

# infusing culture in career counseling

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This article introduces the culture-infused career counselling (CICC) model. Six principles are foundational to a tripartite model emphasizing cultural self-awareness, awareness of client cultural identities, and development of a culturally sensitive working alliance. The core competencies ensure the cultural validity and relevance of career counseling practices for all clients and shift the focus of career practice to support social justice action.



Culture-infused career counselling (CICC; Arthur & Collins, 2010a) is premised on the belief that cultural influences are inextricably woven into people's career development (Arthur, 2008; Leong, 2010). The conceptual foundation of CICC (Arthur & Collins, 2010b; Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b) evolved from frameworks of multicultural counseling (Arredondo et al., 1996; Sue et al., 1998). As we have adapted the model for career counseling, the CICC emphasizes reflective practice in three domains: counselor self-awareness, awareness of the cultures of other people, and awareness of the influences of culture on the working alliance. Intervention planning beyond individual counseling incorporates advocacy and social justice.

## FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF CICC

CICC is premised on six guiding assumptions. First, culture is relevant for career practices with all clients. Clients have unique experiences that influence both career-related issues and available resources. Some individuals are positioned as outsiders, or others, in the social construction of culture, on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, religion, ability, sexual orientation, age, and/or social class. The salience of culture for career issues shifts over time and context. Clients with multiple nondominant identities may be further challenged in navigating community, organization, or other social systems (Collins, 2010).

Second, culture is relevant for all career counselors. Personal and professional socialization shape approaches to career counseling. This includes internalized notions of *work* and *career*, *on-track* and *off-track* career development, as well as how counselors define career problems, interventions, and actions.

Third, views of career and career issues are culturally defined. The terms *career* and *career development* are constructed terms with multiple meanings defined by cultural assumptions and interpretations. These terms may have little relevance for people whose lives are preoccupied by seeking work as a means of survival (Blustein, 2006). Career counselors must assess the meanings of work in people's lives to ensure culturally relevant interventions.

Fourth, theories of career development and models of career counseling contain cultural assumptions. The cultural validity of theories and models based on Western values and tenets, such as individualism and autonomy, the centrality of the work role, affluence, and the linearity



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