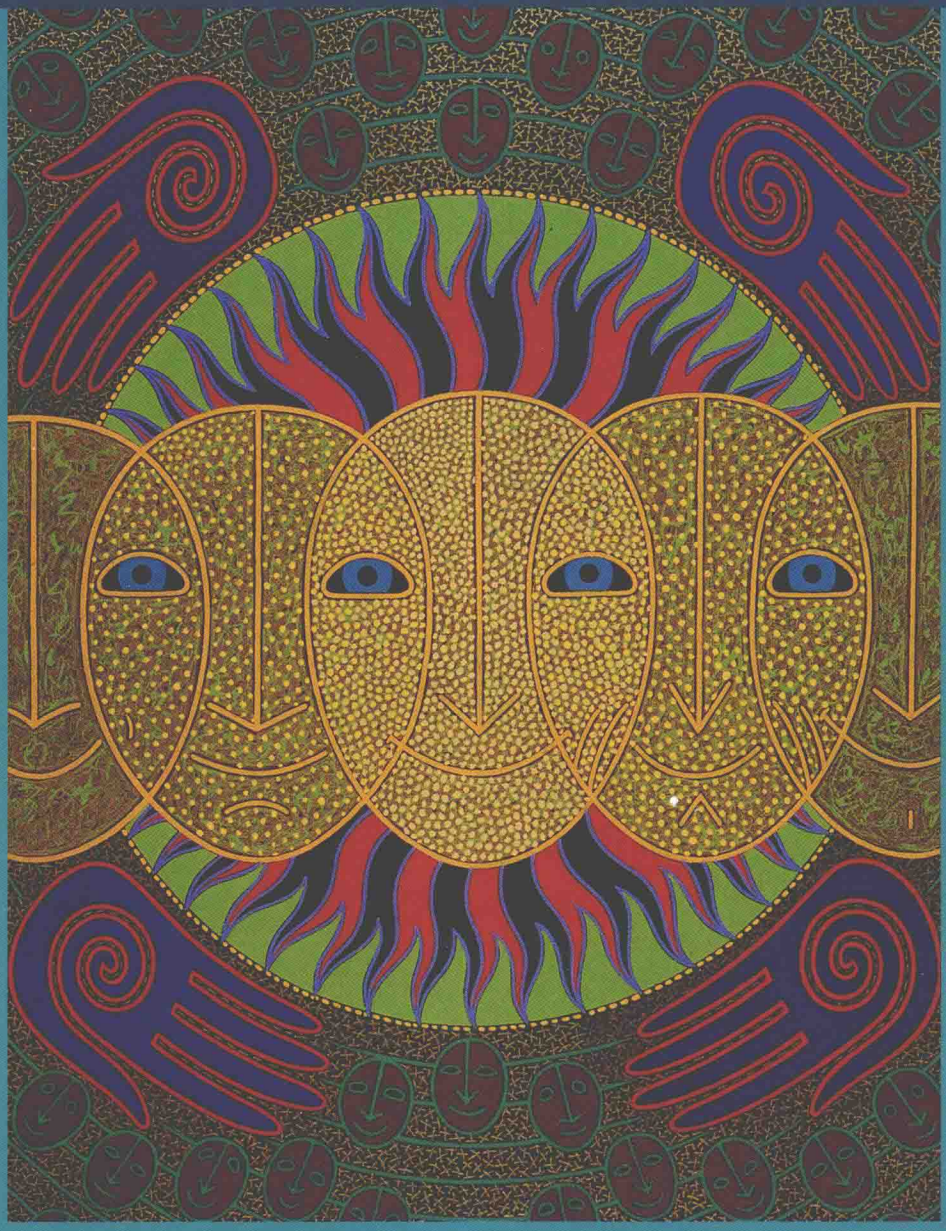

A *Framework for Growth and Action*

DOMAN LUM

CULTURALLY COMPETENT PRACTICE

A *Framework for Growth and Action*

DOMAN LUM

California State University–Sacramento

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CULTURALLY COMPETENT PRACTICE

A *Framework for Growth and Action*

To the persons and groups who have influenced the development of this book:

Herbert Aptekar and Herman Stein,
who brought me into social work education

The Cultural Diversity Committee of the Board of Directors, Council on Social Work Education,
who are advocates of cultural competency programs

The multicultural counseling psychology movement leaders,
who are pioneers in cultural competency publications,

and

My wife, Joyce, and children: Lori, Jonathan, Amy, and Matthew Lum

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Foreword

This timely text represents the culmination of serious dialogues, curriculum workshops, classroom instruction, and extensive research on multiculturalism. In particular, it provides the reader with a solid framework for the development and measurement of cultural competency in social work practice with people of color. The essential components of culturally competent social work practice include cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and inductive learning.

