

“The Boy Who Became a Bear”: Ethno cultural Adaptations of the ARC Framework

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Cultural Identity: “What Defines My Cultural Identity?”

“Every man is like all other men, like some other men, and like no other man” - Kluckhohn and Murray (1957)

Culture Wheel Exercise

1. *Please Identify the top 5 things that make up your cultural Identity.*
2. Visually represent those 5 things in terms of how much of your identity these things make up.

Defining Culture

Definition of Culture

- *Culture can be defined as shared learned behavior and meanings acquired in life activity contexts that are passed on from one generation to another for the purposes of promoting survival, adaptation and adjustment.*
- *Culture is represented EXTERNALLY in artifacts, roles, settings and institutions.*
- *Culture is represented INTERNALLY in values, beliefs, expectations, world view.*
- *Culture structures our perception and experience of reality.*

Anthony Marsella 2010

The ARC Framework

Where does ARC come from?

- Translation of clinical principles across settings (out-px, residential, school, home-based)
 - Or...what is it that we actually do?
- “Evidence-based practice”?
 - Or...how to fit real kids into scientific boxes
- Staying true to the inner clinician
 - Or...keeping the art in treatment



Who does ARC target?

- Designed to target the needs of children, families, and systems impacted by complex trauma
- Core domains translate across children/ families/ systems; applications and goals will vary
- Crucial importance of:
 - Keep an eye on the target, rather than the technique
 - Pay attention to relative goals and relative successes
 - Have a plan, but catch the moments

