

Promoting self-reflection and cultural attunement in culturally responsive consultation: the development of a tool for practice

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The United Kingdom continues to change in terms of its ethnic and cultural diversity, and locating our practice in the overall goals of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all has never been more important. As the Educational Psychology profession navigates enhancing professional practice when working with culturally diverse populations, a vital element of such work is moving away from locating difference in the 'other' towards acknowledging and appreciating our own cultures and worldviews and how these intersect and interact in relationship. One framework to support culturally responsive practice specifically for Educational Psychologists has recently been published (Sakata, 2024), and includes both intrapersonal and inter-personal dimensions to emphasise the ongoing relational reflexivity required to engage in such work. To extend this framework further, we have begun developing a culturally responsive consultation reflective tool (CRC) that promotes self-reflection and cultural attunement in applied consultation practice. This paper outlines the development of the CRC reflective tool, its theoretical underpinnings and initial thoughts on its use in supervision.

Keywords: cultural responsiveness; cultural attunement; culturally responsive consultation; educational psychology practice, self-reflection

Context, rationale and aims

The UK population includes a rich variety of cultures, heritages and ethnicities (Department for Education, 2021), with ethnic diversity increasing across England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Now more than ever Educational Psychologists (EPs) need to effectively support all children, young people, families and schools by embracing research-informed culturally responsive techniques. Both the regulator and professional bodies representing applied psychology practitioners highlight the central significance of being aware, respectful of, and responsive to, cultural sameness and difference. For example, the most recent Standards of Proficiency issued by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) saw the addition of Standard 5 which requires all registrants to "recognise the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice and practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner" (2023, p.9). The British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2021) also highlighted that respect

is one of the most fundamental and universal ethical principles across geographical and cultural boundaries...[providing] the philosophical foundation for many of the other ethical principles. Respect for dignity recognises the inherent worth of all human beings, regardless of perceived or real differences in social status, ethnic origin, gender, capacities, or any other such group-based characteristics (p. 6).

However, the BPS noted that merely espousing this principle does not necessarily equate to its enactment, given the degree to which bias impacts on reasoning. They explicitly link becoming and remaining conscious of one's biases as central to ethical practice and in addition highlighted that awareness of bias alone does not guarantee ethical action. This is because motivation or ability to act can be impacted by numerous factors such as context, conformity, power, affect, social norms and organisational dynamics (BPS, 2021). Even though recognising the potential impact of one's personal values and beliefs is an especially important task for EPs who are less marginalised by virtues of identity (class, ethnicity, faith, sex, gender, ability, citizenship, language, sexual orientation and so on) acknowledging and addressing bias is potentially uncomfortable (and thus ignored, avoided or engaged in on only a superficial level). Some practitioners may therefore find it helpful to have a model to deploy, either individually and/or in relationship, to support authentic reflection and action for cultural responsiveness.

This paper describes the development of a tool which aims to enhance self-awareness of the potential stereotypes and biases held by practitioner psychologists. This may, in turn, maximise opportunities for greater cultural responsiveness and more ethically attuned practice when interacting or consulting with others. We begin by recognising the complexity of defining 'culture' in the context of the EP profession and explore what tools are currently available for Educational Psychology Services (EPSs) and individual practitioners. We then provide an

overview of consultation and offer how self-reflection may be considered a core component of culturally responsive consultation. Finally, we outline selected theoretical underpinnings of the Culturally Responsive Consultation (CRC) tool and offer initial reflections of using the tool in a peer supervisory space. An acknowledgement of the tools' limitations, as well as considerations for future use are also presented here.

Culture within Educational Psychology Practice

Defining Culture

Defining culture is a complex endeavour as individual experiences shape its meaning (Urda & Bruchmann, 2018). One definition offered by Parham (2020) characterises culture as providing “a conceptual lens through which an individual can see, make sense of, and navigate, both intrapersonally and interpersonally, in relation to their families, communities, and the world around them” (p. 109). Despite culture being a universal and fundamental part of being human, we may be so embedded in our own cultural milieu that we assume culture is something that is relevant only to the ‘Other’, or solely when working with minoritised groups (Sandeen et al., 2018). It is important to acknowledge that sameness and difference can exist within and between cultural groups, with some alignment with broader views and beliefs alongside specific cultural practices developing within a given context. Culture is also not a construct in isolation: one must appreciate the multifaceted nature of individuals and consider intersectional aspects of identity (Crenshaw, 1989), and how this is made sense of in the wider social, societal and political landscape. We acknowledge that as authors, we each also have our own perspectives of how culture is defined, the meaning we ascribe to our own cultural experiences and how culture interweaves with multiple layers of identity.

