Culturally Considerate Counseling

I come from a long line of natural helpers guided by one simple, yet rarely spoken principle: treat people with respect. That basic principle also guides this book and decides its title. Perhaps to some Culturally Considerate School Counseling: Helping Without Bias seems passive and does not demand proficiency, yet cultural competency cannot take place without compassion and self-awareness. Grammatically, helping may be a gerund but in action, helping without bias is life affirming and happens only when helpers arrive with open rather than loaded arms.

My life was affirmed as an infant by my tenacious family of natural helpers and the blessed narcissism of a gifted young surgeon who saw to it I survived a rare congenital condition. My individual history contributes to my professional identity and converges in this volume.

Through literature, practical examples, heavily camouflaged case vignettes, and personal narrative, Culturally Considerate School Counseling: Helping Without Bias merges research with search for meaning. There are many models and measurements of cultural competency, yet there are few resources which address character education for professionals. At its core, cultural consideration is the golden rule existing throughout all societies. Buddhism: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. Judaism: Love thy neighbor as thyself. Hinduism: Do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you. Christianity: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Islam: Seek for mankind that of which you are desirous for yourself. Lakota Sioux: Mitakuye oyas’in (all my relations).
THE ASCA NATIONAL MODEL

In 1988, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) adopted the first position statement encouraging its membership to take a proactive stance on multiculturalism and challenged school counselors to be more critically reflective about issues of equity and diversity. In 2004, a new statement was adopted, directing professional school counselors to “advocate for appropriate opportunities and services that promote maximum development for all students regardless of cultural backgrounds and strive to remove barriers impeding student success” (Ravitch, 2006). Professional school counselors are urged to accomplish this by

- increasing awareness of culturally diverse persons and populations,
- increasing sensitivity of students and parents to cultural diversity, and
- enhancing the total school and community climate for all students.


The ASCA relies upon The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling for guidance and mandates regarding the professional school counseling profession. The ASCA National Model “maximizes the full potential of the National Standards document and addresses education reform efforts.” The model also “incorporates school counseling standards for every student, to meet the needs of all students, and to close the gap between specific groups of students and their peers” (American School Counselor Association, 2005).

The preamble of the Ethical Standards for School Counselors states that “professional school counselors are advocates, leaders, collaborators, and consultants who create opportunities for equity in access and success in educational opportunities” (American School Counselor Association, 2005). The categories of responsibilities outlined by these ethical standards are as follows:

a. Responsibilities to Students
b. Responsibilities to Parents and/or Guardians
c. Responsibilities to Colleagues and Professional Associates
d. Responsibilities to the School and Community
e. Responsibility to Self
f. Responsibility to the Profession
g. Maintenance of Standards

Each of these responsibilities inherently includes competencies in multiculturalism and diversity, yet only one, Responsibility to Self (E.2.)
Culturally Considerate Counseling specifies diversity and provides the following standards for professional school counselors:

a. Affirms the diversity of students, staff, and families

b. Expands and develops awareness of his or her own attitudes and beliefs affecting cultural values and biases and strives to attain cultural competencies

c. Possesses knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect him or her personally and professionally

d. Acquires educational, consultation and training, experiences to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness in working with diverse populations: ethnic and/or racial status, age, economic status, special needs, ESL or ELL, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and/or expression, family type, religious and/or spiritual identity, and appearance (American School Counselor Association, 2005)

Culturally Considerate School Counseling: Helping Without Bias incorporates wisdom from a variety of sources, representing a number of disciplines and theories, none more important than that of the ASCA. Whenever possible, cultural competencies will be drawn from the tenets of the ASCA National Model, and strategies will be suggested to facilitate and achieve them. The ASCA framework is similar to the ethical standards of school psychologists, school social workers, and other allied professions. Cultural competencies and supportive strategies should easily transfer to these professions as well.

