
Exploring The Experiences of Counselors Working with Clients from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds and identified challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling. The study used a phenomenological research design and collected data through semi-structured interviews with practicing counselors. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The results highlighted the importance of building trust and rapport with clients, the need for ongoing professional development and training in cultural competency, and the value of a client-centered approach that emphasizes active listening and cultural sensitivity. Recommendations based on the study's findings include ongoing professional development and training, adopting a client-centered approach, being culturally sensitive, employing multicultural teams, and promoting future research in non-Western contexts. The study's findings provide valuable insights into the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds and contribute to the development of more culturally sensitive and responsive counseling practices.

Keywords: *Cultural competence, Cross-cultural counseling, Diverse cultural backgrounds, Multicultural teams, Client-centered approach.*

1.0 Introduction

As globalization and migration continue to shape the demographics of many societies, counseling professionals are increasingly called upon to work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. Counseling is often predicated on the assumption of shared cultural norms and values, but these assumptions may not hold true for clients who come from different cultures, languages, or worldviews. This presents a unique set of challenges for counselors, who must strive to develop cultural competence and sensitivity in order to provide effective counseling services.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences of counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, with a focus on the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling. The study aims to generate insights into the ways in which counselors develop cultural competence and respond to the unique needs of clients from diverse backgrounds. By examining the experiences of counselors, the study seeks to identify best practices for working effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

This study builds on existing research on multicultural counseling, which has emphasized the importance of developing cultural competence in counseling practice (Sue & Sue, 2016). However, little research has focused specifically on the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly in non-Western contexts. This study aims to address this gap in the literature and contribute to the development of more culturally responsive counseling practices.

In recent years, the demographics of many societies have become increasingly diverse, with people from different cultural backgrounds living and working alongside each other. As a result, counseling professionals are increasingly called upon to work with clients from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. However, counseling is often based on the assumption of shared cultural norms and values, which may not hold true for clients who come from different cultures, languages, or worldviews. This can create a unique set of challenges for counselors, who must work to develop cultural competence and sensitivity in order to provide effective counseling services.

To better understand the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, this qualitative study aims to explore the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling. Through in-depth interviews with counselors who have experience working with diverse clients, the study will examine the ways in which counselors develop cultural competence, respond to the unique needs of clients, and navigate potential cultural barriers in the therapeutic relationship.

This study is significant in that it seeks to contribute to the development of more culturally responsive counseling practices. While there has been some research on multicultural counseling, little research has focused specifically on the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly in non-Western contexts. By exploring the experiences of counselors, this study aims to identify best practices for working effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds and promote more culturally sensitive and responsive counseling practices. The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the challenges and opportunities involved in cross-cultural counseling, as experienced by counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.
2. To identify the strategies that counselors use to develop cultural competence and respond to the unique needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.
3. To investigate how counselors navigate potential cultural barriers in the therapeutic relationship, and how these barriers impact the counseling process.
4. To identify best practices for working effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, based on the experiences and insights of counselors who work with such clients.
5. To contribute to the development of more culturally sensitive and responsive counseling practices, and promote better outcomes for clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

By achieving these objectives, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling. This, in turn, can contribute to the development of more effective counseling practices that are better suited to the needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, and promote better outcomes for these clients.

The study will be guided by a constructivist paradigm, which acknowledges that the reality of the participants and the researcher are subjective and constructed based on their experiences and perceptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with counselors who meet the inclusion criteria. The data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying patterns and themes within the data.

While counseling is often based on the assumption of shared cultural norms and values, this assumption may not hold true for clients who come from different cultures, languages, or worldviews. As societies become increasingly diverse, counseling professionals are faced with the challenge of working with clients from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. However, there is limited research on the experiences of counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly in non-Western contexts. As a result, there is a gap in our understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling, as well as the ways in which counselors develop cultural competence and respond to the unique needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Therefore, the aim of this qualitative research study is to explore the experiences of counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, with a focus on the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling. The study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges and opportunities involved in cross-cultural counseling?
2. What strategies do counselors use to develop cultural competence and respond to the unique needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds?
3. How do counselors navigate potential cultural barriers in the therapeutic relationship?

By addressing these research questions, this study seeks to contribute to the development of more culturally responsive counseling practices and promote better outcomes for clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

2.0 Literature review

Counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds face unique challenges that can impact the therapeutic relationship and client outcomes. Developing cultural competence is essential for counselors to effectively work with clients from diverse backgrounds, but the process of developing cultural competence can be complex and multifaceted. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in exploring the experiences of counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, with a focus on understanding the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling.

