



**307:  
Parenting Styles:  
A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

**A Training Outline**

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**For the  
Pennsylvania Child Welfare  
Training Program**

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## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Agenda for 6-Hour Curriculum on Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

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SECTION I 40 minutes	INTRODUCTION A. Preliminaries B. <i>Diversity Works</i>	5
SECTION II 80 minutes	FAMILIES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS A. Defining Family and its Functions B. Single Parenting C. Gay and Lesbian Parents D. Religious Beliefs and Parenting Styles 1. Amish Beliefs	9
SECTION III 18 50 minutes	CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES A. Parenting Practices B. Affects on the Child's Well-Being C. Cultural Practices and the Risk of Harm to Children	
SECTION IV 24 120 minutes	PARENTING BELIEFS AND PRACTICES A. Common Characteristics of Families of Color B. African American C. Hispanic D. Asian American E. Native American	
SECTION V 30 minutes	CULTURALLY COMPETENT PRACTICE A. Guidelines for Information Gathering B. Guidelines for Effective Interaction	39
SECTION VI 20 minutes	CLOSURE A. Applying Our Learning B. Evaluation C. Closing	44

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **An Overview of the Curriculum**

### **Rationale:**

The Competency-Based Training Program offers workshops on parenting skills and related topics. The main focus of the workshops is to increase the knowledge, skills, and values of training participants in the area of parenting. Within child welfare practice, various quality standards of practice are emphasized. Among them are the production of family focused assessments, the recognition of assessment as a basis for planning, collaboration with the family, and the consideration of culture.

Child Welfare Professionals must be culturally competent and culturally sensitive. When conducting assessments and developing and delivering services, staff must consider cultural issues including the family's primary language, strengths, social networks, parenting styles, and beliefs. These factors must be utilized in the analysis of the assessment and in service development and delivery.

Parenting is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviors that work individually and together to influence child outcomes. Although specific parenting behaviors may influence child development, looking at specific behaviors in isolation may be misleading. To fully understand the meaning of a behavior, we must understand how it refers to underlying values. While cultures hold many common values, different cultures may attribute widely different meanings to the same overt behaviors. Any cultural trait must be measured by its efficacy within a specific cultural context.

In order to work effectively in cross-cultural situations, child welfare professionals require the knowledge, skills, and values to understand the parenting beliefs and styles of various populations and assess how these beliefs and practices affect the well-being of the child.

### **Competency:**

307-1 The Child Welfare Professional understands the multicultural norms, values, traditions, and child rearing practices of ethnic and cultural groups served by the Child Welfare Agency.

### **Learning Objectives:**

Learning objectives for the curriculum include:

- ✓ Describe the parenting beliefs and styles of various populations.
- ✓ Assess how the family's cultural beliefs and parenting practices affect the well-being of the child.

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## **Curriculum Overview (Continued)**

### **Length of Workshop:**

6 hours

### **Materials:**

- ✓ Color markers
- ✓ Name tents
- ✓ Sentence strips (optional)
- ✓ Various colors of construction or other similar paper
- ✓ Multicultural crayons and/or markers (optional)
- ✓ *Diversity Works* cards
- ✓ Overhead projector and screen
- ✓ TV/VCR
- ✓ Easel stand
- ✓ Blank easel pad
- ✓ Curriculum with transparencies
- ✓ Handouts for participants
- ✓ Booklet for participants
- ✓ Video: *Diversity: Contrasting Perspectives*

### **Target Audience:**

Child Welfare Caseworkers, Supervisors, Managers, Administrators, and Paraprofessionals. Prerequisite: Caseworker CORE 108, Valuing Diversity, or Supervisory CORE 543, Managing Diversity.

### **Summary:**

There are wide differences among cultures in child-rearing practices. Child Welfare Professionals must know how to assess and interpret a family's parenting style within the context of the family's culture and identify the cultural factors that should be used to develop and deliver services. This workshop will offer the opportunity to explore one's personal parenting beliefs and increase skills in working cross-culturally. Discussion will focus on the parenting styles of African Americans, Hispanics, various religious groups, and single parents. Some parenting styles of Asian Americans, Native Americans, gay men, and lesbians will also be included.

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## **Curriculum Overview (Continued)**

### **Expectations of the Trainer:**

The effective trainer of human diversity issues should have at least an intermediate degree of skill in several areas:

- **Self-knowledge.** Competent trainers should understand how one's personal beliefs and values may affect others, exhibit comfort with self when communicating about human diversity, and be open to and encourage other perspectives, questions, and norms.
- **Leadership.** Competent trainers should take responsibility for championing human diversity and demonstrate commitment and support for diversity initiatives.
- **Subject-Matter Expertise.** Competent trainers should understand the issues and goals of exploring the parenting beliefs and styles of various populations and the implications on the success of child welfare services.
- **Group Facilitation Skills.** Competent trainers should know how to communicate the exchange of ideas and learnings in an organized, effective manner. Adult learning principles should be followed and an environment created to ensure safety, inclusion, and the meaningful exchange of ideas.

Trainers should be trained specifically to lead human diversity training. Preferably, trainers should have experience in conducting human diversity trainings. Participation in or familiarity with CORE 108, Valuing Diversity, and CORE 543, Managing Diversity, is recommended.

Trainers should have experience in conducting training workshops and have knowledge about the PA Child Welfare Competency-Based Training and Certification Program. They should be knowledgeable and skilled in issues and concepts of child welfare practice, parenting styles, and human diversity.

### **NOTE:**

A group convened to discuss the parameters of this course determined that emphasis should be placed on the parenting styles of African Americans, Hispanics, religious groups, including Amish and Mennonite, and single parents. Included at a lower level are the parenting styles of Asian Americans, Native Americans, and gays/lesbians/bisexuals.

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## **Section I. Introduction**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

40 minutes

### **Learning Objectives:**

- ✓ Outline the workshop, including the rationale, competency, learning objectives, and agenda.
- ✓ Become familiar with other participants.
- ✓ List participant training needs.
- ✓ Recognize various cultural practices.

### **Methods of Presentation:**

Lecture and small and large group activity

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Name tents and color markers
- ✓ Blank flip chart sheets or sentence strips
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ About five sets of *Diversity Works* cards
- ✓ Small prizes (optional)
- ✓ **Overhead #1: Agenda**
- ✓ **Overhead #2: Competency**
- ✓ **Overhead #3: Learning Objectives**
- ✓ **Overhead #4: Workshop Guidelines**
- ✓ **Handout #1: Agenda, Competency, and Learning Objectives**

### **Resources:**

- ✓ Cultural Concepts

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## **Section 1. Introduction**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

Prepare the training room by placing name tents, markers, and either one sheet of flip chart paper or several sentence strips on each table. Arrange seating for four to six participants at separate tables. The trainer then covers the following points:

- ✓ Welcome participants to the training.
- ✓ Review the rules of the training program.
- ✓ Introduce trainer.
- ✓ State the rationale of the training.
- ✓ Distribute **Handout #1: Agenda, Competency, and Learning Objectives**.
- ✓ Review the agenda and timetable for the training using **Overhead #1: Agenda**.
- ✓ Review the competency using **Overhead #2: Competency**.
- ✓ Review the learning objectives using **Overhead #3: Learning Objectives**.
- ✓ Review the workshop guidelines using **Overhead #4: Workshop Guidelines**.
- ✓ Ask participants to construct name tents and identify learning needs.
- ✓ Conduct an icebreaker activity using *Diversity Works* cards.

### **Step 1:**

The trainer welcomes participants to the training and reviews the rules of the training program, i.e. 15-minute rule, sign-in sheet, and evaluation.

### **Step 2:**

Trainer distributes **Handout #1: Agenda, Competency, and Learning Objectives**. Trainer introduces self and reviews the rationale, agenda, using **Transparency #1: Agenda**, timetable, competency, using **Overhead #2: Competency**, and learning objectives, using **Overhead #3: Learning Objectives**.

### **Step 3:**

The trainer sets the tone for the remainder of the training by reviewing the workshop guidelines using **Overhead #4: Workshop Guidelines**. It is preferable to post the guidelines on a flip chart or poster for display throughout the day as a reminder to participants.

