

# Cross-Cultural Interviewing at Home and Abroad

American Evaluation Association Annual Conference  
October 25, 2013

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“Sensitivity to and respect for other people’s values, norms, and worldviews is as needed at home as abroad.”

- Michael Quinn Patton



# Culture is...

- Shared experiences
  - languages
  - values
  - customs
  - beliefs
  - mores
- Worldviews
- Ways of knowing
- Ways of communicating

– AEA Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation

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# Cultural factors

- Race/ethnicity
- Religion
- Social class
- Language
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Gender

– AEA Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation



# Twofold approach

- Inside-out (self as instrument, self-in-context work)
- Outside-in (building knowledge, skills, and a culturally competent tool kit)

- Symonette

# Language and Communication

- English isn't English
- ASL isn't ASL



# Solutions to Communication Barriers

- Capture high quality audio data
- Transcription
- Vigilant interviewing
- Note catchers
- Probes
- Flexibility and accommodations

# High Quality Data



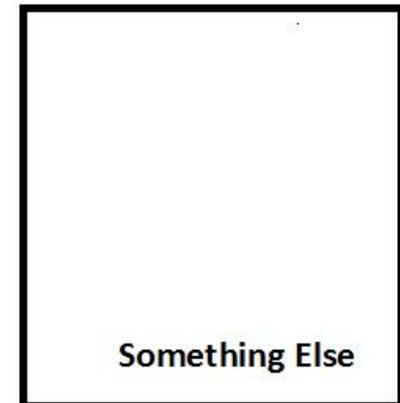
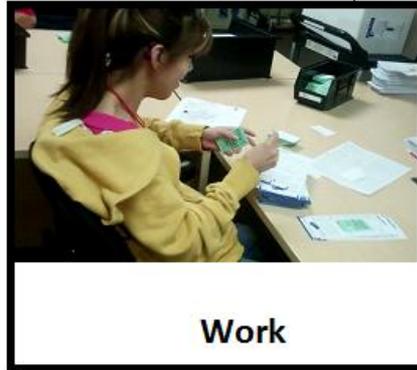
Photo by Flickr user [visual.dichotomy](#)

# Note catchers and probes

- Have a plan
- Have a back-up plan
- Use more structure than you might use in your own culture

# Flexibility in Use

What is your favorite part about coming to Goodwill?



# Values

## **Eastern Agricultural System: *Values of Traditional Society***

Family and group oriented

Emphasis on interpersonal relationships

Favoritism toward males

Authoritarian orientation

Suppression of emotions

Cooperative orientation

Past, present, and future orientation

## **Western Industrialized System: *Values of Modern Society***

Individual orientation

Emphasis on self-fulfillment and self-development

Increasing opportunities for females

Democratic orientation

Expression of emotions

Competition orientation

Present and future orientation

**Adapted from SenGupta et al, 2004**

# Power and Privilege

“Evaluators need enhanced understandings of related systemic processes of asymmetric power relations and privilege, not simply awareness and knowledge of difference and diversity.”

- Symonette

# Time



# Customs and Norms



“Culturally competent evaluators refrain from assuming they fully understand the perspectives of stakeholders whose backgrounds differ from their own.”



- AEA Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation



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# Involving Cultural Insiders

“The deepest and richest insights emerge from authentic communications and deliberations *across* relevant diversity divides.”

- Symonette

# Involving Cultural Insiders

- Before
  - Protocol development
  - Scheduling interviews
- During
  - Introductions
  - Interviewers or Team Interviewers
- After
  - Interpretation and Analysis

# Inside-out

“You don’t have to be a woman to interview women, or a sumo wrestler to interview sumo wrestlers. But if you are going to cross social gaps and go where you are ignorant, **you have to recognize and deal with cultural barriers to communication.** And you have to accept that **how you are seen by the person being interviewed will affect what is said.**”

- Rubin & Rubin

# Inside-out

“Evaluators maintain a high degree of self-awareness and self-examination to better understand **how their own backgrounds and other life experiences serve as assets or limitations in the conduct of an evaluation.**”

– AEA Statement on Cultural Competence in Evaluation



# Critical Reflection

- What is my background?
- What assets does this give me as an interviewer?
- What limitations does this bring?
- Who or what can balance these limitations?

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