Australia is multicultural

• Australia has experienced waves of immigration
  • Indigenous Australians
  • British colonisation
  • Imported labour
  • Refugees
  • On-going immigration
• Dominant culture is Anglo-Celtic.
The biopsychosocial model

Any significant behaviour involves on-going interactions amongst:

- Biological factors
- Psychological factors
- Social factors
  - Including cultural factors.
- Cultural factors are always active, if not always apparent.
Cultural competence

• Set of academic & interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase understanding & appreciation of cultural differences & similarities within & between groups.

• Willingness & ability to draw on community-based values, traditions & customs, to work with knowledgeable persons from community in developing interventions.

• Cultural competencies are learned skills that demonstrate cultural competence.

Forensic psychological assessment of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People
Cultural competencies

• Cultural awareness
  • Of own and other’s cultures

• Knowledge of cultural concepts
  • Ethnicity, minority, multiculturalism, diversity, history, prejudice

• Effective communication skills
  • Clear, two-way
  • Verbal & nonverbal

• Creating sense of safety
Potential concerns

- Cultural variability of “normal”.
- Individualism vs collectivism.
- Intrusion of our own culture.
- Different cultures have different histories.
- Culturally different evaluations of dependency.
- Culturally different ways of thinking.
Indigenous Australians

• Social, political, economic & spiritual well-being has declined markedly since colonisation.
• Imprisoned at 10-14 times rate of other Australians.
• Major health and social problems.
  • Average drinking rate is lower, but alcohol is highly associated with violence.
• Individual and social problems are the same as seen in aboriginal people throughout the world, whose homeland has been invaded and occupied, and whose culture has been trampled.
THE GUDDI PROJECT

To investigate the extent and experience of neurocognitive disability (NCD) and complex disablement amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To develop a culturally safe methodology and assessment tool that:
• Enables identification of NCD and co-morbid conditions.
• Facilitates inclusion in the NDIS.
• Establishes an evidence base to inform NDIS policy and practice.
1. Here and Now Aboriginal Assessment (HANAA)
2. Kimberley Indigenous Cognitive Assessment Scale (KICA)
3. WHO Disability Assessment Schedule - 2
4. Drugs and Alcohol - CARE test kits
5. Depression - KICA
6. Psychosis - First National MH Survey - AIHW
7. Posttraumatic stress

Forensic psychological assessment of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People
The case of Mr W

- Requested by ATSILS solicitor to assess Mr W, charged for serious neglect of disabled son.
- Aboriginal man, 36, unemployed now, raised by grandparents on mission, where adults drank a lot.
- 14 year relationship, ended 4 years ago; mother asked him to look after children, while she had a break.
- Mr W: “Mother refused to visit, answered questions by phone, notes delivered by friend.”
The case of Mr W

- WASSI-II scores: 1st percentile Verbal IQ, 6th percentile Performance IQ, 1st percentile overall IQ.
- Contradicted by jobs history and descriptions as “very clever”.
- mKICA results did not support diagnosis of “dementia”.
- Main difficulty was memory, especially short-term memory.
- Sister did ABAS-3 of Mr W for adaptive skills in daily activities to care for self or others. Mr W scored “Extremely low”.
- Insufficient time/support to assess for FASD, but probable.
The case of Mr S

- Requested by ATSILS solicitor to assess Mr S, two serious charges, one previous, led to imprisonment & probation.
- Largely negative childhood; never held down job; little alcohol but strong drug use; two young daughters; not strong identification as aboriginal, cf. parents were.
- Lacked confidence, re working, responding to tests.
- Impressed as wanting to improve self, especially as father and family member, ready for change.

Forensic psychological assessment of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People
The case of Mr S

- PDS results indicated reliable responses.
- PAS results indicated extensive psychological problems.
- ACE-III results indicated borderline significant cognitive deficits,
- PPI-R results did not indicate psychopathic personality.
- Conclusion is psychologically troubled person who could respond to appropriate treatment.

Forensic psychological assessment of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People
Some recommendations

- Don’t expect to become an expert in any culture than your own.
- Do try to gain some knowledge about and understanding of other cultures you may have to respond to.
- Understanding a culture does not necessarily mean accepting or endorsing it.
- Expect every client you work with will be a product of her or his culture/s, which you ignore at the risk of your effectiveness.
Some reading


Douglas, H (2017) *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and the Criminal Justice System*. ANZAPPL seminar. h.douglas@law.uq.edu.au


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Forensic psychological assessment of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People
Some more reading

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Tests used


Personality Assessment Screener. L C Morey (1997) PAR Inc.


PPI-R: Psychopathic Personality Inventory - Revised. S Lilienfield & M Widows (2005) PAR Inc.


ASK A QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGIST

Forensic psychological assessment of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People
Any questions or contributions?

• Thank you for your attendance and attention.
• If you would like a copy of the slides, email me at:
• drbobmontgomery@abrapsyc.com.au