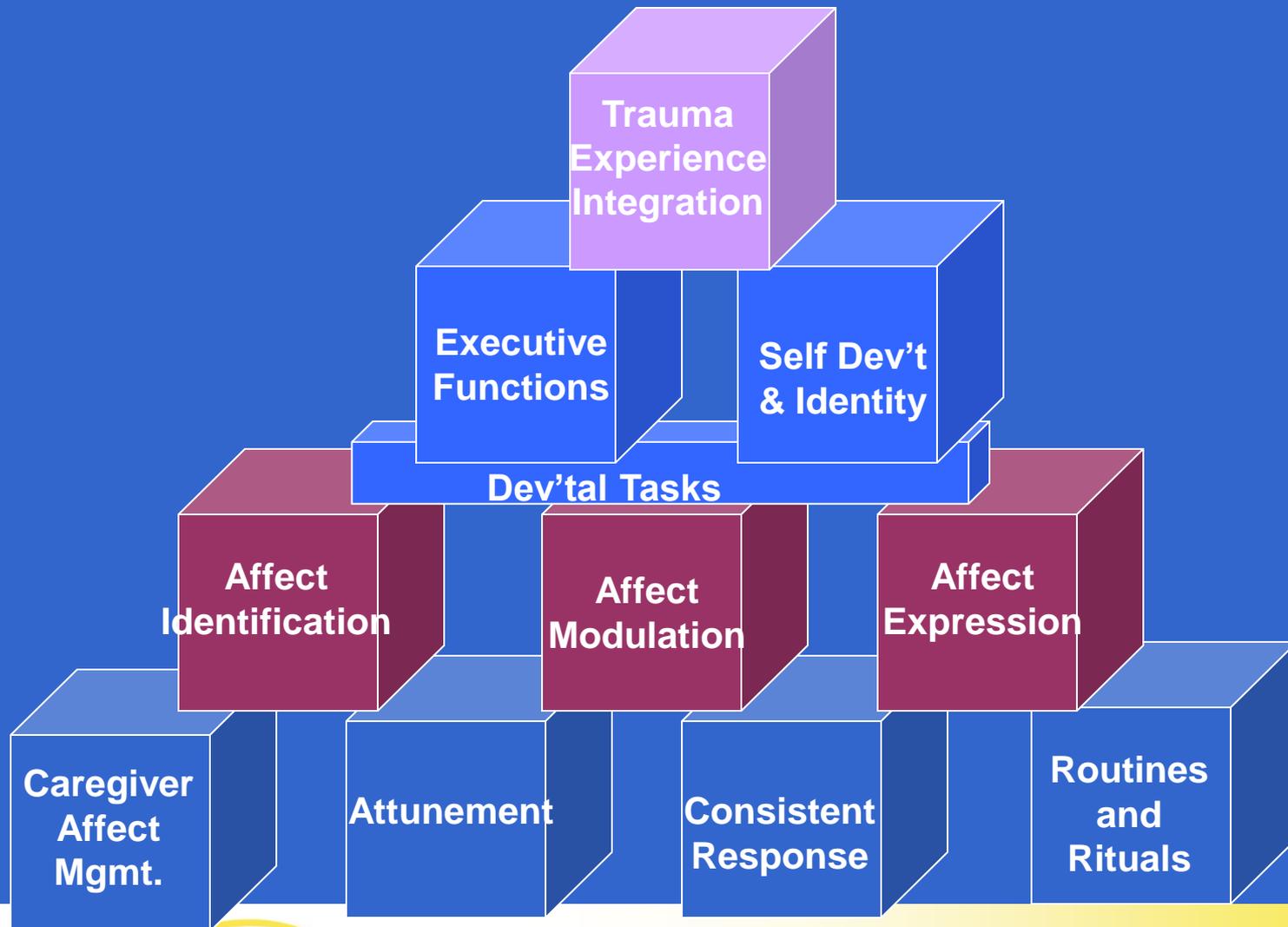
The A, R, C of ARC: 3 CORE Domains

A = A safe caregiving system (**A**ttachment)

R = The ability to regulate and tolerate experience (Self-**R**egulation)

C = Support in the mastery of an array of tasks crucial to resilient outcome (**C**ompetency)

10 Building Blocks



ARC:

A Framework
For
Intervention
with
Complexly
Traumatized
Youth

Systemic

Familial

Individual

TRAUMA EXPERIENCE
INTEGRATION

COMPETENCY

Primary Components
•Executive functions
•Self development

REGULATION

•Affect Identification
•Modulation
•Affect Expression

ATTACHMENT

•Caregiver affect management
•Attunement
•Consistent response
•Routines and Rituals

ARC Focused Assessment Must Consider Assess Each Layer and the surrounding cultural identity



ARC and TRAUMA EDUCATION :

- Trauma education is a thread that runs through all ARC domains. It is central to the framework and to trauma informed care.
- Fight, Flight, Freeze is a Universal response to stressors – “All Men”
- Culture plays a role in the brain’s interpretation of the nature and cause of the stressor and the pattern of responses it may elicit.
- Some cultures believe in the idea of Post Traumatic Growth or the idea that crisis is an opportunity and that courage in the face of stress is admired and valued. (Tedeschi, Park, Calhoun 1998)

Teaching About Trauma through Story Telling- “The Boy Who Became a Bear”

- Little Boy had parents who died and there was nobody who wanted to take care of him. He was called orphan boy.
- Went to live with his uncle who was a hunter and lived in a far away village. His uncle beats him, starves him, belittles him. It is a very scary place to be.
- Like all other people- the boy wondered “why is this happening”. There was not much that he could do. He try to fight his uncle but his uncle is bigger and stronger. He could freeze or be as still as possible in hopes that he wouldn’t be noticed. This would probably not work. Or, he could go live in the woods by himself.
- The third option was sure death because a kid could not survive alone in the woods?
- He was feeling scared, alone, angry

(Wisdom of the Elders Project- Roger Fernandes)

Teaching About Trauma through Story Telling- “The Boy Who Became a Bear”

- The boy is in the woods alone and he knows that he cannot survive by himself in the woods.
- Fortunately the animals watch over him and they are confused about orphan boy- why would a boy come to live alone in the woods? Finally, the animals go to him and ask him?
- The boy explains why he left his uncles house and the owl is shocked and tells the boy “this should never have happened to you”
- Eventually the boy chooses to go and live with the bears. His nose and face begin to transform into that of a bear. After a hibernation he becomes a bear.

ATTACHMENT

Caregiver
Affect
Mgmt.

Attunement

Consistent
Response

Routines
and
Rituals

- Overarching goal: Creation of a safe environment (**trauma-informed system**) and safe relationships that are able to support children and adolescents in meeting developmental, emotional, and relational needs.

What is the Caregiving System?

- The caregiving system for many traumatized children goes beyond the biological parents. Individuals who take on the role of caregivers may include:
- In building a safe environment, attachment work is optimally done at multiple levels of the child's care giving system or environment
- For some Native American children the care giving system may extend to the tribal community and potentially beyond.
- In our story the animals looked after the boy and fostered his connection to nature. This connection moves him through the fear response and provides a safe context within which he gains strength and competency.

Caregiver Affect Management

- The Main Idea: Support the child's caregiving system – whether parents or professionals – in understanding, managing, and coping with their own emotional responses, so that they are better able to support the children in their care.



Caregiver Affect Management

- Have a keen awareness of your own personal push buttons
- Learn to “SLOW DOWN” your response to behavior or emotionally challenging situations by self monitoring and self soothing. Remember SOS
- Consider classroom interventions that support this process. Examples include dimming the lights, implementing quiet minutes or the stop light system to support yourself and the class in regulating affect.
- Create a Self Care plan with in the moment and long term strategies.

Attunement

- The Main Idea: Support the child's caregiving system – whether parents or professionals – in learning to accurately and empathically understand and respond to children's actions, communications, needs, and feelings.



