Cultural Self-Awareness

The following questions are provided as a guideline only. You don’t have to answer them in any particular order and may skip any of them or add anything you wish.

Objective:
To develop a level of self-awareness, including awareness of one’s own cultural biases and countertransferential tendencies with diverse client populations, which permits optimal use of one’s own emotional reactions and behavioral responses in a therapeutic relationship with clients of diverse backgrounds.

A. TO HELP OTHER GROUP MEMBERS TO RELATE TO YOUR CULTURAL IDENTITY PLEASE BRING A PERSONAL/FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH OR AN OBJECT THAT REPRESENTS SOMETHING MEANINGFUL ABOUT YOUR CULTURE

B. PLEASE BE READY TO TELL THE GROUP ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF YOUR OWN CULTURE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.

1. Describe your ethnic/cultural/social identity.
2. What was the ethnic, cultural and social makeup of the place where you lived as a child?
3. Describe who in your family influenced your sense of your cultural identity or any significant childhood experiences that shaped it?
4. What was your first encounter with a culture different from your own?
5. What reactions towards other cultures have you observed – in yourself, in your family, in other people?
6. So far, what has been the closest (or the most meaningful to you) encounter with a different culture? How did it affect you?
7. How do people tend to react to you as a representative of your culture?
8. What characteristics of your native culture you experience as essential part of yourself?
9. Is there anything about your native culture you experience as foreign to you?

C. IF YOU CAN THINK OF AN INTERESTING/ DIFFICULT SITUATION IN YOUR WORK RELATED TO YOUR CULTURAL IDENTITY PLEASE SHARE IT WITH THE GROUP:

1. Any situations involving a client’s reactions to cultural differences between the client and you?
2. Any situations involving your reactions to cultural differences/similarities between you and your client?
3. Any situations involving cultural differences/similarities between you and your supervisor?
4. Any situations where you catch yourself judging one culture by standards of another?
5. Any situations where you catch yourself “excusing” pathology to be “tolerant” of another culture?
6. Any situations where you feel that there is a “culture clash” between a client’s culture and conventional approach to therapy?
7. Any situations where you feel that there is a “culture clash” between your culture and conventional approach to therapy/supervision?
8. Any situations where either yours or your clients’ language (fluency, accent, choice of expressions, use of slang or jargon, etc.) was an issue?