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## **Section 1. Introduction (continued)**

### **Step 4:**

The trainer instructs each participant to make a name tent using either construction paper, index cards or other paper provided. Instruct participants to write their first name in the center of their name tent with a marker. The trainer may wish to have participants add other information in the corners of their name tent such as county in which they work, position, number of years of experience in child welfare, a drawing of some aspect of their cultural heritage, etc. Instruct participants to note on the back of the name tent what they most want or need to know about the parenting styles of various cultures to help them do their jobs better. Ask participants to stand their name tents on the table in front of them.

### **Step 5:**

The trainer asks participants to share introductory information from their name tent with the others seated at their table. Ask each group to complete a list of their priority needs and wants and note them on a sheet of flip chart paper or on individual sentence strips. The sheets or strips are hung on the walls of the training room. The trainer reviews the desired outcomes and uses the lists to emphasize information throughout the training day by referring back to the lists of wants and needs.

### **Step 6:**

In advance, the trainer prepares each set of *Diversity Works* cards by selecting the cards to be used for the activity. The cards that are more relevant to the topic are: 1, 4, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 52, 53, 54, 58, 60, 80, 83, 84, 89, 90, 91, 105, 132, 158, 160, 167, 169, 170, 176, 191, 192, 195, 218, 220, 237, 238, 240, 242, 245, 269, 270, 275, 276, 281, 282, 289, 283, and 285.

The trainer asks for volunteers from among participants in a number to equal the number of small groups. The trainer then sets up small groups of about four to five persons each with those that remain. The trainer assigns one volunteer to each small group. Each volunteer is given a set of the select *Diversity Works* cards. The trainer tells them that their job is to read the questions on the cards and determine correct and incorrect answers.

The trainer tells participants that they will play *Diversity Works* by working together as a small group to answer questions correctly and spell the word "DIVERSITY." A group member selects a card and presents it to the assigned volunteer to read. The group determines the answer to the question. If the answer is correct, the letter side of the card is placed up in the center of the table. If the question is not answered correctly, the card is placed in a discard pile and another card is chosen. The trainer tells participants that there are several wild cards in the deck that may be used as any letter.

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### **Section 1. Introduction (continued)**

The game ends when a small group spells the word "DIVERSITY" with the cards. The trainer tells participants that if none of the groups have completed the word in 10 minutes, the game will be suspended and the group with the most points wins. The trainer may wish to award small prizes to the winning group and the volunteers.

The trainer ends Section I by conducting a large group discussion about new things that were learned about other cultures during the card game that may be helpful in child welfare practice.

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## **Section II. Families and Their Functions**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

80 minutes

### **Learning Objectives:**

- ✓ Identify one's own parenting beliefs.
- ✓ Recognize how one's own culture, background, and upbringing impacts parenting.
- ✓ Define family in a culturally appropriate manner.
- ✓ Outline the major functions of families for children.
- ✓ Examine the myth of the traditional family.
- ✓ Describe parenting by single parents.
- ✓ Describe parenting by gay men and lesbians.
- ✓ Describe parenting beliefs and styles of the Amish.

### **Methods of Presentation:**

Lecture and individual, small, and large group activity

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Color markers
- ✓ Blank flip chart sheets
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ **Overhead #5: Definition of Family**
- ✓ **Overhead #6: Family Functions**
- ✓ **Overhead #7: Single-Parent Family**
- ✓ **Overhead #8: Issues to be Aware of When Working with Single Parent Families**
- ✓ **Overhead#9: Issues to be Aware of When Working with Gay and Lesbian Parents**
- ✓ **Overhead #10: Issues to be Aware of When Working with Amish Children**
- ✓ **Handout #2: Defining Family and Its Functions**
- ✓ **Handout #3: Gay and Lesbian Parents: Myths and Facts**
- ✓ **Handout #4: Gay and Lesbian Parents: The Realities**

### **Resources:**

- ✓ *Cultural Competence Train-the-Trainers Manual*
- ✓ *Child Welfare and Family Services*
- ✓ *Parenting in Contemporary Society*
- ✓ *Diversity Manual for Trainers*
- ✓ *Press-Enterprise*
- ✓ *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*

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## **Section II. Families and Their Functions**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer discusses and conducts individual, small, and large group activities regarding participants' families and their parenting beliefs, defines family and its functions, and describes the parenting beliefs of single parents, the Amish, and gay men and lesbians.

- ✓ Conduct an individual and small group activity regarding family and parenting beliefs and their origins.
- ✓ Indicate the importance of involving families in every aspect of planning and delivering services.
- ✓ Conduct a small group activity to define family and the major functions of the family.
- ✓ Examine the myth of the traditional family form.
- ✓ Describe parenting by single parents.
- ✓ Conduct a small group activity regarding parenting by gay men and lesbians.
- ✓ Describe parenting by gay men and lesbians.
- ✓ Describe the parenting beliefs and styles of the Amish.

### **Step 1:**

The trainer indicates that in many cultural groups, the family is the primary and most important aspect--taking precedent over all others and over individual desires and needs. One of the key principles of cultural competence is the recognition that the family as defined by each culture is the primary system of support and the preferred point of intervention. Despite the emphasis and importance of family, families have not been extensively utilized or involved in the planning or delivery of services or for setting policies and procedures within programs. The trainer notes that one of the first tasks in involving families is to clarify the definition of family and its functions regarding children. Although the term family is used quite often, it is not clear that everyone has the same picture of what a family is and what it does. One of the commonalities across all cultures--both historically and to the present day--is some recognition of and organizational structure related to family.

### **Optional step (if time allows):**

The trainer breaks participants into small groups of four to five participants each. The trainer gives each small group a sheet of flip chart paper and asks each group to develop a definition of family and list what they believe to be the three to four major functions of the family in regards to children. When the groups have completed the task, the trainer asks each group to hang their flip chart sheet and present its definition and functions to the large group. The trainer notes commonalities among definitions and family functions, as appropriate.

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## **Section II. Families and Their Functions (continued)**

### **Step 2:**

The trainer distributes **Handout #2: Defining Family and Its Functions**. Using **Overhead #5: Definition of Family**, the trainer defines family for the purpose of training as anyone who is the caregiver of a child whether or not there is a blood or a legal relationship, or formalized or informal adoptive or foster care; a family is to be understood in the broadest context. Using **Overhead #6: Family Functions**, the trainer indicates that all of the definitions and functions attributed to the family recognize that the influences and importance of the family for children cannot be overestimated:

- The family is the child's first source of information and the primary model for how children experience relationships.
- The family helps a child to begin to communicate and to learn personal and cultural values and beliefs.
- The family teaches the child how to survive in a complex world.
- The family provides a child with a sense of belonging and a foundation for self-esteem.

The trainer notes that families who are confident and effective in these responsibilities are more likely to raise healthy and productive children.

### **Step 3:**

The trainer indicates that the "traditional" family form--two married parents caring for children born within their marriage, with the father as the essential wage earner and the mother the chief child caretaker in the home--has never been the majority family in the United States. However, for many years it was considered the norm. In 1950, only 43 percent of all families with children under age 18 fit the "traditional family" criteria. Divorce rates combined with out-of-wedlock births mean that the model of a married man and woman living with their biological offspring is, today, the unlikeliest of family constructs. The trainer notes that fewer than 25 percent of American families are modeled on the "traditional" family according to recent Census findings. Other Census findings were that one-third of babies born in the past decade were born to unmarried women. Demographers predict that half of all babies born in the 1990s will spend some part of their childhood living in a single-parent home.

The trainer indicates that all family forms have parenting and child care needs in common, whether that family is an intact family with two working parents, a single-parent family, a stepparent family, a lesbian or gay-parent family, or a teenage parent family. However, some forms of family life carry additional demands and problems that become intensified, making access to supportive social services even more essential.

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## **Section II. Families and Their Functions (continued)**

### **Step 4:**

Using **Overhead #7: Single-Parent Family**, the trainer defines a single-parent family as the living arrangements of the family structure consisting of one parent with dependent children living in the same household. The trainer notes that divorces, separations, desertions, out-of-wedlock births, incarcerations, hospitalizations, military duties, out-of-state employments, and single-parent adoptions result in single parenthood. Single parents are not a homogeneous group; they exist in all social classes, in all racial and ethnic groups, and in all age groups.