The Uncle of The Boy who Became a Bear

- A primary goal in attunement is to understand the impact of trauma on children/adolescents and to learn to accurately read cues- particularly cues related to the fear response.
- Back to our story
- The boy is now living with the bears. One day a hunter comes into the woods to hunt bear. He has his spear aimed at a little cub. The mother bear steps in front of the cub. Now it is aimed at the mother. The father bear steps in and the hunter aims at his heart. Now a 4th bear steps in and says “please don’t hurt them. They are my family”.

The Uncle of The Boy who Became a Bear

- The hunter is the boy's uncle and he can see a glimpse of something familiar in the bear's face. He asks the bear "are you my nephew"?
- The uncle says "After you left I was looking and looking for you. I did not understand why you left. I went to the elders and they explained why you had left and what I did wrong. I am sorry".
{ ATTUNEMENT }
- The uncle asks the boy to return to the village with him. The bears say "you should go and be with your people".

Building Attunement Skills: “Follow My Leader”

- Attunement is a dyadic process that takes place over time and it is built through reflection and mirroring.
- The primary focus in a school setting is to opportunities for positive engagement and interaction that requires observation of another, mirroring of another and joy. Consider cultural adaptations of mirroring games such as simon says.
- Experiential Activity: “Follow My Leader”- a game that is commonly played by Native American Youth.

Consistent Response

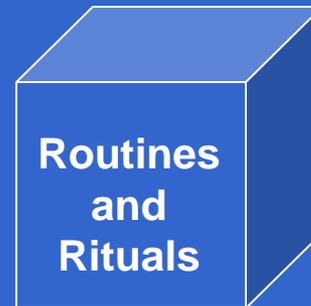
- *The Main Idea:* *Support the caregiving system, whether familial or programmatic, in building predictable, safe, and appropriate responses to children's behaviors, in a manner that acknowledges and is sensitive to the role of past experiences in current behaviors.*

Systematic Implementation of Praise: The Eagle Feather

- The Eagle Feather- in native culture the eagle feather is known as a symbol of wisdom and courage.
- Praise is one of the responses available to us to increase behavior that is desired in the school environment.
- This is an opportunity to bring the broader culture into building positive peer culture in schools.
- Consider the use of metaphor in creating a systematic approach to praise.

Routines and Rituals

- *The Main Idea:* Build predictability through use of individual, familial, and systemic routines and rituals.



The role of routines: Key Concepts

- Trauma is often associated with chaos and loss of control; predictability helps build feelings of safety in traumatized children
- When children feel safe, they are able to shift their energy from survival to healthy development
- Repetition is an important way that children gain skill; children often notice routines more in their absence than in their presence
- Routines should be part of the daily fabric, as well as targeting areas of vulnerability or difficulty

The role of ritual: Key Concepts

- *Rituals* (traditions, celebrations, patterns of experience) offer felt coherence among members of a family, culture, or community, and may repeat across generations
- Shared rituals may provide a sense of belonging; feeling disconnected from dominant culture rituals may highlight a feeling of difference
- Exploration and celebration of ritual may include both establishment and celebration of *whole-system* rituals, as well as exploration, sharing, and celebration of many individual rituals

Circles

- The circle is an important symbol in Native American Culture. As stated by Black Elk, a holy man of the Oglala Lakota Sioux: "Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the Earth the round like a ball, and so are the stars. The wind in its greatest powers whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves." P. 5 (Keepers of the Animals)- *from UTAH Education Network*
- The circle is also an important tool in providing containment and teaching attunement- particularly with young children.
- Consider teaching the significance of circle and creating transition routines by beginning and ending each day in a circle.

Domain 2: SELF-REGULATION

**Affect
Identification**

Modulation

**Affect
Expression**

Self-Regulation

- Overarching goal: Work with children to build ability to safely and effectively manage experience on many levels: emotional, physiological, cognitive, and behavioral; this includes the capacity to identify, access, modulate, and share various aspects of experience

The Key Role of the Caregiving System in Self-Regulation

- Reflection: The lens through which the child learns to interpret experience
- Modeling: A visual language for understanding affect, and a model of coping
- Stimulation and soothing: Support for achieving and maintaining optimal levels of arousal

Affect Identification:

- *The Main Idea:* Work with children to build an awareness of internal experience, the ability to discriminate and name emotional states, and an understanding of where these states come from.