Tools for services that can enhance culturally responsive practice

There are a multitude of EP forums and groups – some long-standing, others established more recently – that have drawn attention to the racism, inherent inequities and lack of respect for difference in the profession and in our work with service users. These groups have provided thought leadership for the discipline as a whole, created networks of engagement and support, sustained the continuing professional development of trainee and qualified practitioners and advocated for change in EP practice. Following the murder of George Floyd and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, a BPS Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) working group

was formed to address racial equity in the profession that included representation from such groups e.g., Black and Ethnic Minority Educational Psychology (BEEP), Trainee EPs' Initiative for Cultural Change (TEPICC) and the Educational Psychologists' Race and Culture Forum (EPRCF). This working group produced a Self-Assessment Framework for Promoting Racial Equity in Educational Psychology Services, a revision of a previous framework first developed more than two decades ago (DECP, 2023). The updated framework aimed “to support services to further develop more rigorous and effective methods for monitoring anti-racist and inclusive practice” (DECP, 2023, p. 3). Of interest is the flexible nature of the tool e.g., individual EPs in a team or service can each complete a self-assessment against the standards and results then collated to explore possible convergent and divergent themes.

Tools for individuals that can enhance culturally responsive practice

As part of her doctoral research studies, co-author Sakata developed a self-reflection framework for culturally responsive EP practice that acknowledges the importance of ongoing learning about oneself, culture and cultural responsiveness at multiple levels (2024). For example, the intrapersonal level focuses on practitioner qualities of self-awareness and reflexivity, centring the practitioners' knowledge and understanding of their own culture and challenging the idea that culture sits solely with the ‘Other’. Intrapersonal factors in turn influence the interpersonal level in the framework; e.g., how EPs relate to those from cultural backgrounds similar or different to their own. Literature has shed light on other tools that can be used to enhance cultural responsiveness e.g., Soni and colleagues (2021) explored the use of transcultural supervision exercises during EP doctoral training. They highlighted the use of supervision as a space to explore understandings of culture, and how this might support critical reflection on learning and practice. They noted how an emphasis on culture can enable an appreciation of difference, a recognition of the impact of ethnocentrism on how we make sense of service users, and the development of a richer and more nuanced understanding of multiple perspectives. Tools such as these can be drawn upon to support culturally responsive consultation practice, given consultation's place is a foundational professional competency, and a key emerging area of professional focus.

Consultation in Educational Psychology Practice

A form of service delivery

Consultation is often referred to as one of the five core functions of EP practice, and “is now understood to offer an

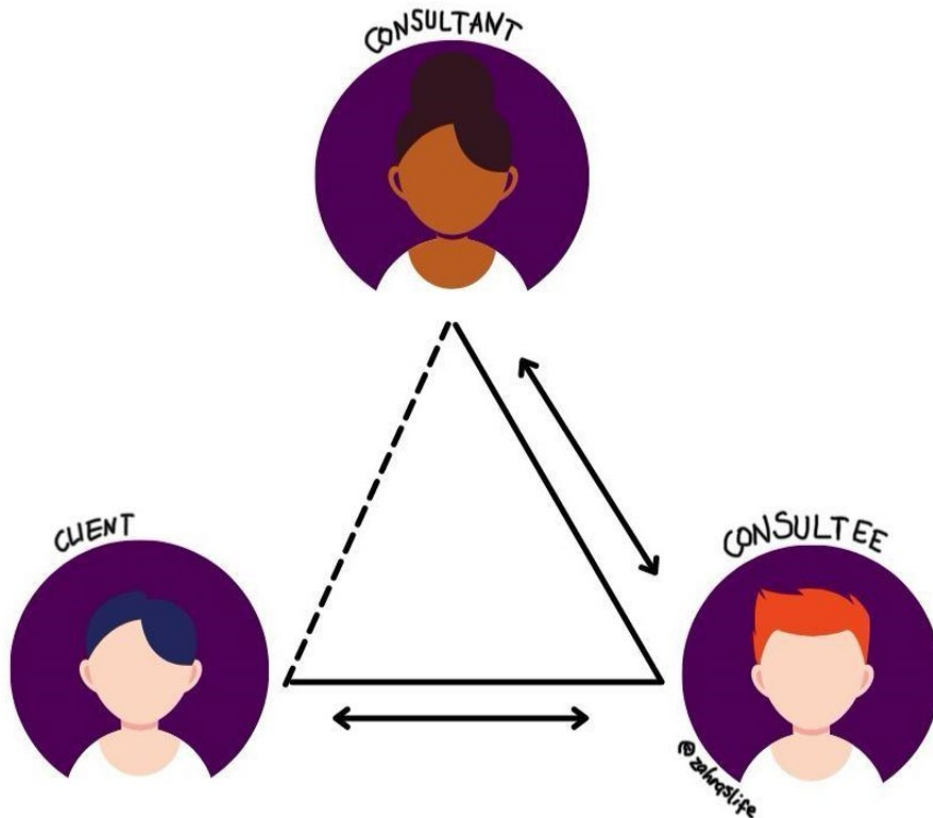


Figure 1. Consultation as a triadic and indirect professional helping relationship

evidence-based and efficient means to extend the reach of school-based professionals in supporting students from marginalised backgrounds” (Gormely et al., 2024, p. 115). Recent literature exploring social justice principles in EP services also highlights consultation as a key mechanism for empowering and valuing families through acknowledging and exploring their cultural experiences and narratives (Kuria & Kelly, 2023). Consultation can be defined as a professional helping relationship that is triadic and indirect in nature (see Figure 1), providing a holistic approach to supporting multi-dimensional problems at an individual, organisational and whole-system levels (Boyle et al., 2017; Cameron, 2006; Wagner, 2000).