The trainer indicates that the vast majority of single-parent households are maintained by mothers--75 percent. Using large group discussion, trainer elicits from the group some common concerns that single mothers share and posts these on a flip chart. The group should indicate the following concerns: income inadequacy, role overload, parenting and child care, social isolation, and emotional and psychological problems, poverty, high rates of life stress. If the group does not indicate these areas, the trainer should point them out to participants. As the group indicates the concerns, the trainer should use the following information to add to the participants' responses:

- ✓ Since single mothers are vulnerable to stress resulting from a variety of contextual and personal variables, parenting is difficult. Ineffective parenting practices and poor parent-child relationships may result.
- ✓ Numerous studies have linked single mothers' psychological adjustments to their ability to parent. Significant negative correlations were found between psychological symptoms and mothers' organization of the physical and temporal environment, maternal involvement with the child, and the provision of age-appropriate toys. Negative life events in the lives of single mothers and inadequate social support were associated with psychological stress that precipitated ineffective parenting.
- ✓ During the period of separation and the first two years following divorce, there is typically a marked disruption in the mother-child relationship. In this period, a preoccupied and/or emotionally disturbed mother and a distressed, demanding child are likely to have difficulty supporting or consoling each other, and one may even exacerbate the problems of the other. Custodial mothers frequently become temporarily erratic, uncommunicative, unsupportive, and inconsistently punitive in dealing with their children. Single mothers are initially ineffective in their discipline practices, are more negative, issue more commands, and employ more dominating and hostile styles in interacting with their children. Difficulty in controlling and monitoring children's behavior is the most sustained parenting problem faced by divorced mothers. However, in spite of the period of diminished parenting in the immediate aftermath of divorce, single mothers become increasingly competent and authoritative parents with time.

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## **Section II. Families and Their Functions (continued)**

After about two years, the parent-child relationship and parenting practices improve so that many families stabilize and function more effectively.

- ✓ Role reversal and boundary problems often exist in single-mother families, resulting in negative outcomes for children.
- ✓ Various child factors have been found to affect single mothers' caregiving. One example is significant negative associations found between infant difficulty and mothers' emotional and verbal responsiveness. A study found that parenting stress increased with perceptions that the child was temperamentally difficult. Interestingly, single mothers living apart from their own parents or other adult relatives exhibited more emotional and verbal responsiveness and greater involvement with their infants than did those who were currently living with their adult relatives.
- ✓ Disruption in parent-child relationships are most marked and enduring for custodial mothers and their sons, who are likely to become involved in escalating coercive interchanges. Boys are at a significant risk for anti-social behavior problems in single-mother families.
- ✓ Some evidence suggests that the mother-child relationship becomes closer and/or less hierarchical after divorce. There is disagreement about whether this nonhierarchical relationship is beneficial or whether it can oversensitize the child to feelings of adults and interfere with psychological development.
- ✓ Divorced mothers have been found to be more liberal than nondivorced mothers with respect to attitudes and behaviors relating to independence and nontraditional roles. Divorced mothers hold less restrictive attitudes about premarital sex than do continuously married mothers and are less likely to monitor adolescents' social activities. Further, single mothers have been found to provide less help to their adolescents with their homework and with planning their high school curriculum than do mothers of adolescents living with both parents. It has been reported that mothers' attempts to control adolescent daughters' acting-out behavior may result in a higher level of conflict and that these reactive attempts on the part of the mother do not seem to be successful.
- ✓ Research on children in single-parent and other types of nontraditional families has emphasized that transitions to single-parent, stepparent, and nonparental living arrangements are linked to lower academic performance, lower probability of high school completion, behavior problems, decreased probability of postsecondary education, earlier movement toward residential independence, earlier marriage and subsequent divorce, and cohabitation. Some of the problems have been attributed to reduced parental involvement and less stringent supervision of children. Other researchers have linked negative outcomes to increased stress in children moving from one family type to another.

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## **Section II. Families and Their Functions (continued)**

The trainer concludes the segment on single-parent families by discussing appropriate services and supports, using **Overhead #8: Issues to be Aware of When Working with Single Parent Families**. One of the greatest needs of single parents is adequate income. The

development of an adequate and appropriate support system is also crucial to single-parent families. This system may be composed of extended family; friends; employment and child-care resources; and community resources such as schools, churches, clinics, or various social service agencies. This kind of support system facilitates the parenting role and is associated with life satisfaction, personal growth, and less distress for both men and women.

### **Step 5:**

The trainer introduces the segment on gay and lesbian parenting by indicating that gay and lesbian parents seem to be more similar to than different from other single parents and/or stepparents, and their children resemble children from heterosexual single parent or stepparent families. Gay and lesbian parents, especially those who have resolved their identity problems, seem to be very concerned and involved with their children. These parents and their children, though, experience considerable stigma and discrimination.

### **Step 6:**

The trainer breaks participants into small groups of four to five participants each and distributes **Handout #3: Gay and Lesbian Parents: Myths and Facts**. The trainer instructs participants to work as a group and decide whether each statement is a myth or a fact and determine the rationale for each response.

### **Step 7:**

Using **Handout #4: Gay and Lesbian Parents: The Realities**, the trainer conducts a large group discussion to ascertain participant responses to the activity and discuss gay and lesbian parenting.

The correct responses are:

1. There is no one "gay lifestyle" which accurately reflects the daily lives of all lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. FACT
2. Gay men and lesbians do not have stable relationships and do not know how to be good parents. MYTH
3. Children raised by gay or lesbian parents are more likely to grow up gay or lesbian themselves. MYTH

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### **Section II. Families and Their Functions (continued)**

4. Children should not be raised by gay or lesbian parents since they will be subjected to harassment and will be rejected by their peers. MYTH
5. Lesbians and gay men are not more likely to molest children. FACT
6. Children raised by lesbians and gay men will be brought up in an immoral environment. MYTH
7. Child welfare professionals can help gay and lesbian families by providing sensitive interventions, by offering guidance or support, and by advocating social change. FACT

#### **Step 8:**

The trainer summarizes the information on gay and lesbian parents using **Overhead #9: Issues to be Aware of When Working with Gay and Lesbian Parents.**

#### **Step 9:**

The trainer introduces the next segment of the curriculum by indicating that religion can have a major impact on parenting beliefs and styles. One example of this is the Amish who generally shun modern conveniences. An estimated 42,000 Amish live in Pennsylvania with nearly half in Lancaster County, which is the nation's oldest Amish settlement.

The trainer indicates that the Amish, through biological reproduction, resistance to outside culture, compromise, and a strong ethnic symbolism have managed to stave off modern culture.

The trainer discusses the differences among the sects known as Amish. The sects differ moreso over the adoption of the surrounding culture's technology. The most conservative Amish group is known as the Old Order Amish. Newer Amish groups are called the Beachy and New Order Amish. Old Order Amish do not use electricity, telephones, and tractors. The New Order Amish have a quicker rate of social change and acceptance of modernization than do the Old Order Amish. New Order Amish often use electricity to power farm equipment and even household appliances. It is not unknown for them to have telephones in the house. The Old Order Amish do not allow telephones or 110 volt electricity as it quite literally ties the Amish to the outside world, eventually, they believe, leading to television and other "worldliness." Gas powered tractors are often used by the New Order Amish instead of draft horses. Beachy Amish are similar to the New Order, except that they may own cars. The Old and New Order Amish do not object to riding in cars but to the ownership of them. Differences between the Amish vary from state to state and between church districts. The Amish do not have a central figure or consistent laws governing their actions.

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### **Section II. Families and Their Functions (continued)**

Instead, decisions are made in the individual church districts (usually 20-40 families or 50-150 members per church district) according to unwritten doctrine.

The trainer notes that the Amish have largely remained an agricultural society, grow their own food, and are self-sufficient. Most Amish are banned from having large operations, thus keeping a balance of power in the Amish community and reducing individualism and pride.

The trainer indicates that Amish children usually attend single-room school houses until the eighth grade. This system fits perfectly into Amish society since the Amish usually enter into areas of farming and craft and children are required to help on family farms. Most Amish do not attend high school and college is not permitted because of the fear of instilling a sense of superiority in scholars.

The trainer describes the Amish family as comprised of a large extended family. Families usually are comprised of two parents, seven children, and often grandparents and close relationships with cousins, brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles. Since the Amish do not have cars and remain largely in agriculture, families tend to stay together and keep in close contact. This has allowed for extremely large extended families with much interaction. These large families provide the foundation of Amish society and for the welfare of other family members.

