

**Applying the Knowledge of Effective Practices for African American Children, Youth and their Families: Implications for Preventive, Early and Intensive Intervention Strategies**

Vivian H. Jackson, Ph.D., Session Chair  
Presenters:  
Erika Van Buren, Ph.D., Janice Cooper, Ph.D. and Vivian H. Jackson, Ph.D.  
Discussant: Regenia Hicks, Ph.D.

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**Africentrism and Kinship Care: A Study of Implementation and Meaning**

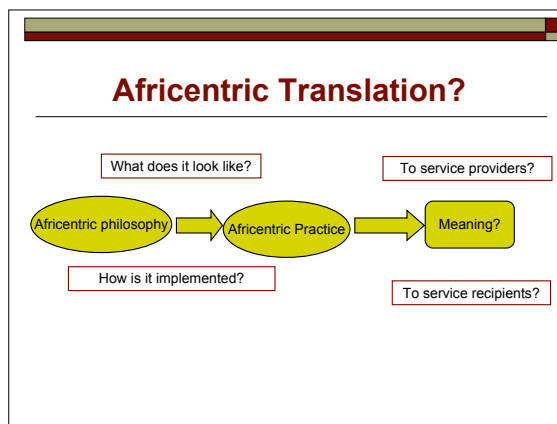
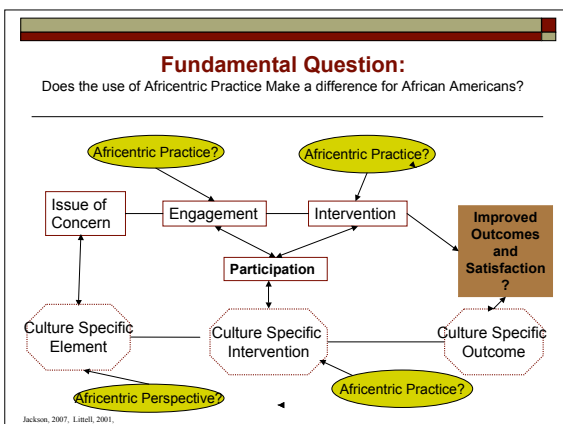
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**Vivian H. Jackson, Ph.D.**  
Senior Policy Associate  
National Center for Cultural Competence  
TA Center for Children's Mental Health  
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development  
Washington, DC

**Where Does Child Welfare Fit?**

American Culture <small>(Tompensars-Hampden, 1998)</small>	Child Welfare	Africentrism
Individual more important than the group	Child focused	Collective identity
Rules predominate over relationship	Rule and procedural	Highest value is relationship
Rationality/evidence	Legalistic	Spirituality/affect
Specific roles	Judge, case worker, each parent, child, CASA	Blurred boundaries
Linear time	Set schedule	Contextual

- NTU Therapeutic Approach**
- NTU – essence, spirit, unity
  - Basic Principles –
    - Harmony
    - Balance
    - Interconnectedness
    - Authenticity
  - Nguzu Saba (Seven Principles of Kwanzaa)
    - Umoja – Unity
    - Kujichagulia – Self-Determination
    - Ujima – Collective Work and Responsibility
    - Ujamaa – Cooperative Economics
    - Nia – Purpose
    - Kuumba - Creativity
    - Imani - Faith
- Gregory and Phillips, 1997



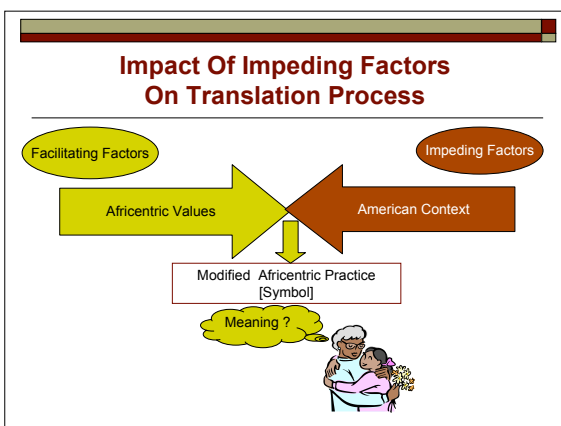
### Findings In The Study Of Family Preservation And Kinship Care Programs Of ABC Agency

- **How is Africentrism translated into practice?**
  - Facilitated by intentional organizational culture building, **but**
  - Impeded by American societal pressures and influences
- **What is the meaning to families?**
  - To the extent that what they received was Africentric, it meant "hope" and affirmation of "capacity" and "worth."
- **What is the meaning to service providers?**
  - Life style
  - Intervention approach
  - No meaning, just part of the job

### Translation Through Organizational Culture Building

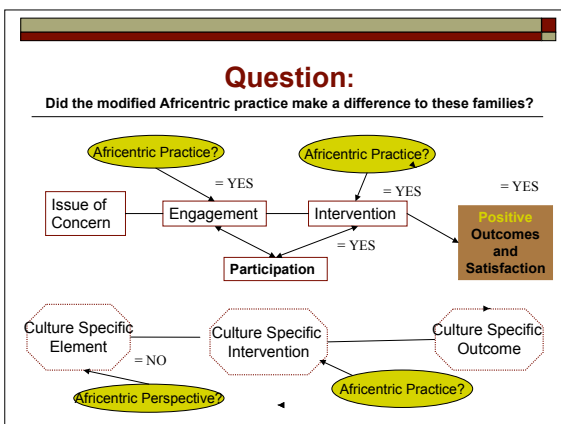
*Culture: institution of practices that are transmitted from generation to generation using: symbols, rituals, artifacts, language, values that will guide the way that people behave. (Bohannan, 1995)*

- **Beliefs:** people are good, strengths oriented
- **Values:** importance of relationships, harmony, authenticity
- **Rituals and practices:** Crossing-over ceremonies, Kwanzaa, agency prayer
- **Language:** NTU based terminology (harmony, alignment) and African terms (NTU, Ngia)
- **Artifacts:** African, African American, African Diaspora – paintings, posters, statuettes, masks in public spaces, meeting rooms and some private offices
- **Transmission over generations** – Training, certification, supervision, rituals
- **Guide people's behavior** – Engage in strong personal relationships, demonstrate caring with clients, use NTU language to explain work



### Meaning To Service Recipients

- "Meaning" from the perspective of the client's definition of his/her issue of concern.
- Absence of overt, tangible symbols of Africentrism to trigger perception and interpretation
- Presence of certain Africentric processes which they valued, specifically, Authentic, Affirming Relationship
  - "Hope"
  - Capacity
  - Worth



### New Questions

- How does an organization implement values based practice?
  - Africentrism is "how" as well as "what"
  - Compare to implementation research on evidence-based practice
- Must a practitioner "be" it to "do" it?
  - Importance of the individual practitioner
- How much does symbolization mean?
  - Impact of intangibles in contrast to concrete, visible symbols

### Recommendations For Practice

- Ensure match between actual need, theory of change, and intervention chosen
- Reinforce the importance of *relationship*
- Intensify focus on the *person* of the practitioner
- Create organizational cultures that exemplify the values of values-based practices

### Do You Have “Be It” To “Do It”?



*“People do not assimilate new ways of doing things unless they make emotional space in their current paradigms. So unless they can figure out how it’s relevant to them, they don’t do it with their clients.” (H. G.)*