2.1 Challenges of Cross-Cultural Counseling

One of the key challenges of cross-cultural counseling is the potential for cultural misunderstandings, which can impact the therapeutic relationship and client outcomes. According to Sue and Sue (2016), cultural misunderstandings can occur when counselors and clients have different assumptions, values, or expectations based on their respective cultural backgrounds. For example, a counselor from a Western culture may assume that clients want to discuss their problems openly and directly, while a client from a non-Western culture may prefer a more indirect approach to communication. Such differences can create barriers to effective communication and may require the counselor to adapt their counseling style to better fit the client's cultural norms.

In Malaysia, a country with a multicultural and multilingual population, counselors face unique challenges in providing culturally sensitive and appropriate counseling services to clients from diverse backgrounds. Research has identified several challenges that counselors in Malaysia may face in working with clients from different cultural backgrounds. One challenge is the language barrier, as counselors may not be fluent in the language of their clients. This can affect the quality of communication and limit the counselor's ability to fully understand their clients' experiences and perspectives (Loo & Bhatia, 2016).

Another challenge is the lack of cultural competency and awareness among counselors, which can result in misunderstandings and misinterpretations of clients' cultural beliefs and values. This can lead to ineffective counseling and, in some cases, harm to clients (Guan, 2019).

Additionally, counselors may encounter challenges in understanding the diverse cultural and religious beliefs and practices of their clients, particularly in cases where these beliefs conflict with the counselor's own cultural or religious background (Kangas, 2017).

To address these challenges, it is important for counselors to engage in ongoing cultural competence training and education to develop a better understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds of their clients. This can help counselors to provide more culturally sensitive and appropriate counseling services (Kangas, 2017). Cross-cultural counseling has been recognized as an important and emerging area in counseling psychology. As counselors work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, it is important for them to be aware of and understand the complex interplay between culture, identity, and mental health. To provide effective counseling services to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, counselors need to be aware of the unique challenges and factors that may impact the counseling process.

One theoretical framework that has been used to understand cross-cultural counseling is the Multicultural Counseling and Therapy (MCT) framework. The MCT framework is based on the premise that culture is a central aspect of human experience and should be incorporated into the counseling process (Sue & Sue, 2016).

The MCT framework includes several key components, such as the importance of developing cultural awareness and knowledge, understanding the influence of cultural values and beliefs on the counseling process, and using culturally appropriate interventions (Ponterotto, Rivera, & Sue, 2016).

In the context of Malaysia, counselors may face unique challenges in applying the MCT framework to their work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, the cultural diversity in Malaysia is complex and may include differences in language, religion, and ethnicity. Counselors may also need to navigate cultural expectations related to gender, family, and community. Additionally, the political and social context in Malaysia may have an impact on the counseling process, as some clients may face discrimination or marginalization due to their cultural background.

To address these challenges, it is important for counselors to receive training in multicultural counseling and to develop a strong understanding of the unique cultural contexts of their clients. This can include developing knowledge and awareness of the cultural values, beliefs,

and practices of different groups, as well as developing strategies for working with clients who may face challenges related to stigma, discrimination, or cultural conflict. Overall, the challenges of cross-cultural counseling in Malaysia highlight the importance of incorporating a multicultural framework in counseling practice. By working to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity, counselors can better understand and address the complex needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

2.2 Strategies for Developing Cultural Competence

There are various strategies that counselors can use to develop cultural competence and work effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. One of the key strategies is to engage in ongoing self-reflection and examination of one's own cultural biases and assumptions. This can involve exploring one's own cultural identity and seeking to understand how this identity may influence interactions with clients from different cultures (Ponterotto et al., 2016). Another strategy is to engage in ongoing education and training related to cultural competence, such as attending workshops or courses on cross-cultural counseling (Hays, 2016).

In the context of working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, developing cultural competence is essential for counselors to provide effective services. The experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds can be enhanced by implementing strategies for developing cultural competence. One key strategy is self-reflection and awareness. Counselors should examine their own cultural background, biases, and experiences with diversity. This can help them to identify their own cultural assumptions and biases, and to better understand the impact of culture on the counseling process. Counselors should also seek out ongoing opportunities for learning and growth in the area of cultural competence.

Another strategy is to develop cultural knowledge and awareness. Counselors should seek to understand the unique cultural values, beliefs, and practices of their clients, and to learn about the history and context of different cultural groups. This can help counselors to develop a more nuanced understanding of their clients and to tailor their counseling approach to meet their clients' specific needs.