In Multiculturalism and Diversity: School Counseling Principles, Ravitch (2006) asserts that organizing data on the basis of specific racial, cultural, or ethnic groups compartmentalizes students by one aspect of their identity rather than looking at students, counselors, schools, and communities more holistically. Similarly, I prefer a more expansive language for exploring issues of difference and taking notice of populations to consider. Some terms cannot be avoided without resorting to laborious and awkward exposition, but we can learn to use them in less limiting ways. Research shows this is quickly becoming essential.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CULTURE

There is a great debate about the words “race,” “ethnicity,” and “culture,” and there are many knowledgeable and eloquent scholars who address the complex history and science surrounding them, yet these terms remain in our daily vernacular. Anthropologists have led the way in redefining
how we think and speak about racial categories, and social scientists have added opinions from sociological and psychological perspectives. In short, these words—categories—are becoming obsolete.

In 1996, the American Journal of Physical Anthropology published the following statement on the biological aspects of race:

These old racial categories were based on externally visible traits, primarily skin color, features of the face, and the shape and size of the head and body, and the underlying skeleton. They were often imbued with nonbiological attributes, based on social constructs of race . . . such notions have often been used to support racist doctrines. (American Association of Physical Anthropologists, 1996)

“Ethnicity” may be more appropriate by definition but equally inadequate if not insensitive.

Ethnicity refers to clusters of people who have common . . . traits . . . and view themselves as constituting an ethnic group, . . . but ethnic groups and ethnicity are not fixed, bounded entities; they are open, flexible, and subject to change, and they are usually self-defined. (Smedley & Smedley, 2005)

The United States Census Bureau provides more authoritative data on the subject of the “American Community,” interchanging ancestry with “ethnic origin or descent” and “heritage or country of birth of person or ancestors.” The census data of 2000 yielded seven basic categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, and Two or More Races (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Tidy perhaps, but neither exhaustive nor inclusive.

The federal government considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts, asserting that Hispanics and Latinos may be of “any race.” In fact, there is disagreement within Hispanic/Latino communities and between generations and gender about which term is preferred (Hede, 2009). Dotson-Blake, Foster, and Gressard (2009) state the term “Hispanic” is regarded by many as being inadequate for use as a total population descriptor as it neglects to address unique identities of individuals from Mexico, Central and South America, and Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Immigrants from these areas often identify more strongly with their nationality than with their language. The terms “Latino” / “Latina” have become more widely accepted in an effort to establish an identity with Latin cultural roots rather than those founded in Spanish colonialism. Authors Felipe and Betty Ann Korzenny (2005) concur by stating, “. . . the term Latino encompasses almost anyone from a culture with Latin roots.” The word “Hispanic” seems to be more accepted by younger generations, while older Latinos view it as a more pejorative term originating
from colonization. Women, however, respond more favorably to “Latina” according to editor of *Latina Magazine*, Sylvia Martínez (Granados, 2000). Maria E. Martín, executive director of *Latino USA*, a radio news journal broadcast on NPR, states that her views regarding the term “Hispanic” have shifted somewhat but adds, “My (previous) reaction to the term was that it was the dominant culture’s attempt to homogenize Latinos.” Martínez feels similarly in that, given a choice, people would not choose either. “Most people think of themselves as Mexican American, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans” (Hede, 2009).

Bonnie Davis (2009) presents an extensive look at the complicated issue of racial identity in her latest book, *The Biracial and Multiracial Student Experience: A Journey to Racial Literacy*. As more “mixed race” students enter the classroom, educators and school counselors have been presented with the challenge of reexamining the meaning of racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. Biracial and multiracial students, parents, and educators share personal narratives throughout Davis’ book, and Davis tells her own compelling story of one educator’s journey to racial literacy. These narratives illustrate the diversity within as well as beyond familial identity.

Even how we have come to use the word “culture” is called into question by the American Anthropological Association (American Anthropological Association, 1998), which states, “cultural behavior is learned, conditioned into infants beginning at birth and always subject to modification. No human is born with a built-in culture or language.” Smedley and Smedley (2005) state that what is common to most anthropological conceptions of culture is the contention that culture is external, acquired, and transmissible to others.

