

E-Isotis Information Society Open to Impairments.

Cultural awareness as a crucial contributor in working effectively with people from different cultural background.



A person with disabilities speaking about the migrant assistants

- “In Greece , personal assistants are usually migrants with different cultural background who might have never met a person with disabilities before. Therefore two vulnerable groups have to cooperate and live together.. Imagine how difficult it is, how life, survival and dignity of each person are at risk.....”

Katerina's Kastrinaki speech on project CASA

The Casa project

- Creation of an agency to match migrants seeking for work in the care sector with people with disabilities or older people seeking for a personal assistant.

Needs that were identified

The need to acquaint migrants with the culture of the host country

The need to train the agency staff in issues of intercultural communication

In school

The participation of children from different cultural background has often been associated with

Difficulties

Language obstacles

Level of education offered in class

To work with people of different cultural background presupposes that a person has been trained to observe the impact of

- Power
- Difference
- Participation
- Misconceptions
- Prejudices
- Culture

Any person working with people from different culture background should be able to comprehend

- His personal identity and beliefs
- His professional identity (how ones beliefs affect ones professional interventions)
- How the above are connected with the institution one is working

**Culture is
a total of values,
ideas, action, shapes, meanings, symbols, a
model of comprehension and definition....**

**To understand the above we need to comprehend
deeply how people of other civilizations form
their beliefs.**

**To see our limitations , to see that we have
limitations, we first need to see beyond them.**

Difficulties in communication between people from different cultural background

- Ambiguity
- Judgments
- Lack of knowledge
- Assumptions
- Not understanding or knowing situations different from ours

Cultural awareness

- Cultural Awareness is the foundation of communication and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions. Why do we do things in that way? How do we see the world? Why do we react in that particular way?
- Misunderstandings arise when I use my meanings to make sense of your reality.
- Different expressions can be seen as alternative ways of organizing reality by different intelligent persons.

Cultural awareness entails

- My knowledge about other cultures
- My ability to assess and comprehend that my outlook on life is directly related to my culture
- That forming judgments on my culture affects the life and situation of other people

Intercultural education can contribute to

- Create critical thinking
- To be positively disposed to new experiences
- To obtain intellectual curiosity and skepticism
- To search for information sources outside their close environment
- To be able to create in their mind a picture of what can be created.

- At this time in your life, how would you rate yourself in terms of understanding how your cultural background has influenced the way you think and act?
- At this point in your life, how would you rate your understanding of the impact of the way you think and act when interacting with persons of different cultural background?

Questions form The Multicultural Awareness Knowledge and Skills Survey, Counselor Edition (MAKSS-C)

Thank you for your attention
maria.malapetsa@e-isotis.org