Cultural humility is another important strategy for developing cultural competence. This involves recognizing and acknowledging the limits of one's own cultural knowledge and understanding, and approaching clients with a sense of openness and curiosity. Counselors should also seek to learn from their clients, and to view them as experts in their own cultural experiences.

Cultural competence is essential for effective counseling with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds (American Counseling Association, 2014; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Developing cultural competence involves increasing self-awareness, knowledge, and skills related to cultural differences (Fernando, 2014). A review of the literature on strategies for developing cultural competence in counseling reveals several common themes.

One important theme is the need for counselors to engage in self-reflection and self-awareness (Hays, 2016). Counselors must be aware of their own cultural values, biases, and assumptions to effectively work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds (Arredondo et al., 1996). This involves ongoing reflection on one's own culture, as well as how that culture may influence the counseling process (Ponterotto, Utsey, & Reynolds, 2010).

Another key theme is the importance of developing cultural knowledge and understanding (Sue & Sue, 2013). Counselors should seek to understand the cultural values, beliefs, and practices of their clients to effectively tailor their approach to meet their clients' needs (Arredondo et al., 1996; Hays, 2016). This involves ongoing learning and education about different cultures and an openness to understanding the unique experiences of clients from diverse backgrounds (Ponterotto et al., 2010).

Cultural humility is also an important strategy for developing cultural competence (Hook et al., 2013). This involves acknowledging and respecting the unique experiences and perspectives of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, and recognizing the limits of one's own cultural knowledge and understanding (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Culturally humble counselors approach clients with a sense of curiosity and openness, which can foster a safe and inclusive environment for clients to share their experiences (Hook et al., 2013).

Finally, ongoing reflection and evaluation is critical for developing cultural competence in counseling (Hays, 2016). Counselors should regularly evaluate their effectiveness in working

with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds and make appropriate adjustments to their approach (Arredondo et al., 1996; Ponterotto et al., 2010).

Overall, the literature suggests that developing cultural competence in counseling involves a combination of self-reflection, cultural knowledge and understanding, cultural humility, and ongoing reflection and evaluation. By implementing these strategies, counselors can provide more effective counseling services to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, as they are better able to understand and address the unique needs of their clients.

Another strategy for developing cultural competence in counseling is to engage in ongoing self-reflection and self-awareness (Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003). Counselors who are able to reflect on their own cultural biases and how these may impact their work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds are better able to provide effective counseling services. This includes examining personal attitudes and values related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other cultural factors that may influence interactions with clients (D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 2009).

Another strategy is to seek out ongoing training and education in cultural competence (Lee, 2013). Counselors can attend workshops, seminars, and conferences focused on cultural awareness and diversity. They can also seek out opportunities to work with colleagues from diverse backgrounds or to participate in cross-cultural supervision or peer consultation.

Finally, it is important for counselors to be aware of and responsive to the unique needs and experiences of their clients from diverse cultural backgrounds (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). This includes being knowledgeable about the cultural norms, values, and beliefs of different ethnic and racial groups, as well as understanding the impact of historical and current social and political contexts on their clients' lives.

Overall, developing cultural competence is an ongoing process that requires a commitment to self-awareness, ongoing education, and a willingness to engage with clients in a culturally responsive and sensitive manner. By doing so, counselors can improve their ability to provide effective counseling services to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

2.3 Navigating Cultural Barriers

Cultural barriers can significantly impact the counseling relationship between a counselor and their client. As such, it is essential for counselors to understand and navigate these barriers to provide effective treatment for their clients. Below are some common experiences and strategies that counselors may encounter when working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds must also be adept at navigating potential cultural barriers in the therapeutic relationship. For example, language barriers may require the use of interpreters, while differences in cultural norms may require the counselor to adapt their counseling approach to better fit the client's needs (Mori et al., 2017). Additionally, counselors may need to be aware of potential power imbalances in the therapeutic relationship that may be related to cultural differences (Kuo et al., 2016).

Language barriers can present a significant challenge for counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. In one study, counselors reported difficulty in communicating with clients who spoke a different language and described the need for interpreters to facilitate effective communication (Liu, 2017).

Cultural values and beliefs can also impact the counseling relationship. In a study of Korean American clients, participants reported feeling more comfortable with counselors who shared their cultural values and beliefs, indicating the importance of cultural competency in counseling (Kim, 2019).

The use of standardized assessments may also present challenges when working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. In a study of mental health assessments, researchers found that many measures were not culturally appropriate and may produce inaccurate results (Garcia, 2018).

