

CULTURAL AND GENDER ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE JUST THERAPY APPROACH

**Presentation to
School of Education Johns Hopkins University, the
Institute for Family Services, & Affinity Counseling
Baltimore, Maryland, 8/9 May 2008**



**Taimalie Kiwi Tamasese and Charles Waldegrave
The Family Centre, Lower Hutt, Wellington, New Zealand**

www.familycentre.org.nz



How do workers, women and men and people of different cultures in an agency or institution protect against gender and cultural bias in their work on a day-to-day basis?

How do they do this in societies where sexist and racist assumptions are an integral part of the upbringing and way of life as they are in most modern post-industrial states?



- Naming the Injustice

- Constraints

 - Paralysis

 - Individualising

 - Patronising



- Cultural Sections and Gender Caucusing
- Radicalising Modes of Accountability
- The Process

Institutional Space
Converging of Meaning
Addressing our own
New Perspectives



Pain as a Preferred Meaning

Accountability as Vulnerability in Trust

Values underpinning the Accountability
Practice:

Humility

Sacredness

Respect

Justice and Love

Trust and Cooperation



Principles:

Reciprocity – Mutuality

Right = Responsibility



ISSUES FOR CAUCUSES OF MARGINALISED CULTURES AND MARGINALISED GENDER:

Caucus as a space of building a clear collective voice.

Caucus as a space of healing.

Caucus as a space of knowledge building.



Caucus as a space for negotiations of mutual interests of women from different cultural backgrounds.

Caucus as a space for negotiations of mutual interests of women and men from a specific marginalised culture.

Caucus as a checkpoint for agency structure and policy.

Caucus as a checkpoint for therapeutic practice and underlying values.



ISSUES FOR CAUCUSES OF DOMINATING CULTURES AND GENDER:

Ongoing Conscientisation

Leadership

Caucus as Checkpoint for Therapeutic and
Underlying Values

**Issues for Leadership of Dominant Group
Caucuses**

Responsibility

Team Building

Caring and Support



Addressing the Prime Break

Self Consciousness

Understanding of Power and Difference

Collective Responsibility

Tracing Liberative Elements

Constraining and Extending One Another

Honouring the Other

Making the Caucus Livable

Providing Care for the Group



Experience 1. Culture

Imagine that all of us in this room are members of one organisation whose client base consists of (Please include names of marginalised cultures in your locality) 25%, 10%, 15% and 38% various white dominating cultures. The director and the majority of the leadership are from the dominant culture. Over the next year, you know there are going to be 5 staff vacancies and some members of the non white cultures have started raising the issues of a more appropriate staff/client ratio. They are also raising issues of the cultural needs of their people, like better resources, time for the whole agency to meet and respect elders and people of traditional wisdom, and a need to express different forms of spirituality.



How do we address this problem as an organisation in a manner that will prevent cultural dominance and enhance cultural equity?

What are our responsibilities?

What is our collective perspective that we can go to the other caucus (es) with?



Experience 2. Gender

Imagine this group is one organisation that has been working for a period with families in which women and children have been beaten and/or sexually abused. Women staff have been working with the women and children and men staff have been working with the men. The problem is that the abuse is not stopping in many families, even though it has reduced considerably. Numbers of the women staff are beginning to express concerns that they think the men workers are a little too supportive and trusting of their clients and this is dangerous to the women they are working with. They want to oversee aspects of the men's work.



How do we address this problem as an organisation in a manner that will prevent gender dominance and enhance gender equity?

What are our responsibilities?

What is our collective perspective that we can go to the other caucus (es) with?



ADDRESSING ASSUMPTIONS AROUND DIFFERENCE

1. We have the same/humanist and Liberal Philosophies
 - 1.1 I, male and white subject become the norm on which our sameness is evaluated and confirmed.
 - 1.2 You, the other must attain these norms or you are inferior. Even though, you may attain these, you are still not equal because you are a step away from the subject self.
 - 1.3 Differences are seen as 'exotica', inferior and are "failures to achieve the norm".



2. We are different.
 - 2.1 I, the male and white subject remain the apex of normality.
 - 2.2 You, the other are too different to make the norm. The ghettoization of the other.

3. We are different but equal.
 - 3.1 We each have our own spirit, intellect, emotions and worldviews.
 - 3.2 The apex of normality is how we can respect and create space for our own uniqueness and difference.