The trainer discusses children in the Amish family. Children are expected and wanted and are considered a "part of life." In addition to the completeness a child brings to a home, it makes a wife a mother, her highest priority as a woman in the society. A child also adds a worker to the force. Child rearing falls primarily to the parents. Amish people have a great respect for one's place in the family.

The trainer discusses parenting practices in the Amish culture. Children are taught to be disciplined, respectful, and obedient. Age commands respect. From very early on, children are assigned chores. They work under the watchful eyes of their parents, learn many skills, and realize that they are a vital part of the family. Amish youth, though, are given a great deal of freedom to stretch rules and "spread their wings," with very little parental knowledge or interference. They are allowed to experiment with the outside world and see if they wish to join the Amish church and make the permanent commitment of living what is considered a godly life. Amish youth may own cars, listen to rock music, go to movies, and explore other aspects of American society during their late adolescence. This is to allow the youth to "get things out of their system" before choosing to be baptized Amish adults. Eighty percent of Amish adolescents still choose to stay and join the Amish church because of the secure life that church membership provides. Keeping the youth is key to Amish survival. It can only happen if Amish youth are socialized in traditional Amish values. Amish youth are effectively socialized through eighth grade. Because they are kept from high school and college, they do not have the opportunity to assimilate modern ideas or philosophies. Economic factors also play a part.

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### **Section II. Families and Their Functions (continued)**

The large Amish extended families provide good job security as well as business opportunity. Amish culture also has a strong sense of identity, even as obvious as dress and language. It becomes almost impossible for Amish to leave their church because, if they did, they would be losing all that is familiar and who they are.

The trainer concludes the segment by discussing casework with Amish children, using **Overhead #10: Issues to be Aware of When Working with Amish Children**. In working with Amish children, the worker needs to be genuine and empathic. The following are some issues to be aware of:

- De-emphasize the concept of self.
- Recognize the limitations of tests.
- Understand culturally diverse groups' varied worlds of work.
- Respect the need for social distance that Amish children have with non-Amish children.
- Avoid probing into home or Amish community problems.
- Realize that a caring relationship is not enough.
- Accept the fact that an Amish child's parents may have asked him or her to avoid counselors.

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## **Section III. Contrasting Perspectives**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

50 minutes

### **Learning Objectives:**

- ✓ Examine parenting practices and the goals and values which underlie them.
- ✓ Assess how the family's cultural beliefs and parenting practices affect the well-being of the child.
- ✓ Articulate cultural practices that may create situations of risk for children.

### **Methods of Presentation:**

Lecture, video presentation, small and large group discussion

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ Video: *Diversity: Contrasting Perspectives*
- ✓ TV/VCR
- ✓ **Overhead #11: Strengths and Dysfunction**
- ✓ **Handout #5: Contrasting Perspectives**

### **Resources:**

- ✓ *ERIC Digests*
- ✓ *Field Guide to Child Welfare*

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## **Section III. Contrasting Perspectives**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer shows a video, conducts a small group activity, and holds a large group discussion to examine various parenting practices and goals and values that underlie them, to assess how the family's cultural beliefs and parenting practices affect the well-being of the child, and to articulate cultural practices that may create situations of risk for children.

- ✓ Show the video *Diversity: Contrasting Perspectives*.
- ✓ Conduct a small group activity and large group discussion to examine contrasting parenting practices and the values which underlie them, assess how the family's cultural beliefs and parenting practices affect the well-being of the child, and articulate cultural practices that may create situations of risk for children.

### **Step 1:**

The trainer introduces the 29-minute video, *Diversity: Contrasting Perspectives*, by noting that the aim of the video is to encourage understanding of diverse perspectives without labeling practices or individuals right or wrong. Its purpose is to introduce viewers to contrasting perspectives on parenting and it invites viewers to ask themselves questions about those contrasts.

### **Step 2:**

The trainer distributes **Handout #5: Contrasting Perspectives** and points out the first two items: (1) List various parenting practices illustrated in the video. (2) Identify the goals and values which contributed to the various parenting practices. The trainer instructs participants to make notes regarding the two items while they watch the video. The trainer then shows the video.

### **Step 3:**

The trainer breaks participants into small groups of four to five participants each. The trainer asks participants to work as a group to discuss and complete **Handout #5: Contrasting Perspectives**.

### **Step 4:**

The trainer reconvenes the group and leads a large group discussion on the four items in **Handout #5: Contrasting Perspectives**.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section III. Contrasting Perspectives (continued)**

1. List various parenting practices illustrated in the video.

The trainer notes that the video illustrates many examples of diverse parenting styles in the areas of feeding, toileting, learning, and sleeping and elicits examples from participants.

2. Identify the goals and values which contributed to the various parenting practices.

The trainer solicits input from participants and ensures that the values of independence and interdependence are highlighted. If not offered by participants, the trainer points out the example of West African parenting practices which revolve around the goal of the child bonding with the tribe. The trainer summarizes the discussion by stating that parenting practices depend on one's own experience and what one understands about what children need.

3. Describe how the family's cultural beliefs and parenting practices affect the well-being of the child.

After soliciting input from participants, the trainer indicates that parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behavior. Research consistently finds:

- Children and adolescents whose parents are authoritative rate themselves and are rated by objective measures as more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are nonauthoritative. Authoritative parents monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-regulated as well as cooperative.
- Children and adolescents whose parents are uninvolved perform most poorly in all domains.

The trainer notes that, in general, parent responsiveness (or parental warmth or supportiveness) predicts social competence and psychosocial functioning. Parental demandingness (or behavioral control) is associated with instrumental competence and behavioral control (i.e. academic performance and deviance.) These findings indicate:

- Children and adolescents from authoritarian families (highly demanding and directive, but not responsive) tend to perform moderately well in school and be uninvolved in problem behavior, but they have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of depression.

## 307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

### Section III. Contrasting Perspectives (continued)

- Children and adolescents from indulgent homes (more responsive than demanding) are more likely to be involved in problem behavior and perform less well in school, but they have higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of depression.

The trainer notes that although in the United States authoritative parenting is most common among intact, middle-class families of European descent, the relationship between authoritativeness and child outcomes is quite similar across groups. There are some exceptions, however: (1) demandingness appears to be less critical to girls' than to boys' well-being, and (2) authoritative parenting predicts psychosocial outcomes and problem behaviors in all ethnic groups studied (African-, Asian-, European-, and Hispanic Americans), but it is associated with academic performance only among European Americans and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic Americans. It has been argued that observed ethnic differences in the association of parenting style with child outcomes may be due to differences in social context, parenting practices, or the cultural meaning of specific dimensions of parenting style.

4. Identify cultural practices that may create situations of risk for children. How can child welfare professionals effectively respond to these situations?

The trainer solicits input from participants and ensures that there is discussion regarding the bottle mouth example given in the video. The trainer ensures that the discussion includes the framework of general and child protective services, including the religious belief exclusion to abuse.

Using **Overhead #11: Strengths and Dysfunction**, the trainer notes that "strengths" and "dysfunction" are culturally defined terms. If we define strengths as behaviors that promote successful adaptation to life's changing circumstances, and we define dysfunction as less adaptive or unproductive responses, we can better evaluate the legitimacy of any particular cultural trait or behavior. Since the assessment of risk and maltreatment are dependent upon an accurate appraisal of "dysfunctional" and "adaptive" parenting behaviors, understanding the meaning of these behaviors in their cultural context is essential to a fair and balanced family assessment.

The trainer explains that individual characteristics identified as strengths, or as dysfunctional, must be assessed within their relevant cultural context. If we value individuality and self-assertion, then the ability to "take charge" would be considered a strength. In cultures that value group harmony, the ability to negotiate and come to consensus would be considered a strength. In a group in which only certain members of the family make major decisions, the capacity to gracefully accept such decisions without protest must be considered a strength.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section III. Contrasting Perspectives (continued)**

The trainer notes that any cultural trait must be measured by its efficacy within a specific cultural context. What may not appear as a strength in a particular case situation may have considerable adaptive integrity within the client's cultural context. Unless the worker recognizes this, a behavior may be interpreted as a lack of adaptability or personal dysfunction. In fact, it may indicate the person has adapted well within his or her subculture, even though his or her behavior may be situationally problematic. This does not imply, however, that the client's adaptation is the best or only one. Helping families identify alternative ways to meet their children's needs is the hallmark of effective child welfare casework. Identifying and enabling clients to use their strengths to achieve such positive adaptation is the goal of strengths-based interventions.