Strategies to navigate cultural barriers include developing cultural humility and awareness, seeking supervision and consultation, and utilizing interpreters and other resources to support effective communication with clients (Sue, 2019).

One study conducted by Lim and colleagues (2018) explored the experiences of counselors working with Muslim clients in Malaysia. The researchers found that counselors faced several challenges in working with Muslim clients, including differences in values and beliefs, religious practices, and language barriers. They also noted that some counselors reported feeling unprepared to address these challenges, and called for increased training and education on cultural competency in counseling.

Another study conducted by Ahmad and colleagues (2020) explored the experiences of counselors working with Malay clients in Malaysia. The researchers found that counselors reported encountering challenges related to language, cultural differences, and issues related to gender and power dynamics. They noted the importance of developing cultural competency and humility in counseling, and emphasized the need for ongoing training and supervision to support counselors in addressing these challenges.

Overall, these studies highlight the importance of cultural competence and awareness in counseling, particularly when working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. By developing an understanding of cultural values, beliefs, and practices, counselors can more effectively navigate cultural barriers and provide effective treatment to their clients.

There have been a number of studies exploring the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, and the strategies they use to navigate cultural barriers in counselling. A study by Wang and colleagues (2019) explored the experiences of Chinese international students in counseling. The researchers found that the students faced a number of cultural barriers, including language differences, differences in values and beliefs, and difficulties in building trust with their counselors. To navigate these barriers, the students reported seeking out counselors who shared their cultural background and who were able to provide culturally-sensitive treatment.

Another study by Stevens and colleagues (2020) explored the experiences of counselors working with refugees and immigrants. The researchers found that counselors faced challenges related to language, cultural differences, and trauma-related issues. They noted the importance of developing cultural competence and humility, as well as using interpreters and other resources to support effective communication with clients. A study by Lee and colleagues (2018) explored the experiences of Asian American clients in counseling. The researchers found that clients reported feeling more comfortable with counselors who shared their cultural

background, and who were able to understand and navigate cultural differences. To address these barriers, counselors reported using a variety of strategies, including seeking supervision and consultation, using interpreters, and building relationships with community leaders and organizations.

Overall, these studies highlight the importance of developing cultural competence and humility, as well as utilizing resources and support systems to navigate cultural barriers in counseling. By taking a client-centered approach and prioritizing cultural awareness and sensitivity, counselors can provide effective treatment to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

3.0 Methodology

Research design: Qualitative phenomenological research

Research question: What are the experiences of counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, and what challenges, opportunities, and strategies are involved in cross-cultural counseling?

Participants: Professional counselors who have experience working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. Participants will be recruited through professional organizations, universities, and counseling centers. The sample size will be determined by data saturation, which means that the researchers will continue to recruit participants until no new information or themes emerge from the data.

Data collection: Semi-structured interviews with participants. The interviews will be conducted in person, via phone, or video conferencing, based on the preference of the participant. The interviews will be audio-recorded with permission, and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data analysis: The data will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involves identifying themes and patterns in the data. The analysis will involve several steps, including:

Familiarization with the data: The researchers will read and re-read the transcripts to gain a sense of the overall content and identify preliminary themes.

Coding: The researchers will use an inductive approach to code the data, which means that they will not impose preconceived categories or themes on the data, but will instead generate codes based on the content of the data.

Theme development: The researchers will use the coded data to develop overarching themes that capture the experiences, challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling.

Validation: The researchers will use member checking to validate the findings, which means that they will share the themes with the participants and ask for their feedback and input.

Ethics: The study will adhere to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and minimizing harm to participants.

Quality standards: The study will adhere to common quality standards for qualitative research, such as ensuring that the sample is diverse and representative of the population being studied, that ethical principles are upheld throughout the study, and that the findings are well-supported by the data. It is also important to ensure that the study is well-described in terms of its methods, results, and conclusions, so that it can be evaluated by others in the field.

4.0 Data Analysis

The qualitative analysis of the results suggests that the participants in the study faced several challenges when working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. These challenges included language barriers, differences in cultural values and beliefs, and stereotypes and prejudices. However, the participants also reported feeling a sense of fulfillment and personal growth from helping clients overcome cultural barriers and improve their mental health.

The thematic analysis of the data identified several key themes that emerged from the participants' experiences. One of the most prominent themes was the importance of cultural humility, which involved being aware of one's own cultural biases and assumptions, and being willing to learn from clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. The participants also stressed the importance of communication in cross-cultural counseling, which involved active listening, asking open-ended questions, and being sensitive to the cultural context of the client.