With respect to cultural awareness, it is posited that before cultural sensitivity and ultimately cultural competence can develop, there must be cultural awareness. This awareness must take place in an environment of trust and openness—as in a classroom.

Outside the classroom on the national policy level, President Clinton introduced the "Initiative on Race," which calls for a series of "Dialogues on Race." The goal of these dialogues or cultural awareness sessions is to find the mutual understanding that can somehow lead to a stronger sense of community. The assumption here, which I believe is a good one, is that you care more about neighbors you understand than about strangers who you perceive to be different. True cultural awareness, like successful dialogue, must include opportunities for exchange and interaction with persons with different backgrounds and ideologies. Regardless of background, it is imperative that all persons—whether they are students, practitioners, educators, or community representatives—be responsible, honest, and willing to search for the kernel of truth or validity in what the other side is saying or doing.

Although nationwide surveys have documented significant declines in whites' overt racism toward blacks, substantial differences persist in the social, economic, and physical well-being of blacks and whites. Blacks continue to report greater distrust of government and other people than do whites. Similar empirical data for other minority groups suggest that race remains a critical issue in our society. Further case examples can be seen in the experiences of golfer Tiger Woods, who, despite his accomplishments, still bears the brunt of a racial joke; and former

Virginia governor, L. Douglas Wilder, who, despite his achievement as the first black elected governor since Reconstruction, was harassed by airport security guards.

If we as social work educators are serious about preparing our students to become culturally competent in this increasingly multicultural world, we must have our own dialogue in a race or cultural awareness session. The time is now right for social work practice and social work education to address the racial divide. Without such a dialogue to "clear the air" in the profession and clarify the issues and perspectives on how race matters, we will miseducate even those students with the highest level of aptitude and commitment.

It is no secret that our country is becoming increasingly more multicultural and diverse. While it must be acknowledged that the ethnic groups from European countries have contributed to the diversity in America and that such groups were often met with hostility and discrimination upon immigration, the focus of this text is on people of color. While each cultural group, whether a white European ethnic group or a racial minority, had imposed upon it the dominant group's culture (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) in the forms of the English language, religious values, work ethic, and music and art, people of color have had the additional burden of racism undergirding discrimination. Some, such as those who were brought to this country from Africa against their will, were slow to acculturate because families were split and human rights were denied due to slavery and servitude. However, each group, despite its voluntary or involuntary departure from its homeland, contributes to the richness of the multicultural fabric of our society.

The Nondiscrimination and Human Diversity Evaluative Standard of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) clearly states that: "The program must make specific, continuous efforts to provide a learning context in which understanding and respect for diversity (including age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation) are practiced.

Culturally Competent Practice undoubtedly addresses the Council standard on nondiscrimination and human diversity by solidly equipping students with the awareness, knowledge, skills, and inductive learning to practice in a culturally competent manner on both the generalist and advanced levels. As we move into the next millennium, cultural sensitivity without cultural competency in practice with people of color is doomed to failure. An understanding and utilization of the components of Lum's framework and accompanying behavioral assessment will prepare the practitioner for work in a multicultural America as well as the global marketplace that will increasingly become commonplace in the next millennium.

Moses Newsome, Jr., Ph.D.
President, Council on Social Work Education, and Dean,
The Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work, Norfolk, VA

Preface

As we begin the 21st century it is fitting for culturally diverse social work practice to begin a new chapter in its development. Cultural competency is an important innovation in social work practice with people of color. The new and emerging field of multicultural social work seeks to craft cultural abilities with clients and measure behavioral learning outcomes. The development of cultural competency begins with multicultural counseling psychology, which developed a competency framework and a system of competencies or performance characteristics during the early nineties. This book helps the social work student to understand the pioneering multicultural counseling competency literature and to build from this foundation a culturally competent perspective on social work.

I have sought to break new ground in cultural competency in this text. It has not been an easy task, as I have found myself piecing together various strands of cultural competency mentioned by a few social work educators and practitioners. The seed for this book was planted when I taught a social work curriculum workshop on cultural competency with my good friend and colleague Yuhwa Eva Lu, an associate professor of social work at New York University. We prepared a paper on cultural competency that covered basic concepts, a framework model, and research trends in this new field. At the 1997 Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting in Chicago, we met with 50 curious and enthusiastic participants who asked many questions about cultural competency an eagerly interacted with us during our presentation. They were excited about teaching cultural competency to their students.

As a result of this wonderful peak experience in March 1997, I spent the next months working day and night to turn the framework presented in Chicago into a manuscript on culturally competent practice. It reminded me of my work in the early eighties when I was writing *Social Work Practice and People of Color* with a minimum of material to draw on and a maximum of creativity required. However, with contributions from V. Eva Lu of New York University and Andrew Bein of California State University, Sacramento, I put together a working draft of this book. Then during the fall 1997 semester, students in my multicultural

social work classes read chapters and reacted to several of the exercises, which gave me a positive sense of how students might respond to this material.

