

Book Review / Compte rendu

France, M. H., Rodríguez, M. d. C., & Hett, G. G.
(2021). *Diversity, culture, and counselling: A Canadian perspective* (3rd ed.). Brush Education. ISBN: 978-1-55059-875-9, xi + 610 pp.

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ABSTRACT

Divided into three sections, this edited volume offers a comprehensive view of the foundational issues, cultural communities, and practical approaches involved in working with a diverse clientele. Contributions to this book include a wide overview of the issues that arise when working with a culturally diverse clientele and a consideration of a broad range of issues with diversity, including vulnerable populations. Chapters address issues of cultural identity development and specific populations, discussing relevant historical contexts as well as practical points that inform best practices. This book is both informative and practical, serving as both a primer and as a succinct source of information. The specific focus on cross-cultural competency versus the more commonly used term of cultural competency highlights the importance of continued development of competency for practitioners.

RÉSUMÉ

Divisé en trois sections, ce recueil offre une vue d'ensemble des questions fondamentales, des communautés culturelles, et des approches pratiques pour travailler avec une clientèle diversifiée. Les contributions à cet ouvrage comprennent un large aperçu des questions qui se posent lorsque l'on travaille avec une clientèle culturellement diversifiée ainsi qu'un éventail de problèmes liés à la diversité, incluant les populations vulnérables. Les chapitres abordent les questions du développement de l'identité culturelle et des populations spécifiques, en discutant des contextes historiques pertinents ainsi que des points qui éclairent les meilleures pratiques. Ce livre est informatif et pratique, servant à la fois d'introduction et de source d'information condensée. L'accent mis sur la compétence interculturelle par rapport au terme plus commun de compétence culturelle souligne l'importance du développement continu des compétences pour les praticiens.

The third edition of *Diversity, Culture and Counselling: A Canadian Perspective* (2021) was edited by M. Honoré France, Maria del Carmen Rodríguez, and Geoffrey G. Hett. Dr. France, professor emeritus at the University of Victoria, is an artist, educator, psychotherapist, and writer from Ani-yun-wiwa First Nation. Dr. Rodríguez is an assistant professor of Indigenous education at the University of Victoria. She researches education for diversity, anti-racism, bilingualism, identity development, and social justice. Dr. Hett, professor emeritus at the University of Victoria, is a founding director of the Erma Fennell Foundation for the Relief of Poverty.

This book provides a comprehensive view of the foundational issues and practical approaches to work with a diverse clientele. Notably, this book recognizes a wide range of issues with forms of diversity such as race and disability and considers how crisis situations influence various vulnerable populations. It includes chapters written by authors who represent the communities discussed and who provide nuanced lived experience coupled with expertise in the field. Their work also includes culturally sensitive methods of therapy that invite professionals to consider how to engage clients in a culturally attuned way.

The book's 25 chapters are divided into three parts. Part 1 focuses on foundational knowledge crucial to becoming a cross-culturally competent practitioner. It highlights challenges for counsellors in a diverse world, outlines the realities and costs of racism, discrimination, and prejudice, and invites therapists to situate themselves and their own biases. An overview of world view, its construction and definition, and how to use it in assessing clients' perceptions of the world is presented. Part 2 focuses on specific concerns of multiple marginalized groups, providing background history, personal narratives when available, a broad understanding of potential cultural considerations, and practical points to apply. Included in this section are chapters discussing considerations for groups that are not always included in discussions of diversity, including Muslim Canadians, people with disabilities, biracial individuals, and Euro Canadians, capturing the complexity of cultural diversity. Also included are chapters on Indigenous communities, Asians (Chinese Canadian and South Asian Canadian), working with migrants, working with refugees, Hispanic communities, Black Canadians, and international students. Part 3 offers practical approaches to working with a diverse clientele, including using Indigenous approaches (e.g., medicine wheel, Indigenous spirituality), yoga therapy, transpersonal counselling, a multi-dimensional approach using Sufism, Buddhist psychotherapy, and connection with nature.

Although the chapters are written by many different authors with varying writing styles, structurally the chapters follow a similar pattern, providing necessary background (e.g., knowledge or a narrative) and then going into the specific concerns of the topic. As expected with many contributors, the length of the chapters varies, yet none of the chapters feels too long or too short; each chapter offers information that is necessary and leaves room for further thought. When

personal narratives are not available, statistical information or existing narratives are provided to increase understanding of the possible lived experiences of individuals from each community. The diversity of voices and perspectives provides a microcosm of a diverse country with marginalized voices being given space. In outlining less known, culturally informed therapy models, the theoretical, philosophical, or historical underpinnings are presented to enhance understanding of where they come from. This is followed by considerations on ways to help practitioners remain within their areas of practice and develop forms of cross-cultural counselling competency that “take into account both the counsellor’s awareness of their own personal cultural values and biases and the client’s worldview” (p. 65).

This book would serve well as a primer for both students and for practitioners who want a comprehensive approach to cross-cultural counselling competency that covers many of the knowledge areas that will help them hone their ability to assist a diverse clientele. For individuals more well versed in cross-cultural work, this book provides a ready source of information and produces more nuanced understandings of migration journeys and practical considerations. The emphasis on working with Indigenous clients is crucial as psychology moves toward a decolonized and anti-racist way of practice. Critical insights into the concerns faced by marginalized groups—with specific attention to non-traditional, non-Eurocentric forms of therapy that can be useful—serve to spark fruitful inquiries into more culturally appropriate ways of practice.

Given the vast number of cultural groups that can be considered, no one work can be comprehensive in its inclusion of all possible groups and subgroups. As a way to better address the diversity within diversity, chapters on religious diversity and disability provide some general insight into how to assist members of broader communities (e.g., individuals with autoimmune conditions, neurodiversity, religious minorities such as Jewish Canadians). Although generational differences are mentioned, exploring and highlighting their role in the lives of racialized immigrants would elucidate a range of needs in a counselling context. Lacking in this compilation is a practical, concerted call toward social justice action and the need for advocacy that is required for therapists working with individuals who are marginalized, which may include a discussion of liberatory approaches. The need for social justice action is scattered throughout the book, but there is no clear, practical discussion on how to achieve this. Therapists are ethically responsible for helping clients take desired action and advocating for societal change, recentring the conversation for needed change in the wider context. Finally, a consideration of more common approaches to counselling and their merits (or lack thereof) when working cross-culturally would help guide ethical decision making. Nevertheless, this book is well structured and well written, and it provides an attentive approach to this complex topic. It will be a thought-provoking source of knowledge.

About the Author

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