Through professionally helping an adult (e.g., a parent/carer, teacher, teaching assistant, youth worker) in a given system (e.g., a family, classroom, early years setting, school, a community centre) to help a child or young person (CYP), an EP-as-consultant applies psychology to improve outcomes for the CYP. An effective consultation also (i) enhances the learning and growth of the adult (the consultee) so that they can support other CYP (the client) in future and (ii) attends to and addresses the environments and ecologies that are adversely impacting the client, consultee and others (Collier-Meek et al., 2023; Fisher &

Huchting, 2019; Meyers et al., 2012). For example, a consultant may attempt to disrupt a narrative that a problem is located solely in a CYP and help tell a richer, more nuanced story about disconnect between individual and context. Effective consultancy requires an appreciation of client, consultee and consultant cultures, worldviews, values, and how these intersect with one another when working relationally (Newman & Rosenfield, 2024).

Psychological concepts that influence our consultation practice

The Relational Model of Consultation (RMC) for applied psychology practice, initially developed at the Tavistock Clinic, emphasises the need for the consultant to be aware of and respond to both what is presented and what might be going on ‘beneath the surface’ in consultation. Exploring the dynamic tensions between the intrapsychic, interpersonal, group and broader context is a key component of the RMC (Kennedy & Lee, 2021). A key idea drawn upon in the RMC is Edgar Schein’s work on the emotional aspects of being in a helping relationship with an Other. He drew attention to the pivotal impact of power and the ‘one up’ position of giving help and ‘one down’

position of seeking help in consultative relationships.

Schein wrote extensively on the psychodynamic underpinnings of process consultancy, illustrated through the O-R-J-I (Observation, Reaction, Judgement, Intervention) cycle. This cycle provides a framework for consultants to account for biases, cognitive errors and motivations that may distort effective analysis and judgement (Schein, 1999). It is important to note that Schein did not argue that bias can be removed or designed out of human systems altogether. Indeed, the wider psychological evidence base highlights biases, heuristics and stereotypes in thinking are inevitable; and can allow us to work at speed, categorise and hold multiple pieces of information. As Schein argued however, they also introduce any number of errors into a consultant's decision making and thus to the interventions we make.

Izod and Whittle (2014) similarly noted that consultation practice is influenced by our preoccupations; preoccupations with what we habitually notice and focus on, and what we ignore or avoid due to our own experiences and worldviews. Some of the potential preoccupations and cognitive biases researched in psychology can play a role in consultation e.g., the 'halo effect', the unfounded application of general judgement to a specific trait (Thorndike, 1920; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) or 'confirmation bias', where people seek out information that verifies beliefs they already have (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Such biases and preoccupations can lead to erroneous or hasty conclusions when problem-solving (Sturgell & Van Norman, 2023). Whilst we cannot avoid or prevent this, finding ways to reflect on and notice bias is critical to reducing their influence to ensure ethical and culturally responsive consultation.

Finally, another key influence on the RMC has been the seminal work of Collette Ingraham e.g., her five component multi-cultural consultation (MCC) framework that integrated cultural dynamics into the consultation process (Ingraham, 2000). The MCC was intended to improve educational outcomes by ensuring that consultation practices were respectful of and took meaningful account of diverse cultural perspectives. More recently, Brown and colleagues (2022) developed the MCC framework to be explicitly inclusive and affirming of racially, sexually and gender diverse populations. They highlighted a key need for consultants to explore assumptions and expectations based on white, heteronormative and gendered constructions that may adversely impact the experiences of minoritised clients, consultees and consultants.

Self-reflection in Consultation

We each bring our own experiences to our consultant role and to the task at hand. Izod and Whittle (2014)

highlighted that these experiences may be conscious and unconscious, and both influence the consultation interaction. As these experiences help shape our perceptions and interpretations, self-reflection is a key element in consultation. This has been addressed to some extent in the EP literature e.g., Sakata (2024)'s self-reflective framework. Ingraham also described activities to support the development of consultants in training, including exploring the nature and origins of their own worldview, use of structured peer group supervision and consultation analysis (2017).

Aspects of identities [voiced and unvoiced; visible and invisible] (Burnham, 2012) and wider nested ecologies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) within which the consultee-consultant relationship takes place can also play pivotal roles and therefore require further self-examination. As consultants, it is critical to understand how – in addition to the structural power that may be associated with the profession of 'Educational Psychologist' – different aspects of identity may be associated with power in a given ecological context. For example, a middle-class Anglophone white male may more easily navigate systems that are designed for or assume financial and social capital. In addition, not everything about us is known to us, but may be known to others [e.g., an EP from a white British background using race-coded language in consultation with a Pastoral Lead from a South Asian background and where the former may not be aware of the potential meaning or impact of such language]. Critical and compassionate self-reflection is key to exploring intersections of identities within wider ecologies, which can increase our understanding of what we are bringing to and doing within the consultation relationship.