Words are powerful. They matter. The words we use in counseling sessions with students and conversations with peers and parents make a first and lasting impression. The words we choose tell far more about us than they elicit from others. Automatically assigning labels (words), even when seemingly factual, also assigns assumptions and disregards a student’s individuality and self-concept. Sometimes, even members of the same family have different ideas about identity. I would like to tell you about Carlos.

Carlos’s father, a direct and passionate self-identified Puerto Rican man, called to inquire about counseling for his son. He had many questions. Was I male? Was I black? Did I speak Spanish? How old was I? How much experience did I have? None of my answers were the right ones, though it seemed to please him that I was not unsettled by any of them and respectful of all. I could assure him of three attributes: academic training, practical application, and past success. Malgady & Zayas cite these attributes as qualities important to Hispanic families when seeking professional help (2001).

Carlos was the “identified patient,” but beneath his disruptive behavior and impertinent attitude was a simple search for an identity of his own rather than a clinical or familial label.
Carlos’s birth mother was of Puerto Rican and American heritage; his birth father was Dominican. Carlos had been adopted by a Puerto Rican couple, now citizens of the United States. His adoptive parents saw him as Puerto Rican and expected him to adhere to their very firm family values and discipline. Carlos, however, identified strongly as part of an African American peer group at the county school where he was bussed as part of the protracted desegregation program. This presented a myriad of problems (Vonk, 2001).

While I understood the complexities of this blended family, my task was to help Carlos become more fluid between worlds and to help his parents and teachers honor his self-identity and internal reality.

One day, Carlos explained football to me. I watch football, but I never understand it. Carlos, at thirteen, taught me more in one hour with crayons and butcher block paper than I had ever learned from John Madden. As he talked, Carlos also concluded he was the running back in his family. He described how they would toss him countless balls, expect him to run with them, score touchdowns, and never complain. The problem, however, was that Carlos felt that he belonged on the other team where his quarterback skills were appreciated. The other team thought he fit better with them; he looked like them, he dressed in the same team colors, and they believed he was smart. They thought it was cool he could come up with all the plays. When he did that for the home team, they punished him for being disrespectful, deceptive, and not “knowing his place.” Additionally confusing for Carlos was that his teachers wanted him to be somewhere in the middle—smart and capable but never too “mouthy.”

Ponterotto, Mendelowitz, and Collabolletta (2008) state that school counselors need to understand the diverse worldviews and value systems that impact a student’s context for learning and interaction both in school and at home. They affirm what Carlos innately knew: “While individual expression and assertiveness may be valued and promoted in high school, such behaviors in a traditional collectivist-culture-oriented family could be interpreted as rude and selfish” (Ponterotto, Mendelowitz, & Collabolletta, 2008).

NEW WAYS OF CONSIDERING STUDENT POPULATIONS

Rather than using words such as “race,” “ethnicity,” or “culture,” consider what we really need to know about a student who doesn’t look the same as we do or speak in the same manner as the majority of our other students. Identifying heritage, history, geography, circumstance, and affinity will give us far more information and lead to better understanding of where he or she is literally and figuratively “coming from” than deciding he is African American because of skin color or Hispanic because of name.
Therefore, let’s discard outdated, limiting, and often prejudicial words and instead consider using

- Heritage and Historic Memory
- Geographic or Regional Origins
- Circumstance and Situation
- Affinity or Relational Bonds

HERITAGE AND HISTORIC MEMORY

There is no doubt the ways in which students and their families self-identify present important implications for school counselors. The goal of shifting our categorical language is certainly not to further annihilate a child’s sense of self, but our language is inadequate, and our understanding of the complexities and nuances of “race,” “ethnicity,” and “culture” is even more so. Ancestry (lineage) and heritage—that which is transmitted from a predecessor (Merriam-Webster, 1973)—are perhaps more specific and accurate ways of discovering an individual’s family background or structure. Our previous way of categorizing students (by race or ethnicity) would likely limit our understanding and unwittingly lead to stereotyping. Journalist Walter Lippmann (1997) wrote extensively in 1922 about the word and manifestation of “stereotype.” Stereotypes are preconceived depictions of a person, group, or society and prove dangerous, especially when used to justify persecution and discrimination.

