

INTRODUCTION

- ❖ The United States is a cornucopia of racial and ethnic groups that make up a multitude of cultures, beliefs, and languages. Nowhere else are the cultural differences more evident than in the penal system, a system that houses a disproportionate number of Black and Brown persons.
- ❖ The American Psychiatric Association addressed cultural differences in DSM-IV-TR, Appendix I with the development of the Outline for Cultural Formulation and a list of syndromes identified by culture (DSM-IV-TR, 2000). The DSM-5 takes it a step further by retaining the previous contents and adding a Cultural Formation Interview. The hope was to create a line of questions to assist psychotherapists in assessing the role of culture in diagnosis (DSM-5, 2013).
- ❖ The development of this section in the DSM-IV-TR and DSM-5 indicates that culture can have a direct impact on how clients respond to evaluators and vice versa, the questions asked, the approach, and the selection of interpreters or translators during the forensic interview.
- ❖ Why is cultural awareness important? Because culture can identify: manifestation of risk, behavioral norms and expectations, acceptable responses to threat, and emotional presentation (Shepherd & Lewis-Fernandez, 2016).

BARRIERS TO CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Freedman and Zaami (2019) identified three concepts of bias often found in forensic psychology:

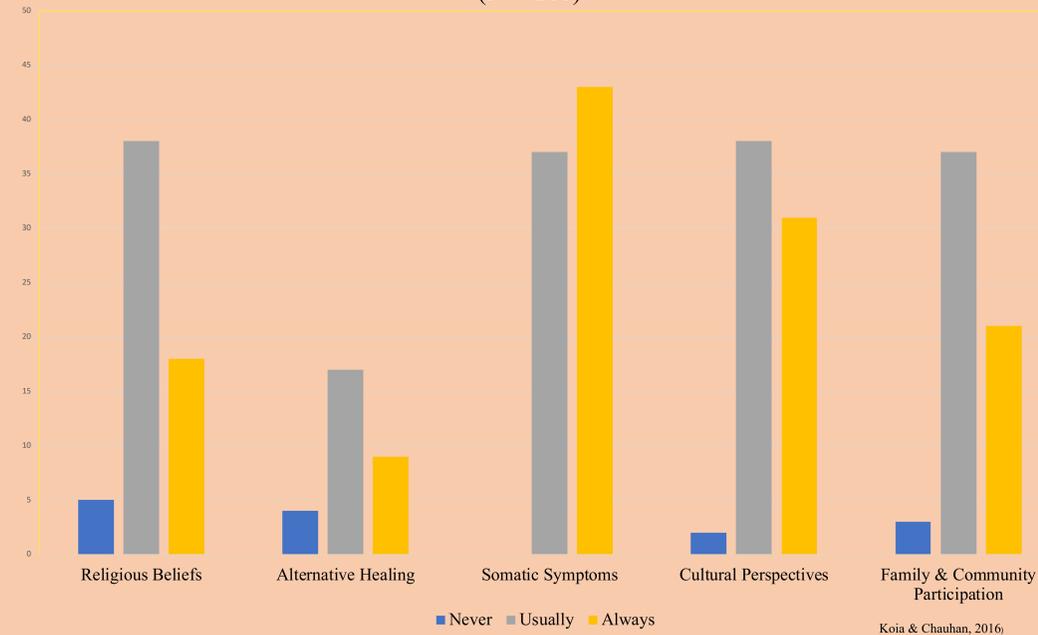
- Cultural Overshadowing: the process of denying a psychological condition due to sociocultural characteristics of the individual.
- Expectation Bias: when a psychologist allow their beliefs and opinions to “shape the interview and assessment” (p.2).
- Confirmation Bias: a psychologist’s tendency to overlook and omit specific data to “support a preconceived idea or stereotype”

When a psychologist is incapable of separating their personal beliefs and opinions from the interview and assessment process, one or all of these biases have the potential to present themselves. This affects the reliability of clinical interviews.

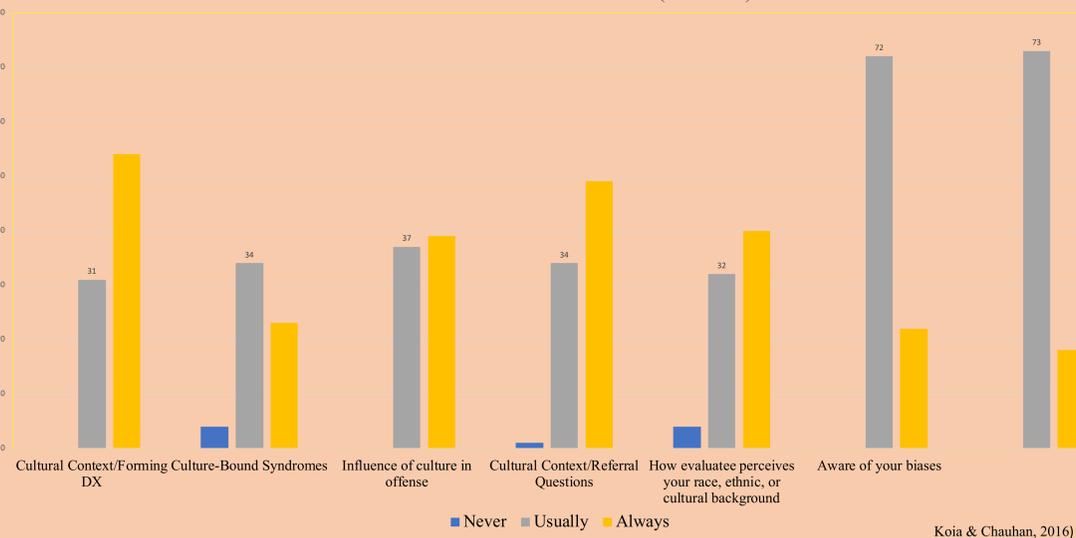
Areas that may impact the forensic interview:

- Informed consent (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018; Synder & Barnett, 2006)
- Evaluator-evaluated interaction (Kapoor et al., 2013; Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018)
- Disorder presentation (Shepherd & Lewis-Fernandez, 2016)
- Language barriers – non-English and dialects, e.g., African-American vernacular (Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018)

Forensic Psychologist Clinical Interview & Collateral Information Practice (N = 100)



Case Formulation Practices (N= 100)



CONCLUSION

As the United States becomes more diverse, the understanding of culture and cultural differences is essential to the practice of clinical psychology. Factors such as evaluator bias, race relations, language, gender, race, dress, and religious beliefs can impact the forensic interview depending on the acculturation of the individual. Therefore, cultural competency proves to be a vital part of training and continued education, to ensure the presentation of accurate information to the courts.

References

- Freedman, D., & Zaami, S. (2019). Neuroscience and mental state issues in forensic assessment. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, doi:10.1016/j.ijlp.2019.03.006
- Kapoor, R., Dike, C., Burns, C., Carvalho, V., & Griffith, E. E. H. (2013). Cultural competence in correctional mental health. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 35, 273-280. doi:10.109/j.ijlp.2013.043.016
- Koia, L., & Chauhan, P. (2016). Forensic evaluators' self-reported engagement in culturally competent practices. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 15, 312-322. doi:10.1080/14999013.218.1495280
- Rioja, V. B., & Rosenfeld, B. (2018). Addressing linguistic and cultural differences in the forensic interview. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 17, 377-386. doi:10.1080/14999013.2018.1495280
- Shepherd, S., & Lewis-Fernandez, R. (2016). Forensic risk assessment and cultural diversity: Contemporary challenges and future directions. *Psychology Public Policy and Law*, 22, 427-438. doi:10.1037/law0000102