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Culturally Responsive Consultation Tool

To create a tool to support consultants' reflection on culturally responsive consultation (CRC) when using the RMC, we began with exploring our understanding of CRC. School Psychologists in the United States use this term to describe how culture is considered within consultation (Knotek, 2012; Parker et al., 2020). Parker and colleagues (2020) stated that it is where "consultants intentionally use various methods and adapt traditional consultation strategies to support culturally diverse students" (p.125). It relies on the skill of practitioners in being culturally attuned; to self, to consultee and to the client within the consultation triad and the context. Three theoretical concepts underpin the CRC tool and will be described below: cultural constellations, cultural attunement and hot, soft and blind spots.

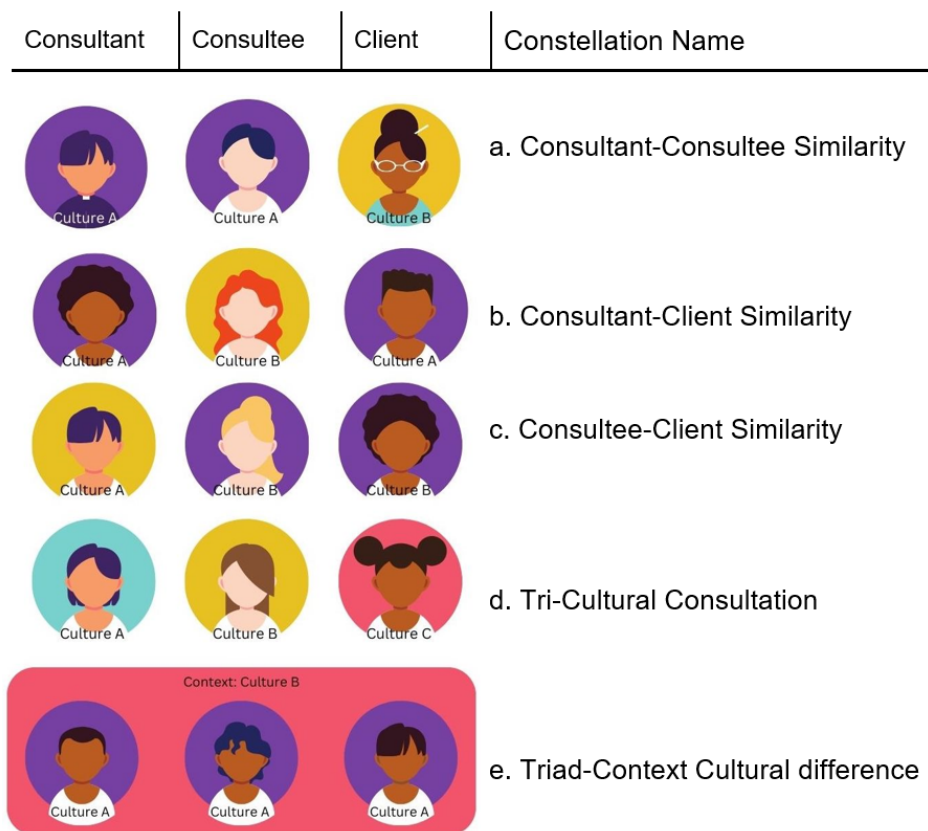


Figure 2. Constellations of Consultation Relationship (Ingraham, 2000)

Cultural Constellations

Cultural constellations are an element of Ingraham’s (2000) work on the MCC, highlighting cultural sameness and difference between clients, consultees and consultants and how these factors may be interacting in the consultation process (Newman & Rosenfield, 2024) (see Figure 2). Ingraham argued that recognising and understanding these constellations is crucial for effective consultation in multicultural settings.

We drew on the consultation cultural constellations idea in our CRC reflective tool to (i) acknowledge the interactive and triadic relationship in the consultation setting, (ii) prompt reflection on how client, consultee and consultants’ worldviews, cultures and experiences may be originating from different places and (iii) explore how potential sameness and difference may be shaping the consultative interaction at intra and interpersonal levels.

Cultural Attunement

Cultural attunement refers to skills that enhance our capacity to be responsive to culture, whether the same or different to our own (Hoskins (1999). Kim and colleagues (2022) argued that attunement infers being at one with

others, bearing witness to a client’s testimony and helping them make meaning of their social experience. Working in a culturally attuned way is intended to help integrate an awareness of societal systems, culture, and power from the consultee and client’s perspective by playing close attention and being responsive to their experiences (McDowell et al., 2022). This amplifies what can be considered marginalised worldviews (Fricker, 2007). Including the principle of cultural attunement ensures consultants remain appreciative of and curious about the worldviews of the client and consultee, and empathetic to their experiences, thus enhancing the helping relationship and improving outcomes for clients (Ibrahim & Heuer, 2016; Khan, 2023; McDowell et al., 2022).

Cultural attunement aligns with principles of cultural humility, which acknowledges the importance of ongoing learning and critical self-reflection (Ellis et al., 2020; Oakes, 2011). Expanding on critical self-reflection, Jackson and Samuels connected cultural attunement with the importance of exploring one’s biases at work, emphasising that a lack of attunement to a client’s experiences, or “lack of awareness of [their] assumptions could not only jeopardize the helping alliance, but also constrain or negatively bias the assessment, and thus, the intervention

process” (Jackson & Samuels, 2011, p. 238). This emphasises the importance for consultants of continuing to interrogate their own identities and consider how their individual experiences influence potential assumptions about and reactions towards others.