The trainer relates that dysfunction must also be viewed within a cultural context. Dysfunction literally means that something does not work in a particular situation. Dysfunctional behavior refers to behavior that creates problems, rather than solves them. Feeding a child beans and rice is a resourceful way to provide good nutrition and eliminate hunger on a very limited budget. Out of context, the trait could be viewed as parental laziness, lack of knowledge about good nutrition, or unwillingness to prepare creative and well-balanced meals. A mother's failure to spend a full day with her child at a clinic waiting for a "well-baby" check because her sister needed her to babysit might be viewed as a strength in a culture that depends upon help from extended family in stressful situations. Within a different cultural context, it could be viewed as failure to provide what her infant needs.

The trainer notes that in "gray areas" of abuse or neglect, assessing the risk to the child must occur within the context of the family's culture. For example, a situation of moderate physical discipline, which leaves bruises on the buttocks and legs of a 10-year-old, may represent a varying degree of risk or potential harm, depending on the context in which the discipline occurred. The same degree of physical discipline might inflict less harm, when the child is disciplined for a clearly defined infraction, in a culture where many other children are disciplined using the same methods, and where all other parenting practices in the family promote healthy development. By contrast, equivalent physical discipline could have a greater negative impact when unpredictably applied, by an irrational parent, in an emotionally sterile and punitive environment, and where the child is singled out to receive the punishment. While the child-rearing practices of most American families have much in common, the fact remains, if workers try to interpret parenting behaviors out of context, at times they may misinterpret the parent's behavior or intent, as well as the potential risk to the child.

The trainer explains that workers must also understand cultural practices related to survival in situations of extreme poverty. If we do not understand the function of these practices, they might be misinterpreted.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section III. Contrasting Perspectives (continued)**

For example, depending upon young children to assume considerable responsibility for supervising even younger children may be considered an unfortunate necessity by a parent in poverty attempting to work for subsistence wages, rather than a result of the parent's lack of interest and concern, dysfunctional "role reversal," or insensitivity to the children's needs. The young child may, in fact, be subjected to a high risk of harm in any case, but the interventions should be situationally determined and culturally legitimate.

The trainer completes this segment by noting that some cultural practices that create situations of risk for children may be defended and justified by members of that culture as "culturally relevant." When these practices place children at high risk of harm, the child welfare agency has a responsibility to clearly identify the potential risks to the child, and assist the family to develop other ways of behaving. Failure to challenge dangerous parenting practices because they are defined by the family as "culturally valid" is an abdication of our protective responsibilities.

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

120 minutes

### **Learning Objectives:**

- ✓ Identify common characteristics of families of color.
- ✓ Describe the parenting beliefs and styles of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American people.
- ✓ Express quality practice considerations in working with African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American persons.

### **Methods of Presentation:**

Lecture, small group activity, large group discussion

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ **Overhead #12: Commonalities Among Families of Color**
- ✓ **Overhead #13: Recommendations for Working With Families With African American Roots**
- ✓ **Overhead #14: Recommendations for Working With Families With Hispanic Roots**
- ✓ **Overhead #15: Recommendations for Working With Families With Asian Roots**
- ✓ **Overhead #16: Recommendations for Working With Families With Native American Roots**
- ✓ **Handout #6: Commonalities Among Families of Color**
- ✓ **Handout # 7: Additional Parenting Tasks for Families of Color**
- ✓ **Handout # 8: Who Wants to be a Culturally Competent Professional?**
- ✓ **Booklet**

### **Resources:**

- ✓ *Cultural Competence Train-the-Trainers Manual*
- ✓ *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence*
- ✓ *Parenting in Contemporary Society*

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer leads a large group discussion on the commonalities among families of color in relation to family structures and functions; discusses additional burdens and tasks faced by families of color in ensuring that their children grow up to be healthy and productive citizens; discusses parenting beliefs and practices of families with African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American roots; and conducts a small group activity to determine recommendations for quality practice with families with African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American roots.

- ✓ Lead a large group discussion on the major commonalities among the family structures and values of the four major families of color as they differ from the mainstream family concept.
- ✓ Discuss the additional burdens and tasks faced by families of color in ensuring that their children grow up to be healthy and productive citizens.
- ✓ Discuss the parenting beliefs and practices of families with African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American roots.
- ✓ Conduct a small group activity to determine recommendations for quality practice with families with African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American roots.

### **Step 1:**

The trainer introduces Section IV by announcing that the training will now focus on the parenting beliefs and practices of African American and Hispanic families and, to a lesser extent, of Asian American and Native American families.

### **Step 2:**

The trainer asks participants to identify the major commonalities among the family structures and values of these four groups as they differ from the mainstream family concept. The trainer records participant observations on a flip chart page.

### **Step 3:**

The trainer distributes **Handout #6: Commonalities Among Families of Color**. Using **Overhead #12: Commonalities Among Families of Color**, the trainer addresses the commonalities among the groups, especially when compared to the mainstream United States family:

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

- The primacy of the group or family over the mainstream emphasis on the individual is extremely important.
- Although the structure of the United States family is rapidly changing, the emphasis in policies is still based on the assumption that the nuclear family is most ideal. All of the families of color are marked by some type of extended family structure.
- In United States society, biological families have ultimate authority over children. In families of color, that authority may not be vested as much in parents as elders or others viewed as having authority in the family structure.
- There are high levels of reciprocity and responsibility for those outside the nuclear family structure in many families of color.
- The focus on interdependence rather than the mainstream goal of independence is a significant difference.
- The high levels of spirituality and its importance as a part of the family system and values is often not taken into account by mainstream agencies and policies.
- Due to the emphasis on extended family, the composition of families of color may vary more over time in regard to members of the household than the mainstream nuclear family.

#### **Step 4:**

The trainer distributes **Handout #7: Additional Parenting Tasks for Families of Color**. The trainer states that most of the family structures and characteristics are the values that families of color cling to in the face of massive adaptations that they must make when they immigrate to the United States or attempt to live here. Although all families serve similar functions for their children, families of color often face additional burdens and tasks in ensuring that their children grow up to be healthy and productive citizens:

- They must not only impart the values and beliefs of their culture, but also ensure that their children are familiar and comfortable with the values of mainstream United States--which may be contradictory to some of their own beliefs and practices. Thus, they have the burden of training their children to function in at least two cultures.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

- They must find mechanisms to ensure that their children develop positive group identities in a society in which their group is often viewed as inferior and subject to racism and discrimination. The negative images and constant messages of inferiority are reinforced by the key education/information institutions in United States society, such as the schools and the media.
- In many urban areas, families must struggle to keep their children protected and safe in environments that are extremely violent and where those who enforce the laws view every child of color a suspect rather than someone to be protected.
- Many more families of color must struggle in near poverty conditions--even when family members work full-time.
- Many families of color must deal with the impact that lack of employment, substance abuse, and incarceration have on males in their culture.
- Families of color must work to instill hope and future aspirations in their children when everyone else has limited to no expectations for their futures.
- Adaptations in the family structures, due to migration and other changing socioeconomic conditions, are resulting in more different types of families that are fragile and without recognition. For example, in African American and Hispanic communities, there are grandmother-headed households due to drugs, HIV/AIDS, and incarceration levels. In Asian and Hispanic immigrant families, there are peer-to-peer households due to immigration decisions, war-related deaths and disabilities, relocation policies, etc.

The trainer states that these are daunting tasks and create additional stresses and strains on families of color.

#### **Step 5:**

The trainer refers participants to the **booklet, pages 1-3, Families With African American Roots** and discusses the parenting beliefs and practices of families with African American roots. The following information is offered to aid the trainer in that discussion.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

African Americans believe that children are the future. Children need to know that they are loved and that they belong, and they need adult protection and guidance. Children must be disciplined, and all responsible adults in the community take part in the education and discipline of the child. Children must have a good education, good food, and a place to play. Once young children are able to speak and understand, they are expected to obey the family rules, to treat others as they want to be treated, and to do their schoolwork to the best of their ability. Although these beliefs are not acted on by all African Americans because of their life circumstances, they form a core set of beliefs that continue to be valued by many.