Setting the Frame: Teach-To-Kids

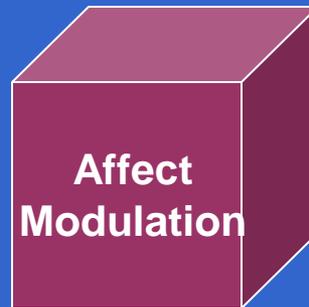
- Everyone has feelings
- Feelings come from somewhere
- It is not always easy to know what we feel
- There are cues that can tell us what we might be feeling
- Knowing about feelings helps us understand ourselves, the situation we are in, and whether we need to do something to manage the feeling

Strategies For Building Basic Identification Skills

1. Use culturally relevant classroom materials such as posters, books, video/media to bring the language of emotion into the classroom. When engaged in these types of activities:
 - Normalize and validate affective experience; pay attention to mixed emotion:
 - Reflect on emotions in the context of specific experiences:
2. Sharing and Caring Circles: Invite the child to share daily emotional experience; incorporate emotion language or check in's into appropriate routines:
3. Reflect on the child's observable affect and behavior; tune into cues and describe what you see:

Modulation

- The Main Idea: Work with children to develop safe and effective strategies to manage and regulate physiological and emotional experience, in service of maintaining a comfortable state of arousal.



The Use of Metaphor in teaching Affect Modulation: Down Regulation

- The Analogy of The Hunter:

“ No one has been able to control his breathing better or concentrate longer under pressure than a hunter waiting hours and hours to hunt food for his family”

“ Sometimes when you are out hunting or on the sea fishing you get scared or nervous but you have to stay calm inside”

“The ability to stay calm when everything is going crazy is something that I’m getting better at And something that we (my Native people) have been good at for thousands of years”.

- Experiential Activity: Peacock Feathers

Affect Expression:

- *The Main Idea:* Help children build the skills and tolerance for effectively sharing emotional experience with others



The Talking Stick

- Circles- Create routines/ritual's that support safe expression of affect. Consider having a portion of circle time be devoted to ice breakers or Hi's and Lo's.
- The Talking Stick- The teaching of the Talking Stick is an exquisite example of the combined sacredness of the Talking Circle and the Five Codes of Ethics, in particular Non-Interference and Anger Not be Shown. When the Talking Stick is passed around the circle it is an action that is overtly indicative of the respect that we have toward the concept of harmony, balance and good manners among Humans, The Talking Stick is a symbol of respect for the thoughts, stories and individual histories of each member participating in the circle. Whoever is holding the stick speaks their truth at that moment in their personal history, The role of the rest of the participants is to sit quietly and engage in **active listening**. No one else should interrupt while the person holding the Talking Stick is speaking. When the individual has finished speaking (however long that takes), the Talking Stick is handed to the next person in the circle. If the receiver chooses not to speak, she simply hands it to the next person until the Talking Stick has been passed to everyone participating. In this way each person has had the opportunity to **Speak and to Listen**.
(www.shannonthundebird.com)
- Self Expression- help children build a repertoire for symbolically and/or expressing their feelings through play, visual art, writing,

Domain 3: Competency



Self and Identity

- *The Main Idea:* Support children in exploring and building an understanding of self and personal identity, including identification of unique and positive qualities, building of coherence across time and experience, and support in the capacity to imagine and work toward a range of future possibilities



Cultural Identity

- Having a broader systemic perspective on identity can create opportunities to explore family, tribal, and cultural identity.
- In the case of Peter, a 5 year old Tlingit child in foster care, Native American symbols, metaphors, and activities were utilized in treatment. Tlingit tribes are divided into two different clans, Eagle or Raven. The clinician used expressive art and books to explore the meaning of the Raven, characteristics of the Raven, and read the legend of Raven and the Creation Story.
- MASKS- Masks are part of Native American Culture and are used to symbolize what they are designed to depict: animals, heroes, characters in a drama, wind, rain, supernatural beings, spirits of good and evil, ancestors, gods, spirits of nature, etc.

Trauma Experience Integration



The Main Idea: Work with children to **actively explore**, **process**, and **integrate historical experiences** into a coherent and comprehensive **understanding of self** in order to **enhance children's capacity** to **effectively engage** in present life.

“The Boy Who Became a Bear” Who Became a Boy . . . Who Became a Teacher.

- Last we discussed the boy previously known as Orphan Boy, his uncle had asked him to return with him to the village and the animals encouraged this choice.
- The boy decided to go with his uncle and as he returned to the village his claws turned back into hands, his snout shrunk back to a nose- his human face returned.
- He was able to take what he had learned from he bears and use it to teach his people many things such as how to hunt, fish and make medicine.
- He was named “Little Brother Bear”.

Children are not simply a composite of their deficits, but are whole beings, with strengths, vulnerabilities, challenges, and resources.

ARC provides a framework that seeks to recognize factors that derail normative development, and to work with children, families, and systems to build or re-build healthy developmental pathways.

For more information about ARC, or to provide feedback or suggestions, please contact one of the primary authors:

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