Hot spots, blind spots, soft spots

The concept of hotspots, blindspots and softspots comes from Sandeen and colleagues’ work on how psychologists are impacted by their own experiences (Sandeen et al., 2018). Such experiences can lead to unexamined assumptions or biases that change the ways in which practitioners work with others. They highlighted “an understanding of oneself as a cultural being who has reactions toward others, both similar and different from oneself, is a critical step in becoming more sensitive to cultural concerns” (Sandeen et al., 2018, p. 144). This is crucial to our CRC tool, encouraging review of one’s own hot spots, blindspots and softspots is arguably an inherent component of gaining intrapersonal insight into how one relates and responds in consultation to others.

Sandeen and colleagues define hotspots as times where individuals may align with a sense of powerlessness in what is brought to the work, and may respond strongly when reflecting on that area of identity (e.g., a female consultant who has experienced misogyny consulting with a female consultee who is experiencing difficulties in their professional relationship with a male colleague). Blindspots relate to a lack of awareness regarding aspects of culture, perhaps because of an aspect of identity that has been less examined and may relate to an area where a person has held relative power (e.g., a middle-class consultant with limited experience of financial adversity interpreting a parent’s non-attendance at a consultation as disinterest or disengagement). Softspots may occur when a psychologist over-identifies with a part of the system or has not reflected on assumptions they hold that lead to deviation from typical practice (e.g., in the direction of lowered expectations for client behaviours and outcomes).

Development of the CRC tool

Consultation models vary in the degree to which they integrate cultural factors (Parham, 2020) and there can be discomfort for consultants in raising cultural topics (Newell et al., 2013). Sakata’s emphasis on the interacting relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal processes has been extended in the development of the CRC

tool for promoting self-reflection and cultural attunement within consultation. The tool (see Appendix A for an extract) is designed to be used by EPs and those in training to raise awareness of potential assumptions and biases held and thus to work with greater cultural responsiveness. As our own thoughts and feelings are not always in conscious awareness during consultation, the tool may be helpful for use in supervisory spaces when reflecting on these interactions. Making use of this tool in supervision can also support relational reflection on our own cultural values and explore how they might influence our perspectives as consultants.

It is recognised that having a prescribed script for interaction may feel contradictory to being authentic and fully present in consultation. It is also acknowledged that conversations around cultural differences can sometimes feel hard to approach or navigate. The CRC tool aims to offer some prompts to stimulate curiosity about how we might inquire into cultural sameness and difference, whilst being aware that these will be adapted depending on the context. The tool has multiple elements, which can be accessed in whatever order the user sees fit, and includes reflection on cultural constellations and hot, soft and blindspots mentioned earlier. A distinctive element of the CRC tool is the idea of cultural thought traps which is discussed in more detail below.

Cultural thought traps

The concept of thought traps in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) originates from the foundational work of Aaron T. Beck in the 1960s. His work on depression led to the identification of types of thinking patterns, which he termed cognitive distortions or automatic negative thoughts. These patterns of thinking were seen as traps that individuals fall into, which then negatively affected their mood and behaviour (Beck, 1963). These cognitive distortions were considered ‘thought traps’ that CBT aims to address, by helping individuals recognise and challenge dysfunctional thinking patterns (Beck, 1976).

Whilst in CBT a ‘thought trap’ is a pattern of (typically irrational) negative thinking that can lead to distorted perceptions of reality, we have somewhat reframed the idea of thought traps. For the CRC tool, a thought trap is a possible perspective we are taking on a consultation that might be impacted by own worldviews, stereotypes and biases. For example, one trap we may need to ‘catch’ could be seeing ourselves or others through a solely Western, Education, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic (WEIRD) lens, which may be incongruent with who we or they actually are. Another might be a ‘jumping to conclusions’ trap e.g., where we presume a family living in a multigenerational household must be under socioeconomic pressure. This may derive from our cultural assumptions

As we are referring to Sandeen and colleagues work, we have left the language as it is in the original text. We appreciate that there are other potentially less ableist terms available e.g., the APA suggests the use of “show unconscious bias” (APA, 2023, p. 18)...

leading to a focus on an assumed negative impact, rather than on an open and curious exploration of culture and family functioning.

Overview of the Tool

The tool begins with a space to reflect on the consultation cultural constellation, noting salient characteristics of the consultation triad and the intersections of identities that may be relevant to the work. The CRC tool then outlines a selection of cultural thought traps that can be explored when responding to cultural sameness and difference, highlighting an invitation to consider different components within a consultation (see Appendix A). For example, ‘alignment’ may come into play when we look at situations from the perspective of only one member of consultation (e.g., the client), which may obstruct our view of the consultee’s point of view. If we become too aligned, perhaps because of an aspect of identity that is shared and where we assume what we feel is what they must feel, then we may lose a degree of objectivity. Avoiding the cultural thought trap of alignment therefore offers an invitation to hold space to consider different perspectives within the consultation.