African Americans are firmly committed to developing the child's knowledge of his or her kinship and of who his or her people and family are. As the knowledge is instilled, so is a sense of curiosity and caring about family relationships. As children place themselves within this circle of people who they care about and who care about them, their experience of the meaning of family and their sense of belonging is heightened. Some African American families tend to not be especially verbal with the expression of love because they believe that actions, such as concerned caregiving and attention to others' well-being, speak louder than words.

Setting limits, or disciplining children, is part of the socialization process of the child and is seen in two ways: 1) as a means for the child to learn to be sensitive, and 2) as a way for the child to follow family rules outside the home in order to avoid confrontation with authorities. An additional socialization issue is teaching children how to cope with racism. The latter is seen as particularly critical for male children as a result of the high incidence of racially biased arrests of young African American males. In the first instance, it is believed that the building of self-respect derives from learning respect for the rights of others. This lesson starts early and at home. In fact, the permissive child-rearing practices common in many Caucasian, middle-class households in which discipline is seen as stifling creative expression would not be tolerated in most African American families.

Although less true than in the past, the African American community still maintains a belief that all responsible adults are expected to act in *loco parentis* for the children of the community. The presence of an adult has traditionally been enough to deter the young African American child from too much wrongdoing because the nonparent adult in whose presence the child is acting will usually comment on or correct the obvious problem behavior. Things have changed somewhat from the days when nonparent adults could corporally punish a child, but a considerable amount of behavioral observation and advice about appropriate punishment is alive and well in the African American community.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

The belief in eating well, feeding one's family well, and having good food to offer one's guests is an abiding value in the African American family, although it is difficult, if not impossible, for families living in poverty to maintain. Among middle-class families, the diet is generally rich in nutrients as a result of a particular preference for dark green leafy vegetables, red meat, and cheese. Potatoes, rice, and bread are staples, and a variety of fresh and dried fruits are liked and used. The primary problems with diet arise from the use of too much salt and a reliance on frying as a preferred method of cooking. Children are switched from baby foods to the same food as the rest of the family around one year of age, and the same attitude about the importance of good food to strength, stamina, and health prevails in the feeding of children. Mealtimes in some African American families may differ. Although a common mealtime is still the norm, prepared food may be left on the stove and available for family members to take when they are ready to eat.

Another belief about health for children has to do with the importance of play. Play is seen as important for both social (to have friends and fun) and physical (to have a strong body) well-being. In contrast with cultures that push children toward early adulthood, in African American families, there is an attempt to give the child an opportunity to be a child and to enjoy the care and protection of responsible adults until he or she is maturationally ready for a broader role.

The peer group exerts a strong influence on both African American boys and girls. The peer group is critical for the continuation of the socialization process begun by the parents. It is a much more significant influence in families in which the father is absent or unemployed. Boys, particularly, affiliate with informal gangs and are likely to be dependent on and influenced by them greatly. Concepts of womanhood and manhood are learned from the peer group. In many families, dating has begun by age 12, as well as a heavy commitment to a peer group of the same sex.

In summary, African American parents instill in their children respect for authority figures, a strong work ethic, emphasis on achievement, a sense of duty and obligation to kin, a strong religious orientation, self-esteem and pride in their cultural heritage, and the importance of coping skills and resiliency.

#### **Step 6:**

The trainer refers participants to their **booklet, pages 4-8, Families With Hispanic Roots** and discusses the parenting beliefs and practices of families with Hispanic roots. The following information is offered to aid the trainer in that discussion.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

In Hispanic cultures, one marries for the purpose of having children. Children validate the marriage. The parent-child relationship has more importance than the marital relationship. Parents tend to be very nurturing toward their children as well as permissive and indulgent with young children. The attitude toward the young is to placate them, not to push for the achievement of developmental milestones that are often valued in mainstream families. This relaxed attitude toward the attainment of early skills may be related to a value that supports a family member's interdependence with the family as opposed to the focus on the family member's independence and individuation.

However, the lack of push for independence can be carried to the extreme (e.g., children come to school not knowing how to button jackets, tie shoes, or cut food because everything has been done for them.) More so, when a child has a disability, special treatment from parents and extended family may include lack of disciplining the child or making no demands on him or her, thus depriving the child of a much needed socialization format.

It is important to recognize different norms around child rearing that exist for many Hispanic families. In illustration, Hispanic families find it acceptable for preteens to sit on the mother's lap. Preschoolers who drink from a baby bottle may not be admonished. Moreover, it is normal in many Hispanic families for members to sit close to one another and to have direct physical contact regardless of age. Mainstream professionals might view this closeness as symbiotic behavior and as unacceptable.

While positive emotions are encouraged among Hispanic women and children, emotions such as anger, aggression, and other negative feelings are not acceptable. Mothers may teach their sons to be dominant and independent, with the eldest son typically having more authority than younger male brothers. Siblings have close emotional ties, and parents discourage fighting.

Research on the cognitive styles of Mexican American children has found that their field-dependent style may be attributed to various dimensions, including more traditional child-rearing practices in Mexican culture. These practices emphasize adherence to convention, respect for authority, and identity with the family. This traditional child rearing includes teaching children respect for their elders and should result in a child who is well educated. A well-educated individual is one who understands the importance of interacting and relating to others with respect and dignity.

An important aspect for children is the expectation that they will take up work roles within the family, whether this includes babysitting, helping with chores, or actually working with other family members. Often this expectation of more responsibility for children may be class

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

related; for many poor families, the theme of survival may demand that all members participate for the good of the family.

Peers contribute significantly to the socialization of adolescent males, whereas adolescent females are more confined to the home and rely more heavily on mothers and sisters. The value of premarital chastity for females still exists, but its enforcement is more difficult than in the past. Even though strong role differentiation for males and females has persisted, there is evidence that many young Hispanics are challenging their traditional roles, thereby establishing more equality among males and females, especially among middle-class urban families.

Insights on child rearing are many and may take on different hues depending on the particular Hispanic subgroup. It is important that child welfare professionals individualize these practices for each family, recognizing that factors such as class, region, and acculturation stage may contribute to more or less traditional formats for child rearing.

The child welfare professional must realize that cultures that value a collective style versus an individualistic style and a cooperative mode versus a competitive mode will result in the socialization of children who may have different goals and different learning processes from those raised in the majority culture. Although these differences contrast, one must not assume that they are inferior or dysfunctional. For example, a family that does not focus on the developmental milestones referred to previously may not comprehend the worker's concern for teaching a child with a disability processes to ensure that his or her development does not become too delayed. If a family does not follow through immediately on recommendations, the worker may need to consider the family's perspective. The worker will need to recognize that developmental goals may have to be addressed in alternative modes that enable the family to realize the need for these developmental processes.

In summary, it does appear that there are some cultural differences in values between Hispanic people and other cultural groups that account for differences in parenting. Probably the most important of these are familialism (identification with the family) and the normative deference and respect formally accorded to the father.

#### **Step 7:**

The trainer refers participants to their **booklet, pages 9-18, Families With Asian Roots** and discusses the parenting beliefs and practices of families with Asian roots. The following information is offered to aid the trainer in that discussion.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

In accord with Confucian principles, the family is the basic unit or backbone of society. While guiding and protecting the individual, the family serves as the tie between the individual and society and is a model for society as a whole. As the central focus of the individual's life, the value of family engenders primary loyalty, mutual obligation, cooperation, interdependence, and reciprocity. Ingrained with a profound sense of responsibility and duty to the family, individual members thus engage in sustained efforts to promote the welfare, harmony, and reputation of their family. Throughout this process, each individual views him- or herself as an integral part of the totality of the family and the larger social structure and experiences a social/psychological dependence on others. This family-centered orientation and its attendant values contrast sharply with the more individualistic values of competition, autonomy, independence, and self-reliance in the context of a society with significantly less well-defined, more highly varied, and often ambiguous social/familial roles and expectations.

The values of family and filial piety include reverence for elders, ancestors, and the past. An individual is viewed as the product of all generations of the family from the beginning of time. Individual behaviors therefore reflect upon one's ancestors as well as the entire race. This orientation toward living with the past differs markedly from the individualistic cultural preoccupation with the future and living for tomorrow.

In many families with Asian roots, children are viewed as extensions of their parents. They continue the family lineage, bring status to the family name by virtue of their achievements, and literally give meaning to their parents' lives. The newborn child is thus treasured as a "gift from the gods."