Discovery of the unseen is often far more important than the obvious. Ayanna and I had worked together for a few months. She was a verbal child but responded especially well to art therapy. These methods gave us insights, though they served more as a bonding exercise. During one particularly poignant session, Ayanna matter-of-factly stated, “I’m glad you’re white.”

“You are?”

“Yes,” she said, working away on her art, an image of the two of us taking a walk.

“Tell me more about why you are glad.”

“Because I don’t trust black people. My best friend, Molly, is white. I trust her. But I don’t trust the other girls. They’re always talkin’ about me and stuff. Molly’s not like that. My doctor is white. My mom says that black people are always talkin’ trash about each other. White people don’t do that. I can trust you.”

“Well, I’m glad you can trust me, but I’m just wondering if the only reason you trust me is because I’m white.”

“Well . . . no.” I asked if she could tell me other reasons. She could. “You listen. You don’t tell me I’m wrong for feeling bad or sad or mad. You do tell me when I need to change my behavior, but you’re not mean about it.”
I asked if there was anything else. "Oh yeah!" she said. "You're funny and you laugh at my jokes!"

Later, I talked with her mother, who easily admitted Ayanna "got those ideas about black people" from her. She also disclosed that her own mother had instilled those ideas in her. This bias against African Americans came from Ayanna's grandmother, who was Jamaican born. She viewed herself and her family heritage as vastly different from black Americans. The Jamaican heritage in Ayanna's family was virtually unknown to her but mighty in its implications.

"Heritage" is a word often used with pride. Heritage assumes positive legacy left by ancestors and communal traditions gifted by prior generations. For example, among many Native American/American Indian tribes, the importance of community and collaboration are closely held values that promote prosocial interactions and altruism. Inviting Native American/American Indian elders to the classroom to recount stories of tribal empathy and kindness can assist students in building social skills and school community (Turner, Reich, Trotter, & Siewart, 2009).

Historic memory is collective in nature. It is understood as a representation of the past shared by a group or community. Historic memory fosters and defines group identity, explaining where members have come from, who they are, and how they should behave in the present as it relates to the past (Romano, 2009). Romano further suggests that schools play an important role in shaping collective (historic) memory because they are the first places children learn about important historical events, though most textbooks provide a Eurocentric point of view. For some children and their families, this history is either fictional or biased.

Kathy Graves details a valuable example of the meaning of memory in her 2004 doctoral dissertation titled Resilience and Adaptation Among Alaskan Native Men. Taking decades old data, Dr. Graves explored the ramifications of historical trauma, involving "the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding both over a life span and across generations resulting from massive group catastrophes (which) continue to affect current generations of Alaskan Native people" (Graves, 2004). Similar consideration should be given to students whose ancestors were victims and/or survivors of mass traumas such as slavery, the Holocaust, or Japanese American internment. Recently, I was humbled to learn about the heritage and historic trauma of a segment of the Louisiana population (Begnaud, 1964). I thought I knew something about Cajun customs because of Mardi Gras and Anne Rice. I can also relate to the perpetual barrage of intellectual disparagements hurled against people of Cajun ancestry because of similar ones heaved upon my own hillbilly kin. Instead, I was ignorant of the cultural assault suffered by the Acadian people who, like American Indians, were stripped of their cultural pride, first language, and identity (LeBlanc, 2010). Learning this expanded my knowledge base, informed my understanding of the rich Acadian culture beyond gumbo and jambalaya,
and has made me more considerate of friends, colleagues, and clients who come from southwestern Louisiana parishes.