Each of the cultural thought traps includes prompts for both intra-personal reflections (i.e., opportunities for the consultant to reflect on their self-in-role), as well as inter-personal considerations (i.e. how the consultant might respond to these dynamics in consultation). The tool also provides a space for intra-personal reflections using the hotspots, blindspots and softspots prompts. Finally, the CRC provides space to capture what was noticed within the consultation, what sense was made from the interactions and how we might use this information to develop our consultation practice moving forward. This follows Rolfe and colleague’s model of reflection to think about how we can develop our cultural attunement in our next consultation and promotes our ability to reflect in action during future consultations (Rolfe et al., 2001).

Reflections on casework

Two of the authors used the CRC tool within a peer supervisory space to support discussion of a recent consultation experience. A summary of the process, reflections and takeaways are provided.

Process

We first familiarised ourselves with the tool and then followed the steps below, contracting to use the whole hour of supervision to reflect in a containing manner on cultural

attunement and potential biases:

1. Supervisee provides an overview of the consultation cultural constellations
2. Supervisee formulates a question or overview of what they wish to explore about the consultation in supervision
3. Supervisee freely shares the consultation experience, including feelings and thoughts
4. Supervisee and supervisor engage in questioning and sharing of intrapersonal reflections
5. Supervisee and supervisor associate with cultural thought traps
6. Supervisee and supervisor notice what is coming to mind in regards sameness, difference, intersectionality of aspects of identities, uncertainty and defensiveness or associated hot/blind/soft spots
7. Supervisee and supervisor identify a learning point or takeaway for the next consultation.

Peer Supervisory Relationship

The quality of relationship between supervisee and supervisor was critical, and linked to factors previously identified in the literature on effective multicultural supervision (e.g., openness to discussing cultural similarities and differences in the dyad, valuing ongoing professional development opportunities, demonstrating a genuine interest in respect to each other’s culture) (Eklund et al., 2014). We reflected on having a previous relationship outside of supervision and how this influenced our use of the tool e.g., how we saw ourselves as peers with co-ordinate power status rather than one being ‘superior’ to the other. This seemed to give permission to make mistakes and to feel safe enough to explore potential judgements or biases. We also have shared interests around cultural responsiveness, which perhaps facilitated a sense of comfort to explore practice. It became apparent during the supervision that there were various shared assumptions held between us; and we wondered how we might have responded had our assumptions not been shared, or connected to a hotspot. Having the space to think about experiences of falling into potential thought traps supported a non-judgmental approach and allowed questions about biases to feel non-punitive. We felt freed up to authentically share worries, opinions and hopes for what could be possible in subsequent consultations. For the supervisee especially, it was as if the supervisor had built a capacity to ‘catch and hold’ her and to notice these things in service of enhanced future consultation practice.

The tool went beyond helping me think about race or ethnicity to prompting me to consider multiple aspects of identity and their intersectionality. This supported my understanding of how feeling distanced from the consultees' experience can influence my confidence to ask curious questions, due to worries of appearing intrusive or offensive. Using the CRC tool also enabled me to reflect on how my own experiences and cultural values shape my interactions in consultation and how this can lead me to fall into cultural thought traps. For example, the parents in this case were from a different race, religion and socioeconomic background to me. I had been feeling worried that I would not be relatable and that difference may have influenced their safety to share their experiences. This intrapersonal dimension of worry influenced the interpersonal experience, where as a woman from a different faith (in the presence of a religious male consultee), it felt anxiety-provoking to ask about pregnancy and birth in depth due to my own cultural norms. I had 'jumped to the conclusion' that maybe I should not ask about this based on my own experiences of gender norms, hierarchy and fear of offending the Other.

Vignette 1. Supervisee experience

I learnt about the importance of holding space for the supervisee to consider multiple aspects of identity. The supervisee reflected on her feelings related to the cultural constellation of those involved in the consultation, highlighting several elements of difference between herself and the consultee (e.g., in race, religion, socioeconomic status, gender). Acknowledging these multiple aspects of difference left the supervisee wondering about the level of connectedness she had with the consultee, and helped her to hypothesise ways in which cultural difference was felt to be a barrier in the consultation.

This reflection made me initially consider the 'overgeneralisation' thought trap; not in the sense that the supervisee had overgeneralised something the consultee had said, more whether there had been an overgeneralised feeling of difference within the consultation triad that then blocked a connection with the consultee. It was interesting that the supervisee had connected this interaction to a different thought trap (jumping to conclusions). Whilst we both drew on the same experience, we aligned it to different thought traps, highlighting for me the subjective nature of how one may interpret thought traps, and the importance of an open and non-judgemental dialogue about our interpretations.

Vignette 2. Supervisor experience

Extent to which the tool helped to consider cultural factors

Having the hot spots/blindspots/softspots prompt was a helpful reference point and one which we seemed to naturally approach in supervision. Having knowledge of this in advance was useful: by coming to the supervision with some level of awareness of what 'spots' may have been in play, as well as a shared familiarity with the cultural thought traps, it felt that these surfaced naturally in the supervisory discussion and were not inauthentically shoehorned in. The above two vignettes provide further

detail from the point of view of supervisee and supervisor.