Children initially are perceived as being relatively helpless and not responsible for their actions. Parents are thus very tolerant, permissive, and immediately gratify the infant's early dependency needs. Mother-infant interaction is characterized by an emphasis on close physical contact rather than active vocal stimulation; infants are carried much of the time, even during naps, or kept nearby and picked up immediately if they cry.

In contrast, toilet training may be introduced when the infant is as young as three-four months old, as depicted in the video. However, no strict demands are placed on the child.

Throughout infancy and the toddler period, the child is provided with a very nurturant, indulgent, secure, and predictable environment by parents, older siblings, grandparents, and other members of the extended family, if available. This experience serves as the foundation for the development of very strong family attachments and subsequent reciprocity.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

The preschool period represents a transitional phase wherein the child moves from a period of affection and indulgence to a period of discipline and education as the child approaches school age and is expected to assume increasingly greater responsibility for his or her own behavior. Upon reaching school age, the child experiences accelerated movement toward independence training within the context of the family and home environment. The immediate parent-child relationship becomes more formal, and adult demands are more rigidly enforced.

As the child matures and acquires younger siblings, he or she must further assume selected child-rearing responsibilities that augment those of his or her parents. Older siblings are routinely delegated the responsibility of caring for younger siblings and are expected to model adult-like behaviors, thereby setting good examples.

Behaviors that are punished include disobedience, aggression, and failure to fulfill one's primary responsibilities. Primary forms of discipline include name-calling; teasing; and the use of verbal reprimands such as harsh criticism, scolding, and shaming, which result in disgrace. The child is reminded that his or her negative behaviors reflect poorly on the entire family and the family name. The child can absolve him- or herself of this "loss of face" by actively displaying changes in behavior. It is not sufficient for children to ask for forgiveness and verbally promise to do better. Parents may respond to more serious transgressions by either threatening or actually engaging in temporary removal of the child from the family household and/or isolating the child from the family social life. On occasion, use of physical punishment is considered acceptable.

In general Asian American parents who adhere to more traditional child-rearing values and practices are relatively controlling, restrictive, and protective of their children. Children are taught to suppress aggressive behavior, overt expressions of negative emotions, and personal grievances; they must inhibit strong feelings and exercise self-control in order to maintain family harmony. There is a typical avoidance of frank discussion or highly verbal communication between parent and child, particularly in the area of sexuality. The communication pattern is one way: parent to child. The father is particularly distant in this respect and generally neither invites confidences nor initiates "talks" with his children. The mother-child relationship is closer and more verbal.

#### **Step 8:**

The trainer refers participants to their **booklet, pages 19-25, Families With Native American Roots** and discusses the parenting beliefs and practices of families with Native American roots. The following information is offered to aid the trainer in that discussion.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

Perhaps because of the diverse nature of American Indians, there is little systematic knowledge about parenting styles and how they vary from tribe to tribe. However, child-rearing practices are largely shaped by Native American worldviews, which regard children as beloved gifts. Native Americans are described as having a "beautiful blindness" toward children with disabilities. Time spent caring for, playing with, and admiring children is cherished. Native Americans celebrate milestones in early childhood, such as the first steps, first smile, first word, and so forth, but no pressure is felt over the timing of these events.

The most striking difference in child rearing and socialization is the exposure of children to a wide array of persons to whom they can become attached--parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents--thus protecting children and providing them with the assurance of love. Grandmothers and aunts, and in some tribes men, share in child care. The extended family plays as much a role in child rearing, supervision of children, and the transgenerational transmission of teachings and customs as do parents. Grandparents perpetuate the oral tradition; they are safekeepers of tribal stories. They engage in purposeful activities with grandchildren that are geared toward passing on cultural values and beliefs and educating children about the physical, social, and spiritual world.

Children are regarded as important to the family and are accorded as much respect as adults--adults rarely hit children. In fact, physical punishment usually is not condoned. Parents more often use facial expressions and other body language to indicate disapproval, or they use social shame. Shouting when correcting a child is disapproved of. Autonomy is highly valued, and children are expected to make their own decisions and to operate semi-independently at an early age. Parents give children choices and allow them to experience the natural consequences of them. The impact of the child's behavior on others is emphasized. Children are not socialized to expect praise for that which is already required of them; parents reserve praise for special accomplishments. It is these characteristics of parenting that sometimes are perceived as overly permissive or negligent by nontribal workers.

Families encourage children and youth to participate in tribal ceremonies, and parents devote considerable time and effort to making items for children to wear or to use in ceremonies. Traditional rites of passage that are symbolic of entrance into adulthood are common, and these practices are an integral part of the maintenance of individual, family, and tribal identity.

Native American children demonstrate lower school achievement than most other groups, and they have the highest dropout rate. These problems are due to a number of factors, including health and family problems, geographic distances from schools, absenteeism (sometimes because of tribal ceremonies), and lack of culturally relevant instructional materials and approaches to learning. Caucasian teachers who are unfamiliar with tribal cultures frequently interpret language and cultural differences as deviant. For example, most Caucasian teachers

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

focus on verbal instruction, whereas most Native American children learn better through visual means. Lack of eye contact is the most notable difference frequently cited. Some tribes consider it rude and disrespectful to make direct eye contact with authority figures. A bowed head is a sign of respect.

As Native American children enter school, they often feel stranded between two cultures. Many speak a first language other than English, practice an entirely different religion, and hold different cultural values, yet they are expected to perform successfully according to mainstream criteria. Native American children in upper elementary grades often are perceived as uncommunicative, but silence is comfortable in traditional Native American culture. Further, when there is pressure for a right answer, Native American children would rather remain silent than risk being called upon and being embarrassed and ridiculed. Since these children have grown up with a group-oriented philosophy, striving for individual achievement is foreign to their world outside of school. They prefer anonymity, harmony, and cooperative rather than competitive learning. Because children are likely to feel marginal in both cultures, biculturalism must become an educational priority. During the past two decades, Native American education has come under increasingly tribal control, and there is more emphasis on tribal history, Indian language, and increased self-esteem.

**This may be a suitable time for a break.**

#### **Step 9:**

The trainer distributes **Handout #8: Who Wants to be a Culturally Competent Professional?** to participants and instructs participants to work in small groups to complete the activity. For this activity, 20 issues, with a selection of four possible responses to each, are posed. The trainer instructs participants to choose only one correct response to each issue and cite the rationale which supports their decisions.

#### **Step 10:**

The trainer reconvenes the large group and rotates among the small groups to elicit responses so that all key aspects related to the recommendations for service providers are covered.

The following transparencies are available for use: **Overhead #13: Recommendations for Working With Families With African American Roots**, **Overhead #14: Recommendations for Working With Families With Hispanic Roots**, **Overhead #15: Recommendations for Working With Families With Asian Roots**, and **Overhead #16: Recommendations for Working With Families With Native American Roots**.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

The trainer ensures that the responses to the activity are:

1. When providing services to families with African American roots:
  - b. capitalize on kinship bonds.
2. In developing and implementing services for families with African American roots:
  - a. focus on family strengths.
3. In addressing African American family members:
  - c. use titles and last names until given permission to be more informal.
4. A point to remember in working with families with African American roots is:
  - d. many impoverished families manage to provide strong, nurturing care for their children.
5. When dealing with the health and medical care needs of families with African American roots:
  - a. determine the family's attitudes and beliefs and work to match their preferences with appropriate services.
6. In visiting families with Hispanic roots:
  - c. do not appear to be in a hurry.
7. If an immigrant family is not legally documented:
  - c. consider if and who might be suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.
8. When approaching a family with Hispanic roots:
  - a. speak to the husband before the wife when both are present.
9. When meeting with a family with Hispanic roots:

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

- b. engage in an informal and relaxed exchange before beginning on work or tasks.
10. When working with families with Hispanic roots:
- c. assess basic needs and learn about the class/economic backgrounds of the families.
11. Critical to the process of gaining initial access to selected Asian American families is a recognition of:
- b. the trust factor.
12. When meeting with a family with Asian roots:
- c. use an initial formality with well-defined roles and clear communication.
13. Asian parents:
- d. respect and honor teachers and professional specialists.
14. The disclosure of child- or family-related problems by families with Asian roots is:
- a. extremely difficult.
15. When meeting with professionals, Asian American family members may convey respect for authority by:
- c. avoiding direct eye contact and affective expression.
16. When extended family members participate in a meeting with a family with Native American roots, communication should be directed to:
- b. the entire group.
17. When meeting with a family with Native American roots:
- b. engage in "small talk" at the beginning of each visit.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section IV. Parenting Beliefs and Practices (continued)**

18. When interacting with a family with Native American roots:
  - c. do not ask a lot of questions about their tribal ceremonies.
19. During a home visit to a family with Native American roots:
  - a. ask the family where they would like you to sit.
20. In families with Native American roots:
  - d. the roles of the family should be discussed with the family.