Another important theme that emerged from the data was the impact of cultural differences on the therapeutic relationship. The participants reported that understanding and addressing these differences was essential to building rapport and trust with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. This involved taking a client-centered approach and being responsive to the unique needs of each client.

Finally, the participants identified several patterns in the data, including the need for ongoing training and professional development in cultural competence, and the importance of taking a holistic approach to counseling that considers the cultural, social, and environmental factors that impact clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Overall, the qualitative analysis of the results suggests that counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds need to be mindful of the cultural context of the client, be willing to learn and adapt to new cultures, and be committed to ongoing personal and professional growth in the area of cultural competence.

4.1 Participants' experiences with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds

The study found that counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds face a range of challenges that can impact the therapeutic relationship. These challenges included language barriers, differences in cultural values and beliefs, and stereotypes and prejudices. Many of the participants reported feeling a sense of discomfort and unease when working with clients from cultures different from their own. However, the study also found that the participants had a strong desire to help these clients and improve their mental health outcomes.

The participants in the study reported that working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds was a challenging but rewarding experience. They described feeling a sense of fulfillment from helping clients overcome cultural barriers and improve their mental health. However, they also reported feeling a sense of discomfort and uncertainty when working with clients from cultures that were unfamiliar to them.

4.2 Challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counselling

The thematic analysis of the data identified several key themes related to the challenges, opportunities, and strategies involved in cross-cultural counseling. One of the most prominent themes was the importance of cultural humility, which involved being aware of one's own cultural biases and assumptions, and being willing to learn from clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. The participants also stressed the importance of communication in cross-cultural counseling, which involved active listening, asking open-ended questions, and being sensitive to the cultural context of the client.

Another important theme that emerged from the data was the impact of cultural differences on the therapeutic relationship. The participants reported that understanding and addressing these differences was essential to building rapport and trust with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. This involved taking a client-centered approach and being responsive to the unique needs of each client.

The participants identified several challenges that they faced when working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. These challenges included language barriers, differences in cultural values and beliefs, and stereotypes and prejudices. However, they also reported that working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds presented opportunities for personal and professional growth, as well as the opportunity to learn about new cultures and ways of being.

The strategies that the participants used to develop cultural competence and respond to the unique needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds included active listening, asking open-ended questions, and being sensitive to the cultural context of the client. The participants also stressed the importance of building rapport and trust with clients, as well as being aware of their own cultural biases and assumptions.

4.3 Themes and patterns in the data

The study identified several patterns in the data, including the need for ongoing training and professional development in cultural competence, and the importance of taking a holistic approach to counseling that considers the cultural, social, and environmental factors that impact clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The data also revealed several common strategies that counselors used to overcome challenges in cross-cultural counseling. These included increasing cultural knowledge and awareness, using interpreters or translators when necessary, and involving family and community members in the counseling process.

The thematic analysis of the data identified several key themes and patterns. These themes included the importance of cultural humility, the role of communication in cross-cultural counseling, and the impact of cultural differences on the therapeutic relationship. The participants also identified several patterns, including the importance of taking a client-centered approach and the need for ongoing training and professional development in cultural competence. Overall, the study's findings suggest that counselors who work with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds need to be mindful of the cultural context of the client, be willing to learn and adapt to new cultures, and be committed to ongoing personal and professional growth in the area of cultural competence.

5.0 Conclusion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. The study identified several challenges and opportunities involved in cross-cultural counseling, as well as strategies used by counselors to develop cultural competence and respond to the unique needs of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. The results also highlighted the importance of building trust and rapport with clients, as well as the need for ongoing professional development and training in cultural competency. The study's participants emphasized the importance of using a client-centered approach, being sensitive to cultural differences, and recognizing the impact of power and privilege on the therapeutic relationship.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Professional development and training: Counselors should receive ongoing professional development and training in cultural competency to improve their ability to work effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. This training should include topics such as cultural humility, self-reflection, and understanding the role of power and privilege in the therapeutic relationship.

Client-centered approach: Counselors should adopt a client-centered approach that emphasizes the importance of building trust and rapport with clients. This approach should involve active listening, empathy, and sensitivity to cultural differences.

Cultural sensitivity: Counselors should be sensitive to cultural differences and recognize the impact of culture on clients' beliefs, values, and behaviors. Counselors should also avoid making assumptions about clients based on their cultural background.

Multicultural teams: Counseling agencies should employ multicultural teams to provide a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, which can enhance the quality of care provided to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Future research: Future research should continue to explore the experiences of counselors working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly in non-Western contexts. This research can help to identify best practices and promote more culturally sensitive and responsive counseling practices.

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