

**Culturally Responsive Assessment: Application of the KAWA (River) Model**

Jaime Muñoz<sup>1</sup>, Sara Dix<sup>1,2</sup>, Allison Miller<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, United States*, <sup>2</sup>*Project Employ at Bethlehem Haven, Pittsburgh, PA, United States*

Introduction: Practitioners providing culturally responsive occupational therapy realize that stereotyping people into categories that can be attributed to language, physical features, race or ethnicity most often results in clinical encounters that are neither effective nor therapeutic (1). OT practice models argue that culture is a key component of understanding the person holistically, yet few offer specific tools to assess persons from a cultural perspective (2). Narrative reasoning involves uncovering the person's story and supports culturally responsive care (3).

Objectives: Participant's who attend this session will:

- demonstrate an increased self-awareness of his or her own cultural sensitivity to implement in practice regardless of treatment setting.
- demonstrate an understanding of background, process, and benefits of using the Kawa Model in practice.
- use their own self-assessment to describe the Kawa Model assessment process.
- describe steps in the treatment planning using assessment data from the Kawa Model.

Description/Report: This session provides an overview of the development and structure of the Kawa (River) Model. Using active learning strategies, participants will practice the assessment process on themselves. Case studies demonstrating the interpretation of assessment results, goal setting and treatment planning will also be presented. Finally, results of a pilot study examining the types of occupational performance problems defined by clients in an occupational therapy community-based program will be presented

Contribution to the practice: Practitioners who are successful at eliciting the client's story are more likely to provide interventions that support occupational performance and participation consistent with the client's unique sociocultural contexts. The Kawa Model is proposed as an OT perspective, which intentionally seeks to understand the client's perspective in sociocultural context. Participants unfamiliar with this approach will learn how to use it and those who have used the approach will be encouraged to share their experiences.

1. Iwama, M. (2006). *The Kawa Model*. Edinburgh: Elsevier Publishers.
2. Muñoz, J.P., (2007). Culturally responsive caring in occupational therapy: A grounded theory. *Occupational Therapy International*, 14, 4, 256-280.
3. Schell, B., & Schell, J.W. (2008). *Clinical and professional reasoning in occupational therapy*. Philadelphia: Lippencott, Williams & Wilkins.