Christine Sleeter is professor emerita at California State University, Monterey Bay. Professor Sleeter coined the term and developed the Critical Family History Theory which places family in a “socio-cultural historical context” (Sleeter, 2008). She describes research of her own family history in an effort to deepen her understanding of historic memory:

I explored how this process can work as an entrée into historical memory about race, ethnicity, and identify—revealing the ways in which power and privilege have been constructed, the prices people have paid for that, and the ways in which ordinary people have challenged inequities. (Sleeter, 2008)

GEOGRAPHIC OR REGIONAL ORIGINS

Geographic origin tells us about the place one was born, where he has lived, the terrain he has traveled. Geography encompasses country, region, state or province, topography, and population distribution.

Changing schools is difficult for many students. When the change includes disruption from a known environment to a lesser known or unknown one, difficulty is compounded. With mass transit, mass media, and Internet access now being a part of our daily routine, it is easy to assume that moving from one area to another should be a relatively simple thing. It isn’t. Lonborg and Bowen (2004) note that there is a “growing body of literature addressing ethical and multicultural issues in school counseling, yet there is relatively little discussion of the challenges associated with rural counseling practices.”

My family of origin lives in the Ozark Mountains of southern Missouri. It may be easy to maneuver the narrow winding county roads in the winter in our SUVs, but it is inconceivable for many of my relatives to maneuver the four lanes of Interstate 44 to visit St. Louis. When they do, it feels to them as if they are visiting a foreign land. Much of the Ozarks, like many regions in Appalachia, is isolated within rugged hills and only accessible via locally maintained roadways. Some areas of the desert Southwest or Northern mountain states are similar. Television and Internet reception is intermittent; cable and satellite connections are often unavailable or unaffordable, not only to families but also to rural schools systems (Zacharakis, Devin, & Miller, 2008).

These are only a few of the things we must consider when students arrive in our metropolitan schools from less populated areas of the country. Dialect, dress, and experience may differ greatly. It is easy to assume that students are delayed by intellect instead of by exposure. On the other hand, students who relocate from urban or suburban areas may
seem more advanced than their rural classmates. Familiarity does not necessarily mean comprehension, however. Regardless, helping children feel at home and welcome is the priority.

Geographic considerations may skip generations. As with deeply held ancestry, geography can show up in unexpected ways. Customs, idioms, beliefs, and traditions can have strong ties to a family’s geographic origins. Salyers and Ritchie (2006) describe the need for Appalachian cultural awareness as a means of enhancing services to a “forgotten people.” In many pockets of America, there is a similar need to recognize difference and distinction based upon geographic location, though many have argued that residents sharing identification with location also share common identity and history (Salyers & Ritchie, 2006).

CIRCUMSTANTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Circumstantial considerations include societal structures such as economic status, permanence, and access. Examples include students living in poverty, transient (homeless) families, children in foster care or later age adoptions, or a student whose parent is incarcerated, indefinitely hospitalized, or otherwise incapacitated.

The 2005–2007 U.S. Census data estimated that 18.3% of children under 18 years old lived below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Children living in poverty present a profound challenge to educators and counseling professionals. Children living in poverty are more likely to report increased levels of anxiety, depression, more behavioral disturbance, and lower level of school engagement leading to a greater incidence of tardiness, absenteeism, and dropout (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007).

In 2003, children under 18 accounted for 39% of the homeless population (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2007). Consider the simple ramifications of these facts: every time a child has to change schools, his or her education is disrupted, some estimates speculating as much as three to six months of education being lost with each move, and one study found that 23% of homeless children repeated a grade (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2008). Clean clothes and bathing are luxuries when there is no washer or money for a Laundromat; it is not easy to find homework when there is no safe place to keep it; if a child hasn’t had a good night’s sleep or is hungry, it is impossible for him or her to concentrate in class. School attendance is especially important for children who are homeless because it may provide one constant in an uncertain world; however, district requirements may make it impractical for children to be registered properly or access transportation. Difficulties in obtaining birth certificates, prior school records, or proof of current residency are typically problematic (Strawser, Markos, Yamaguchi, & Higgs, 2000).
In the instance of later age adoption—that is, adoption after a child is of school age—not only is a student adjusting to a new school, but he or she may be adjusting to a new family, home, and lifestyle. Many later adoptions occur after a child has been living in a residential group home or treatment setting. This, compounded with the original reasons children are available for adoption, raise very multifaceted and often unanswerable questions.

