Title: Disconnects in Psychological Treatment of Diverse Groups

Slide content:
- Watch the following video clip. Dr. Michael D’Andrea is acting in the role of the therapist, and Dr. Brenda Cartwright is acting in the role of the client. During their exchange, Dr. Cartwright becomes frustrated by having to explain why her experiences as a black woman to her white, male therapist.
- As you watch this clip, think of how you might have wanted to respond to Dr. Cartwright so that this “cultural disconnect” in therapy could have been avoided.

Narrator: There are many reasons therapists struggle to understand the problems experienced by their patients. We’ve explored the role that cultural differences contribute to these misunderstandings. In the following video clip Dr. Michael D’Andrea is acting in the role of the therapist, and Dr. Brenda Cartwright is acting in the role of the client. During their exchange, Dr. Cartwright becomes frustrated by having to explain why her experiences as a black woman to her white, male therapist.

As you watch this clip, think of how you might have wanted to respond to Dr. Cartwright so that this “cultural disconnect” in therapy could have been avoided.

Slide 2

Title: Using an Existential-Humanistic Approach to Multicultural Counseling and Therapy

Slide content:
[video clip]

Dr. Michael D’Andrea: Brenda, thanks a lot for taking the time to get to know me better and for helping us both come to an understanding of how we might proceed in counseling together and what we hope to achieve. I wonder if you could tell me a little bit about what the specific issue that you’ve brought here today that we want to focus in on.

Dr. Brenda Cartwright: You know, well last week um...I was invited to a meeting with two really esteemed persons in the multicultural movement. We were going to be working on a project where I was going to be adding a black female perspective to it. And we had decided to meet at a restaurant. And I was so excited about meeting this new person that… I arrived early and I was waiting in the holding area. And the one individual did not know me but did know that I was African American… um came in, walked by me a couple of times and kind of… ignored me. And, when I realized that that was actually the person I was going to be meeting… because the other individual came in and they shook hands and introduced. I realized that… you know... this is a guru in multicultural counseling and he walked by me, knew I was African American, I was the only one in the area… and didn’t acknowledge me. So I really felt... devalued.

Dr. Michael D’Andrea: You felt devalued. I’m getting something from you as you’re telling the story about the situation. Devalued is one sense. Can you help me understand some of the other feelings that…?

Dr. Brenda Cartwright: Well, it probably has to do even more with the fact that..... it speaks to the African American experience of being invisible. You know this happens over and over again. That we’re… invisible. We don’t exist.
**Dr. Michael D'Andrea:** I've heard and I've read about this, they call it the uh… The Invisibility Syndrome, where black persons or other persons of color as well but particularly African Americans are just bypassed on the street and shopping malls. When they're being… waiting in line to be served. Can you tell me a little bit more about other ways that you've experienced this directly besides this particular situation?

**Dr. Brenda Cartwright:** Oh I've um… in my own school I belong to the senate. And… I can say something… another individual will say something… that will be heard. They didn’t hear what I said. And it was the same thing. Um… when I was in school I could raise my hand and have the exact… the answer and my instructors would just… you know… not see me.

**Dr. Michael D'Andrea:** In staff meetings I notice that women oftentimes… oftentimes, not occasionally will say things that are not responded to and then a little while later a male will say something and there is a response to what he’s saying so… You had mentioned earlier in today’s session, the fact of being a woman and an African American, you have really two factors going on here that promote invisibility. Am I with you on that?

**Dr. Brenda Cartwright:** Yeah… yes it’s like a double whammy. Yeah. I’m a woman and I’m African American.

**Dr. Michael D'Andrea:** You know, I feel that I want to connect on an emotional level more with you by empathizing and feeling what you’re feeling and something’s happening to me and I’m not getting that connection and it has to do with me. Maybe you can help me empathize and get into your feelings better by… Could you take a little bit of time to talk about the feelings in this particular situation or any other one so I can understand how it has affected you?

**Dr. Brenda Cartwright:** You know Michael, I'm not sure that I can really make you understand that experience. Something that you have to go through yourself… The only thing I can say to you is that it happens time and time again and it gets to the point that you just don’t want to deal with it.

**Dr. Michael D'Andrea:** Now I do see on your face that you’re holding your teeth together and… you’re angry. Are you… like you’re angry?

**Dr. Brenda Cartwright:** Oh yeah. You know, it’s like… I don’t even want to talk about it anymore. It’s like… white people know that this exists. And you want me to say it again and again, what I’m experiencing. And I don’t want to have to explain it. They should know that they’re ignoring me.

**Dr. Michael D'Andrea:** Are you getting angry with having to explain it with me, in this situation here?

**Dr. Brenda Cartwright:** I guess I am.

**Dr. Michael D'Andrea:** Ok. How is this going to affect how we move from this point together to look at your feelings or thoughts?

**Dr. Brenda Cartwright:** Um… I just want to make sure that you hear me and feel what I’m experiencing. I can’t put it in words, but I think you can see in my face… what the experience is.

**Dr. Michael D’Andrea:** Yes. I get a sense that you feel like I can connect with what you’re saying and hear you. And that may be good enough for right now, in our relationship.

End of Presentation