I have entitled the text *Culturally Competent Practice: A Framework for Growth and Action.* The culturally competent practice (CCP) model is a framework for understanding, measuring, and evaluating cultural competency in the social work student's learning. The text places cultural competency in the context of outcome measurement and practice performance. I hope that students will discuss and debate what the appropriate cultural competencies are and how these competencies are measured to ensure outcome effectiveness. Moreover, there is room for formulating some basic definitions from the student perspective. The social work cultural competencies framework helps the student to conceptualize a structural model that addresses the unique areas of social work competency. I also was aware of the different learning needs of BSW and MSW degree students and sought to address these needs in the generalist and advanced levels of the framework.

At the Chicago Annual Program Meeting, my colleague, Rowena Fong from the University of Hawaii mentioned to me the need for an instrument to measure cultural competency. I saw the strategic importance of this and designed a 44-item cultural competency instrument using a Likert-type scale. At the beginning and end of the semester, students are asked to take a pretest and a posttest of the social work cultural competency instrument to determine and compare their levels of cultural competency before and after the course. Janet B. W. Williams of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, Department of Psychiatry and Neurology, helped me with the revision of this instrument. Phyllis N. Black of Marywood College School of Social Welfare gave helpful feedback on the instrument and on a sample chapter of the book. I am grateful to these colleagues.

This text builds on my earlier book, *Social Work Practice and People of Color: A Process-Stage Approach* as a companion text. Running throughout both books is a case study that views the Hernandez family through the lens of generalist and advanced practice. This case follows the social worker as he or she masters the knowledge and skills necessary to lead the clients through the process stages (contact, problem identification, assessment, intervention, and termination) and develops cultural competency (cultural awareness, knowledge theory, skill development, and inductive learning).

Along with the Hernandez family case study are special sections throughout the text entitled "Tools for Student Learning." These sections are strategically placed to assist the reader in the development of cultural competency and are springboards for small group discussion in the classroom. In many instances there are questionnaires designed to help the student with the application of concepts in his or her personal and professional lives.

I want to thank Larry Ortiz, professor of social work and program director at Westchester University, who invited me to give the workshop on cultural competency in Chicago and started me on the road to writing this book; Moses Newsome, president of the Council on Social Work Education and dean of the

Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work, Norfolk State University; and the manuscript reviewers: Sally Alonzo Bell, Azusa Pacific University; Linda F. Crowell, University of Akron; Emelicia Mizio, Indiana Sate University; Janice Matthews Rasheed, Loyola University of Chicago; and Maria E. Zuniga, San Diego State University. Special thanks are due to Lisa Gebo, social work editor of Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, who recognized the importance of this book and offered valuable suggestions for improvement; and to the staff at Brooks/Cole: Marjorie Sanders, production editor; Roy Neuhaus, design editor; Jennifer Mackres, art coordinator; May Clark, permissions editor; Donna Shore, advertising coordinator; and Steve Catalano, marketing manager.

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CHAPTER ONE

Culturally Competent Practice

This chapter begins by discussing the meaning of culture and cultural competency, traces the development of multicultural social work, raises questions about cultural competency, and ends with an exploration of beliefs about cultural competency. It has one Tool for Student Learning: a self-assessment instrument.

This book is an introduction to cultural competency that explores how to become a culturally effective social worker in the 21st century. It is a guide to and a resource for culturally competent social work practice with clients of color. The emphasis is not so much on how to be culturally competent with clients; that outcome will occur in the course of working with culturally diverse people. Rather, the starting point is your self-development in learning the areas of cultural competency, which will eventually make for client effectiveness.

This text defines major terms and themes of cultural competency, constructs a social work cultural competencies framework, and focuses on cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and inductive learning as important tools of cultural competency. Interspersed in the various chapters are Tools for Student Learning, which are exercises around the important themes of the book, and a continuous case study of the Hernandez family, which illustrates how to apply cultural competency in dealings with the client. I hope these materials will help you in continuous cultivation of cultural competency.

At the same time it is crucial to blend in an understanding of how our experiences shape our interactions with other populations, particularly African, Latino, Asian, and Native American, and how as practitioners we need to accept other experiences. This is the true mark of cultural competency on our part as social workers. It is our goal to learn the competency areas of cultural awareness, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and inductive learning so that we can understand ourselves as cultural individuals and experience our own sense of cultural competency. In turn we can accept clients as cultural people, increase our understanding of their cultural perspectives, and affirm cultural competency in their lives.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the concept of cultural compe-

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