

## CAN YOU WORK WITH SOMEONE FROM ANOTHER CULTURE?

Cultural traits describing subcultures in our society are profuse in the professional literature. This study is one attempt to question the basis for making generalized statements which are then universally applied. In this age of rapid change and acutely heightened awareness of the need to be culturally sensitive in work with clients, there is a dangerous tendency to look for instant, short cut knowledge. This tendency includes the desire to understand other cultures quickly and easily. But it is probable that no one individual will manifest all of the cultural traits described of a given group; caution must be taken that those who deviate from the assumed norm for that group are not viewed as pathological.

Source: "An Experiential Approach to Cultural Awareness in Child Welfare" by Linda Wilson and James W. Green. in Child Welfare (July/August, 1983), pp. 303-312.

1. Ability to ask questions about another culture and still observe appropriate boundaries
2. Ability to listen with understanding, not just to express one's own feelings
3. Sensitivity to the kind of questions that may be offensive to minority persons
4. Ability to accurately interpret people's moods and body language
5. Ability to project feelings of respect
6. Ability to relate on a peer level without introducing elements of power into the relationship
7. Ability to avoid making value judgments
8. Ability to identify with poverty
9. Ability to share social experience
10. Ability to avoid intellectualizing
11. An interest in understanding the language of the culture
12. A willingness to participate in the culture, not just observe it