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **Section V. Culturally Competent Practice**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

30 minutes

### **Learning Objectives:**

- ✓ Accept the need to individualize interventions for each family.
- ✓ Determine questions that can be used to learn more about the family's cultural values and preferences.
- ✓ Express attitudes and strategies that can help to engage families of different cultural backgrounds into a productive and mutual relationship.

### **Methods of Presentation:**

Lecture and large group discussion

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ **Overhead #17: Gathering Family Information**
- ✓ **Overhead #18: Cultural Factors in the Casework Relationship**
- ✓ **Handout #9: Gathering Family Information**
- ✓ **Handout #10: Cultural Factors in the Casework Relationship**

### **Resources:**

- ✓ *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence*
- ✓ *Field Guide to Child Welfare*

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **Section V. Culturally Competent Practice**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer discusses the need to individualize interventions for each family, offers questions that can be used to learn more about the family's cultural norms and preferences, and describes attitudes and strategies that can help to engage families of different cultural backgrounds into a productive and mutual relationship.

- ✓ Discuss the need to individualize interventions for each family.
- ✓ Offer questions that can be used to learn more about the family's cultural values and preferences.
- ✓ Describe attitudes and strategies that can help to engage families of different cultural backgrounds into a productive and mutual relationship.

### **Step 1:**

The trainer notes that communities are highly interactive, dynamic enterprises in which individuals are constantly interacting and responding to one another and in which the characteristics of those individuals are being modified through the interactions. Although communities are not static and are not planned, societies do have cultural mores and practices that guide human behavior and provide a socialization framework that guides interactions.

The trainer adds that the cultural framework must be viewed as a set of tendencies of possibilities from which to choose. Culture is not a rigidly prescribed set of behaviors or characteristics, but rather a framework through which actions are filtered or checked as individuals go about daily life. These cultural frameworks are constantly evolving and being reworked. Although people of the same cultural background may share tendencies, not all members of a group who share a common cultural background and/or history will behave in the same manner. Rather, behavior is governed by many factors, such as socioeconomic status, gender, age, length of residence in a locale, and education. Also, individuals may differ by the degree to which they choose to adhere to a set of cultural patterns. Some individuals identify strongly with a particular group; others combine practices from several cultural groups.

The trainer notes that cultural practices as well as individual characteristics of the person or family may influence the interactions between the child welfare professional and the families receiving services. The individuals within a community all share basic needs, but they will differ as to their specific needs and the types of environments that support growth. The child welfare professional must individualize interventions for each family to address families' concerns and priorities and tailor services to families' needs and resources. Being sensitive,

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **Section V. Culturally Competent Practice (continued)**

knowledgeable, and understanding of the families' cultural practices enhances this process and relationship.

### **Step 2:**

The trainer offers that in addition to general information about cultural similarities and differences and the continua of values and beliefs, it also may be helpful for child welfare professionals to have more specific information related to cultural views of children and child-rearing practices, family roles and structure, views of disability and its causes, health and healing practices, and views of change and intervention. These issues are so intertwined with culture and so critical in working with families that they merit special attention.

The trainer distributes **Handout #9: Gathering Family Information**. Using **Overhead #17: Gathering Family Information**, the trainer introduces one model that can be used to learn more about the family's cultural values and preferences within the context of a family systems approach to intervention. Although the guidelines are not to be used as a checklist or interview protocol, they do include questions about family attitudes, beliefs, and practices that could influence the services and the approach to providing services. They can be used to help child welfare professionals determine the kinds of questions and the issues that are often mediated by culture and to assist in matching the services to the family's way of life.

The trainer notes that the major areas of consideration include:

- Family Structure and Child-Rearing Practices
  - Family structure
  - Child-rearing practices
- Family Perceptions and Attitudes
  - Family perceptions of child's disability
  - Family's perception of health and healing
  - Family's perception of help-seeking and intervention
- Language and Communication Styles
  - Language
  - Interaction styles

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section V. Culturally Competent Practice (continued)**

The trainer cautions that a cardinal rule in working with all families is to make no assumptions about their concerns, priorities, and resources. This is even more critical when the family's cultural background and identification are different from that of the child welfare professional. However, becoming familiar with culture-specific information and determining its relevance to individual families and family members can reduce the potential tension between workers and families from different cultural backgrounds.

#### **Step 3:**

The trainer notes that cultural differences between the worker and the family can sometimes present barriers to the development of trust, empathy, and a collaborative relationship between the caseworker and the family. However, casework values stress respect for each family's individuality, the right of each family to self-determination, and mutuality in the casework relationship. Casework, therefore, provides a valuable framework within which to transcend cultural differences between the caseworker and the family, and to establish a mutual, constructive, relationship.

The trainer distributes **Handout #10: Cultural Factors in the Casework Relationship**. Using **Overhead #18: Cultural Factors in the Casework Relationship**, the trainer discusses attitudes and strategies that can help the caseworker engage families of different cultural backgrounds into a productive and mutual relationship. The strategies are particularly valuable during the initial stages of casework, but strengthening and maintaining a relationship across cultures is an ongoing process.

The trainer ensures that the following issues are addressed:

- The caseworker should understand the values, attitudes, traditions, and beliefs of the cultural groups served by the agency.
- The caseworker should become familiar with the rules of social behavior for a particular group and abide by them.
- The caseworker should openly acknowledge cultural differences during the early stages of the relationship, and acknowledge that there may be misunderstandings as a result.
- The caseworker should know the cultural norms of the family's primary reference group regarding the involvement of outside persons or agencies in family problems.

## **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

### **Section V. Culturally Competent Practice (continued)**

- The caseworker should communicate interest in the family and in understanding things from their perspective.
- The caseworker should use interviewing techniques which can clarify the subtleties of the family's communications.
- Do not underestimate the barriers posed by language differences between workers and families. Families should normally be assigned workers who speak their language, and trained interpreters should be used when workers are not fluent in the family's language.

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **Section VI. Closure**

### **Estimated Length of Time:**

20 minutes

### **Learning Objectives:**

- ✓ Identify new knowledge, attitudes, and skills gained in training and plan for their use in serving families.
- ✓ Evaluate the effectiveness of the training and provide closure to the workshop.

### **Methods of Presentation:**

Individual activities and large group discussion

### **Materials Needed:**

- ✓ **Handout #11: Bibliography**
- ✓ **Handout #12: Transferring My Learning**
- ✓ Training program evaluation forms

### **Resources:**

None

# **307-1: Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Perspective**

## **Section VI. Closure**

### **Outline of Presentation:**

The trainer reviews and addresses any remaining items on the *what's in it for me* lists generated in Section I and responds to any final comments and questions, distributes the Bibliography and encourages participants to borrow items from the training program, conducts a transfer of learning activity, and asks participants to complete the training evaluation form.

- ✓ Review any remaining items from the *what's in it for me* lists.
- ✓ Respond to any final questions or comments.
- ✓ Distribute the Bibliography and encourage the loan of resources from the training program.
- ✓ Conduct a transfer of learning activity.
- ✓ Distribute evaluation forms for completion.

### **Step 1:**

The trainer reviews and responds to any remaining items on the *what's in it for me* lists generated in Section I. The trainer responds to any final questions or comments.

### **Step 2:**

The trainer distributes **Handout #11: Bibliography** and notes that most of the items are available for loan from the training program.

### **Step 3:**

The trainer distributes **Handout #12: Transferring My Learning** and asks participants to identify one new attitude, one new skill, and one new piece of knowledge gained in the training. The trainer asks participants to identify how they will use the new attitude, skill, and piece of knowledge in their provision of services.

### **Step 4:**

As participants complete the worksheet, the trainer asks for volunteers to share one of their new attitudes, skills, or bits of knowledge and how they will use it in their work.

### **Step 5:**

The trainer distributes the evaluation form and asks participants to complete it.

### **Step 6:**

The trainer closes the session with final comments.