Culture, Trauma, and Context:

Strategies for Successful Case Outcomes

Overview

This presentation provides strategies for successful case outcomes for justice involved families, children, and underserved communities by examining the role and context of culture in California.

Framework of Therapeutic Jurisprudence

- Legal actors can impact therapeutic or anti-therapeutic outcomes for individual involved in the legal process.
- Lawyers and other legal actors should consider how their role can impact the emotional and psychological wellbeing of their clients or court participants.
- Lawyer practices law proactively through legal planning, legal check-ups, and anticipation of psycho-legal soft spots. Law-related psychological wellbeing is important for the lawyers to address.

Therapeutic Jurisprudence and Cultural Responsiveness

A Therapeutic Jurisprudence (TJ) approach to lawyering implicitly assumes the presence of a lawyer- client relationship, advocates a client-centered approach, and integrates existing interdisciplinary theories and techniques to achieve therapeutic outcomes for clients and their lawyers.

Presentation Tips

Navigational Assessment: Focus is not just on the intersecting identifies of the participant, but on the social-cultural context within which interaction takes place

Become Expert: Not on others' cultural identities, but on how cultural dynamics may be impacting:

- How your system looks to those participating in it
- How you look and sound to those you're impacting
- What role trauma can be playing in their mental and physical state and presentation
- What interpretations and reactions their behaviors elicit in you
- How to catch your unconscious bias and diversify it with alternate possibilities

Manage The Small Stuff. It's Big

- Humor doesn't translate well
- Body language means more (positive and negative)
- Facial expressions mean more
- Laughter means more (usually negative)

Relevant Resources

Washington University School of Law: Practicing Culturally Competent Therapeutic Jurisprudence: A Collaboration Between Social Work and Law

https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1409&context=law_journal_law_policy

---

National Center for State Courts: The Evolving Science on Implicit Bias: An Updated Resource for the State Court Community

https://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/accessfair/id/911