Experiences using the tool

We both felt that contracting for a dedicated space to explore self-in-role and cultural attunement amplified the importance of cultural responsiveness in consultation. Using the tool prompted questions about our own cultural identities and raised our curiosities about how these interacted and influenced both the intrapersonal experiences and interpersonal interactions.

Beginning with reflecting on cultural constellations naturally helped the supervisee to reflect on areas of sameness and difference and hypothesise factors that could be influencing the consultation relationship. It also prompted an acknowledgement of the supervisory cultural constellation and how we had each drawn on different cultural thought traps. As noted previously, familiarising ourselves with the tool prior to supervision supported the experience. This led the supervisee to notice traps themselves when recalling the consultation experience and thus helped minimise feeling negatively judged. The supervisee's honest account of what may have been going on also invited the supervisor to reflect on and name cultural thought traps by asking open-ended curious questions. This supported a more in-depth exploration of the influence of differing perceptions of power, as well as helping the supervisee to notice and think about actions and reactions during the interaction. Thus this invited discussion on the type of consulting relationship that may have been forming. Using the tool in the order outlined above also contributed to effectively containing the experience e.g., using the hotspot activity towards the end led to a takeaway reflection or action to notice in the next consultation. This felt developmentally satisfying and a positive, hopeful and learning-oriented end to the supervision.

Key elements

One of the key supportive elements in using the tool was building a psychologically containing space for both supervisee and supervisor through contracting. This included contracting to use the full supervisory session to focus on culturally responsive consultation. Another element was the attention paid to naming the cultural similarities and differences in the supervisory relationship, similar to how one might go about using the cultural constellations in consultation. A third supportive element was beginning with the end in mind e.g., focusing on what the supervisee hoped would happen in the space and co-constructing what a non-judgemental space might look like for them. Finally, the supervisor showing curiosity and acknowledging their own experiences in an authentic manner was a key area of support for the supervisee to build trust in the relationship and speak freely.

Limitations

The concept of cultural thought traps has a number of limitations. One is whether the traps included in the CRC tool cover the breadth of potential biases. Indeed, there are many not included that could potentially impact consultation practice. Whilst the intention was to have a starting point that could raise awareness of the importance of reflecting on one's self-in-role, it is acknowledged that there may be a lack of comprehensiveness. Linked to this,

an additional limitation might be that the tool inadvertently promotes a reductionist view of the complex emotional experiences, thinking and understanding that occur for consultants during consultation. There is then a danger that the tool could be used in a way that neglects the nuances and contextual factors contributing to an individual's thinking. Another important consideration is that the concept of 'thought traps' themselves have been developed within a specific Euro-American context that may inherently present its own worldviews, assumptions and biases as 'normal', 'typical' or 'usual'. The types of cognitive distortions identified in CBT may not be fully applicable or relevant to all cultural groups. Furthermore, we will all have our own interpretation of these traps and what they mean; when we notice them and when we do not.

Mis-applied, reflecting on consultation using the CRC tool may lead a practitioner to assume they are 'bad', especially in terms of surfacing biases in thinking. Where individuals believe that any bias is unacceptable or abnormal, as opposed to appreciating that "our brains are built to use schemas to enhance efficient cognitive processing" (Sandeen et al., 2018, p. 146), confronting the range of distortions one may have fallen into can be especially painful. If the CRC tool is used inappropriately in supervision, the supervisee may be left with feelings of distress or feeling adversely judged by the supervisor. Given these sensitivities and the potential to feel persecuted when identifying potential cultural thought traps, using this tool may leave both supervisee and supervisor feeling especially exposed and vulnerable. As such, the level of containment created and sustained is pivotal.

Future Considerations

There are multiple ways in which we would like to develop the tool. For example, we would like to include an activity to more explicitly consider the supervisory cultural constellation, extending Ingraham's (2000) cultural constellations framework for consultation to supervision on consultation. This could help open up a dialogue around culture in the supervisory relationship and its potential influence on reflections on the consultation relationship. This could include Soni and colleagues' (2022) transcultural supervision activity which can be complementary to using this tool, or drawing on other frameworks e.g., systemic ideas (Burnham, 2012). Future research could perhaps examine the idea of cultural thought traps in consultation more generally; or explore the ways in which supervisees and supervisors learn from the process of taking part in this type of reflective practice. Researchers may also be interested in exploring drawong on other psychological theories and models, such as Nwoye's work on African psychology (Nwoye, 2015), and how these could

be taken further in supporting reflections on culturally responsive consultation.

Conclusion

It is of paramount importance that EPs include culturally responsive practices in all aspects of their role. With consultation being a core element of our day-to-day work with families, schools and the wider systems, it is pivotal that we consider the relationships and diverse contexts we work within. The authors have developed a tool which aims to support this within consultation, acknowledging the existence of biases and recognising the importance of self-reflection, and warmly welcome hearing of colleagues' experiences of using this tool in their practice.



