

ABA/ NLADA 2007 Equal Justice Conference

Cultivating Cultural Competency in Volunteers

Rosalie Fragoso
Legal Services Coordinator
5121 Masthead NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
(505) 797-6077
rfragoso@nmba.org

Hal Nevitt
LCSW/CEAP
Director Member Assistance Program
State Bar of Arizona
4201 N. 24th St #200
Phoenix, Arizona 85016
602-340-7334
hal.nevitt@staff.azbar.org

Martha Delaney (Moderator)
Clinics Director
Volunteer Lawyers Network
600 Nicollet Mall, Suite 390A
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 752-6676
martha@hcba.org

Brief Description:

How can a program assist pro bono attorneys' interaction with their clients? This session will address ways to educate attorneys about working with low income clients and clients of various ethnic backgrounds. Panelists will also discuss how staff and pro bono attorneys can cope with the emotional strain that can come with advocacy for low-income clients.

Topical Outline:

- I. Cultural competency
 - a. Culture affects Behavior
 - i. Culture governs how close we stand while talking with another person.
 - ii. Culture governs how we use (or avoid) eye contact.
 - iii. Culture governs how we express (or suppress) powerful emotions such as joy, disapproval, and anger.
 - iv. Culture even governs the expression (if not the actual experience) of love, because culture determines whether we feel free to express love in public settings by holding hands, hugging, or kissing the person we love.

- b. Six Patterns of Cultural Differences
 - i. Different Communications Styles
 - Verbal and non-verbal communication are used in different ways among cultures
 - ii. Different Attitudes Toward Conflict
 - Some cultures view conflict as a positive thing while others view it as something to be avoided.
 - iii. Different Approaches to Completing Tasks
 - Access to resources
 - Rewards associated with completing a task
 - Different notions of time
 - Cultures differ with respect to the importance placed on establishing relationships early on in the collaboration process
 - iv. Different Decision-Making Styles
 - Who makes the decision varies from culture to culture
 - v. Different Attitudes Toward Disclosure
 - In some cultures it is not appropriate to be frank about emotions, reasons behind a conflict or understanding, or about personal information
 - vi. Different Approaches to Knowing
 - The way a group comes to know things varies from culture to culture
- c. Non-Verbal Communication: The meaning of gestures varies in different cultures

II. Dealing with Stress

- a. An Overview
 - i. Stressor Identification
- b. Victim Advocacy Stress
 - i. Various contributors to stress
 1. Adversarial Nature of Justice System
 2. Communication Barriers
 3. Interpersonal Behavioral Factors.
- c. Definition of Anger
- d. Stress/Anger Reduction Techniques
 - i. Meditation
 - ii. Time outs
 - iii. Progressive Relaxation
 - iv. Breathing exercises
 - v. Self-talk
 - vi. Physical exercise

- e. Conflicts
 - i. Ineffective
 - ii. Effective

- f. Conflict Resolution
 - i. Definition
 - ii. Impact of effective

- g. Conflict Resolution Skills/Techniques
 - i. Problem Solving Guidelines
 - ii. Additional Strategies
 - iii. Effective Self Assessment
 - iv. Building successful relationships
 - v. Check yourself

- a. Creating Wellness
 - i. Good personal habits
 - ii. Personal Physical/Mental Health Regimen
 - iii. Personal Tension Tamers
 - iv. Ongoing health maintenance
 - v. Sleep

Notes:

Bibliography & Website Links:

1. "A Framework For Understanding Poverty" by Ruby K, Payne, Ph.D, 2001.
2. <http://nonverbal.ucsc.edu>
3. www.kwintessential.co.uk
4. "Traditional Native American Cultures and Contemporary U.S. Society: A Comparison" by Charles Horejsi and Joe Pablo, 1993.
5. "Managing Cross-Cultural Conflict in the Workplace. HCBA Fall 2005", presented by David Hunt, J.D.
6. <http://implicit.harvard.edu>