Students whose parent is indefinitely hospitalized or incarcerated often face an assortment of issues such as grief, confusion, and isolation; in both circumstances, they may feel shame. Separation anxiety and attachment issues are prevalent.

The stigma of having a parent in prison can be overwhelming. It is estimated that 1.5 to 2 million children are affected, and the number of children with parents in the correctional system has doubled since 1991 (Miller, 2006). Parent-teacher conferences must be managed in creative ways because incarceration does not always mean the parent has lost rights or legal custody.

Chris and Tony originally came into counseling with their mother. Ms. Simmons had been sentenced to five years in prison for a drug-related felony. She was getting her affairs in order. She was very clear that she wanted her sons to have someone to talk with while she was gone, and her family would not be helpful. The boys, 14 and 15 at the time, were reluctant to talk about how their mother’s upcoming incarceration would affect them. It was not until Ms. Simmons was imprisoned that they began to express feelings of embarrassment and fear but also of pride in how their mother was taking responsibility for her actions. Prior to her incarceration, the boys had both been below average students. After she went away, they both worked hard to “make her proud.”

This newfound academic success was a surprise to many of the teachers, and they remained baffled as Ms. Simmons had also instructed that no one other than the counselor and the administration be told the reason for her absence. She remained in constant contact with her sons and when possible, conducted parent-teacher conferences over the phone. She was granted early release for good behavior yet missed Tony’s graduation. One of the ways in which Chris compensated for the absence of his mother was to become interested in filmmaking. He took as many multimedia classes as he could and documented the daily lives of his brother and himself. He made a special video of Tony’s graduation day and sent it to their mother.

**AFFINITY OR RELATIONAL BONDS**

Affinity or relational bonds may be by choice rather than circumstance, yet there may be an entrenchment in the mores and customs of the group which require consideration. Military families currently present a noble
though challenging array of considerations. Conversely, students who belong to gangs or are children or siblings of gang members may feel the same fierce loyalty to their unit, but we as professionals use our skills to counsel them out of harm’s way rather than honoring the service of their family member. For some children, this seems unfair; war is war.

Issues common to most all affinity or relational bonds are a strong sense of allegiance, some measure of uniformity, an actual or implied code of honor, and a suspicion of outsiders—those who are not part of the group or faction (Anderson, 1996).

Gang membership almost always carries a negative connotation, but gangs do serve a purpose. A sense of belonging, self-identity, status and emotional support, peer group respect, and sense of security are basic developmental needs which can be acquired for some young people through participation in gangs. Values such as loyalty, responsibility, and group conformity are learned on the streets when they are not available at home (Omizo, Omizo, & Honda, 1997).

In some instances, home is where gang membership begins. In one study conducted, a 14-year-old girl confirmed being born into the gang. “My mother and step-father were leaders in the gang, and I was always there. For my first birthday, I got a tattoo on my arm... I’ll be one of them ’til I die” (Molidor, 1996). Molidor goes on to report that the experiences of her sample of female gang members were more like that of a “combat zone than a learning environment.” The majority carried a knife to school on a daily basis and had easy access to firearms. Two themes emerged from the study: belonging and power (Molidor, 1996). This is not so different from the reasons young men and women join other, more socially acceptable armed forces.