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Appendix A - Culturally Responsive Consultation Tool – Selected Text

CULTURAL THOUGHT TRAPS TO EXPLORE WHEN RESPONDING TO CULTURAL SAMENESS OR DIFFERENCE

<p>1) ALIGNMENT </p> <p>This is when we only look at situations from one client's point of view, which could obstruct our view or cause us to lose objectivity. This may be because we are aligning to an aspect of their identity which is shared/assumed to be thought of in a similar way.</p> <p><i>“The parents are right; the school isn’t doing enough to support the young person. The impact of systemic racism means the school is wrong or bad”</i></p> <p>This could lead to splitting into good/bad or right/wrong beliefs or making overgeneralisations.</p> <p>This trap is an invitation to consider different perspectives</p>	<p>2) LABELLING </p> <p>Sometimes we use a single word to describe a child or young person, or their family. This kind of thinking is unhelpful. We are too complex to be summed up in a single word!</p> <p><i>“This person is from an X background...because of this background Y is presenting in this way”</i></p> <p>This could lead to early use of labels or losing sight of the intersecting aspects of a person’s identity</p> <p>This trap invites us to deconstruct language & narratives</p>	<p>3) GRANDIOSE </p> <p>Believing that we already know the answers and have the right point of view, meaning we might dismiss or discount other possible views.</p> <p><i>“I have a best friend from X background; therefore, I know exactly what this young person’s home life must be like as I’ve spent time in my best friend’s home”</i></p> <p>This could be in relation to assuming expertise around the practices of cultural groups. This could lead to overgeneralisations or jumping to conclusions.</p> <p>This trap is an invitation to address power in the room</p>
<p>4) OVERGENERALISATIONS </p> <p>This is when we use words like “always” or “never” to describe situations or events, or where we might apply one experience to all future similar experiences. This type of thinking is not helpful because it does not take all situations or events into account. As a result, we might not consider exploring exceptions to the rule.</p> <p><i>“This person is from an X background this means they always faced X and never experienced Y”</i></p> <p>This could lead to fortune telling, relying on some of our previous knowledge and using “sameness” as a shortcut</p> <p>This trap is an invitation to explore exceptions to the rule</p>	<p>5) JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS </p> <p>Making assumptions or forming an opinion without enough evidence.</p> <p><i>“She doesn’t like looking at adults in the eyes, this is most likely Autism or experienced trauma”</i></p> <p>This could contribute to ‘mind reading’ and losing curiosity in consultations, leading us to think we know that is coming next or why someone is presenting in that way. This might mean we lose sight of cultural curiosity to explore of what a given behaviour might/might not express</p> <p>This trap is an invitation to be curious</p>	<p>6) EMOTIONAL REASONING </p> <p>Using our emotions/personal experience to reach conclusions and deem something to be true.</p> <p><i>“I feel this way so it must be true / they must be also feeling this way”</i></p> <p>This could look like consultants responding from their own personal experiences; this could be due to their own experiences of discrimination, a focus on certain aspects of the consultee’s identities, over or under identifying and causing those aspects (positive or negative) to be amplified</p> <p>This trap invites us to reflect on our self-in-role</p>

Culture Thought Trap	Intrapersonal reflections <i>(examples)</i>	Interpersonal considerations <i>(examples)</i>
<p>ALIGNMENT</p>  <p>An invitation to consider different perspectives</p>	<p><i>Who am I relating to in this piece of work? Who is the consultee, who is the client, what systems are they living and working within?</i></p> <p><i>Am I aligning to something a consultee has said? Is this linked to my own personal experiences, to which I am perceiving is a ‘shared experience?’ Is this a ‘hot spot’ for me? (Sandeem et al., 2018).</i></p> <p><i>How am I paying attention to relationship and relating at this stage?</i></p> <p><i>Have I considered differences in cultural norms to justify or help explain behaviour (ie. how learning styles in some cultures may be in direct contrast to my own culture or white western norms)? Am I splitting between the two and aligning more with one view?</i></p> <p><i>If there are contradictions/inconsistences, am I ok with pointing these out/asking more questions about them?</i></p> <p><i>What is the purpose for the system? Am I colluding with an ineffective or discriminatory system?</i></p> <p><i>Have I considered possible biases linked to alignment? i.e. the halo effect (overall impressions influencing feeling around their character), availability heuristic (making quick, but not always accurate assessments), the horn effect (making a judgement based on a negative trait)</i></p>	<p>Ensure the perspectives of all participants or key people within the system are heard, welcoming the clients’ experiences and perspective on their cultural heritage.</p> <p><i>We want to ensure everyone’s voice and perspective is heard and wondered if we can start with...</i></p> <p><i>If X was here, how do you think they would respond or feel in relation to what we are speaking / going to speak about?</i></p> <p><i>This is the sense I’m making from what I’ve heard and I’m wondering how hearing this makes you feel? Do you think this is an accurate picture of the current challenges for X?</i></p> <p><i>While school feel X and parents feel Y, I’m wondering if we can explore the difference and similarities and consider how Z might be feeling in both these contexts?</i></p> <p>This might support our explorations of strategies that support him/her/them.</p> <p>For more information on these biases, please refer to PiC resource</p>
<p>ALIGNMENT</p> 	<p>Reflections</p> <p>What did you notice?</p> <p>What sense did you make of this?</p> <p>What would you do differently, if any?</p>	