Culture Clash: Counseling and Millennials in the Digital Age

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American College Counseling Association National Conference;
San Antonio, TX
October, 2014
Millennials

• What brought you here today?

• What comes to mind with the term Millennial?

• When we consider generation, with which generation do you most closely identify?
Millennials (born 1981-2000):

- first generation to have large-scale access to the Internet, mobile phones, etc. during formative years
- more ethnically diverse than any other generation
- overscheduled
- Helicopter parents
- overconfident, require excess affirmation, impatient, demanding
- short attention span and low tolerance for boredom
- seek relevant and immediately applicable information
- want immediate solutions
Millennials’ expectations...

- How are your clients expecting you to use technology in counseling?

- How does this compare with what you are actually doing?
How does this relate to culture?

- How do we define culture?
- How are communication and culture interrelated?

- The Digital Native (1st Gen.)
- The Digital Native (2nd Gen.)
- The Digital Immigrant

- The research suggests digital natives (aka “digital youth”) represent a distinct culture. How and why? (our frustrating e-book)
You might be a digital immigrant if...

- Print out things to edit them
- Call people into your office to show them a website instead of emailing it
- Like to do one thing at a time
- Perceive today’s youth in crisis because of their online behaviors

- If you’re an “immigrant” can you ever be a “native?”
“Through increasing their understanding of social media, therapists may be able to frame client stories in a more meaningful and accurate way; focusing on digital youth as the ‘teachers of meaning’” (Pedersen & Ivy, 1993, p.2, as cited in Hoffman 2013, p. 121).

“Therapists should consider that when youth use social media, even in ways that adults perceive as deviant, they are engaging behaviors that are normative for their culture” (p.123).
Because of the panic among digital immigrants concerned about the effect of technology on the digital natives, the “youth may be prone to keeping their digital worlds private due to adults’ lack of understanding” (p. 122).

“Therapists need to be aware of how the construction and media portrayal of social media has influenced their own perceptions of the context of adolescent development” (p. 122).
Technology and Communication

- What is the nature of communication among millennials (and in society today)
  - Time lags in receiving responses, multiple conversations going at the same time
  - Often written and without opportunity to witness immediate responses
    - Text messages
    - Email
    - Brief messages (tweets, FB posts, Tumblr, etc.)
    - Photos (Instagram, etc.)
    - YouTube
  - Anonymity?
  - Student peer-monitoring
Culturally Competent Counseling

- Knowledge
- Attitudes/Beliefs
- Skills
A “Brave New World...”

- What was the state of technology in counseling when you were a student?
- What is the current state of technology in counseling?
- Parallel process between media and generation
- Redefining the timeline of generations
- Academia’s response (or lack thereof)
A.5. Prohibited Noncounseling Roles and Relationships

- A.5.e. Personal Virtual Relationships With Current Clients

Counselors are prohibited from engaging in a personal virtual relationship with individuals with whom they have a current counseling relationship (e.g., through social and other media).

- What social media platforms do you use?
- What precautions do you take to avoid disclosing confidential information?
A.6. Managing and Maintaining Boundaries and Professional Relationships

• A.6.e. Nonprofessional Interactions or Relationships (Other Than Sexual or Romantic Interactions or Relationships)

Counselors avoid entering into nonprofessional relationships with former clients, their romantic partners, or their family members when the interaction is potentially harmful to the client. This applies to both in-person and electronic interactions or relationships.
B.3. Information Shared With Others

• B.3.e. Transmitting Confidential Information

Counselors take precautions to ensure the confidentiality of all information transmitted through the use of any medium.
H.6. Social Media (ACA 2014)

• H.6.a. Virtual Professional Presence

In cases where counselors wish to maintain a professional and personal presence for social media use, separate professional and personal web pages and profiles are created to clearly distinguish between the two kinds of virtual presence.
H.6. Social Media (ACA 2014)

- H.6.b. Social Media as Part of Informed Consent

Counselors clearly explain to their clients, as part of the informed consent procedure, the benefits, limitations, and boundaries of the use of social media.
H.6. Social Media (ACA 2014)

- H.6.c. Client Virtual Presence

Counselors respect the privacy of their clients’ presence on social media unless given consent to view such information.
H.6. Social Media (ACA 2014)

- H.6.d. Use of Public Social Media

Counselors take precautions to avoid disclosing confidential information through public social media.
ACA 2014 Code of Ethics and Social Media

- What stands out about the new code?
- What challenges and opportunities lie in the guidance of the code?
- What concerns you about the new codes?
- Licensure issues
Case Studies
Suggested readings