The current military involvement in the Middle East has presented school counselors with new dilemmas. In school districts located near military bases, it is somewhat easier to establish routine ways of responding to student concerns and crisis. Burnham and Hooper (2008) also find significant age and gender difference in school children’s response to the war in Iraq. Girls and younger children report the highest level of fear. Boys may experience war-related fears, but they are less open about expressing them. Younger boys may present as “enamored and excited,” while girls present as “worried and troubled” (Burnham & Hooper, 2008). Gathering the facts from parents before addressing the concerns of children is important, as children often fear most what they don’t know and may imagine a scenario based on their fears rather than actuality. Somatic complaints may increase with stress. Honest and age appropriate information helps to comfort children. To offset helplessness, emphasize the things students have control over such as school performance and helping out at home (Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, 2008).
**CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

At the end of most chapters, the reader is offered an itemized list of Cultural Competencies and Supportive Strategies. Each competency is followed by the relative ASCA National Model Standards for school counselors. Refer to the *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (American School Counselor Association, 2005) for elaboration.

- Listen carefully; ask questions; do not assume. (ASCA National Model Standards—A.1.a., b., c., A.3. a., b., B.1.a. b., E.1.a., b., c., E.2.a., b., c., d.)
- Research what your students share with you and ask them more questions. (ASCA National Model Standards—B.1.d., B.2.d., C.1.c., D.2.a., b.)
- Construct a consistent climate of inclusion and interest within the school community. (ASCA National Model Standards—A.3.b., E.1.a., b., c., E.2.a., b., c., d.)
- Be proactive in enforcement of consequences for exclusion, prejudicial talk, or behavior without creating backlash. (ASCA National Model Standards—E.1.a., b., c., E.2.a., b., c., d., F.1.a., b., d.)
- Gently, yet persistently, respond to bigotry or intolerance of other school professionals. (ASCA National Model Standards—E.2.a., b., c., d., F.1.a., b., d., F.2.b., c., G.1., 2., 3., 4.)
- Seek other professionals who may have more personal or professional experience with a particular population. (ASCA National Model Standards—D.1.c., E.1.c., E.2.d., F.2.a., G.1.)
- Attend professional workshops, presentations, and conferences to expand cultural and awareness and competency. (ASCA National Model Standards—E.1.c., E.2.d., G.1., 2., 3., 4.)
- Continue to listen, ask questions, and share what you’ve learned from your students about heritage, geography, circumstance, and relationships. (ASCA National Model Standards—A.1.a., b., c., d., F.1.c., E.2.b., d., F.2.b.)
- Find a container and some colorful index cards. Each day, write something you’ve learned about “culture” and put it in the container. (ASCA National Model Standards—E.1.b., E.2.d.)
- When your container is full, pass it on to a less experienced colleague. (ASCA National Model Standards—F.2.b., c.)
- Begin filling a new container with gifts of personal and professional growth. (ASCA National Model Standards—E.1.b., c., F.1.c.)
CHAPTER SUMMARY

This is in no way a complete compilation of material regarding populations generally categorized by race, ethnicity, and culture, but it is an invitation to listen, learn, and consider new and perhaps more precise delineations. In future chapters, we will consider the individualized needs of other student populations and provide suggestions for continued professional growth and skill building. Chapters will undoubtedly intertwine. Chapter 2, for example, will explore student religious and spiritual affiliations. Be conscious of the information in Chapter 1 regarding the importance of heritage, history, and affinity. These factors—these considerations—are significant within religious and spiritual identities as well.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT AND FACILITATE CULTURALLY CONSIDERATE COUNSELING

- Invite your students to read, write, and share information about their ancestry and/or heritage. Leave the request open-ended. Do not define the topic for them. Be clear they will not be graded on their acceptance of this invitation.
- Invite your student to make an image of her family doing something together. Invite the student to tell the story of the picture or collage.
- Using a world map, invite your student to point to the places he knows his ancestors have lived. Ask where he (the student) was born. Where would he like to visit to learn more about his heritage?
- Establish a school “Heritage Day.” Celebrate ancestry and history through clothing, food, music, and storytelling. Honor elders and others by including stories of family sacrifice.
- Ask your students the following question: What is worth fighting for? Then invite him or her to name four people who would stand beside you in that fight.
- Be prepared to answer the same questions.