



# **UNDERSTANDING CLIENT LIFE CONTEXT FOR INTENTIONAL MINISTRY**

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## IN THIS WORKSHOP . . .

- In Social Services each encounter and each client are diverse and require intentional ministry. To do intentional ministry we must be aware of the life context that contributes to the behaviors observed in our clients. Our responsibility for ministry and our commitment to mission requires awareness and action. Workshop participants will gain an understanding of the impact of life context and the development an effective ministry presence.



# WHAT THAT DESCRIPTION IS SAYING TO US AS WE MAINTAIN OUR COMMITMENT TO MISSION IS...

- The life context of each individual contributes to their behavior
- Therefore ... We must gain awareness of what their life is really like – and build our understanding of how life really is for them.
- So that ...we can develop effective ministry presence,
- That will allow each member of the Ministry Unit Team to
  - Share the Love of Jesus
  - Meet Practical Need and
  - Be a Transforming Influence for every client and family we encounter.



# INTENTIONAL MINISTRY

- Parker Palmer

“Most of us from experience know what real hospitality feels like. It means being received openly, warmly, freely, without the need to earn your keep or prove yourself.

An inhospitable space is one in which we feel invisible – or visible but on trial.

A hospitable space is alive with trust and good will, rooted in a sense of our common humanity. When we enter such a space we feel worthy, because the host assumes we are.”



## INTENTIONAL MINISTRY TO DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS

- Our clients come from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, each with distinct histories and goals
- Our clients also have individual perspectives and personalities ~ ways of being
- The varied points of diversity all converge in our facility, or ministry unit.
- Kluckhohn & Murray claimed three dimensions for all humans:  
Every person is in certain respects
  - Like all others
  - Like some others
  - Like no others.



## ○ Soup ~ Soap & Salvation

- UNIVERSAL NEED

We are alike in  
that we all  
have basic  
human needs,

For:

- “ Nutrition
- “ Hydration
- “ Human  
connection
- “ Security

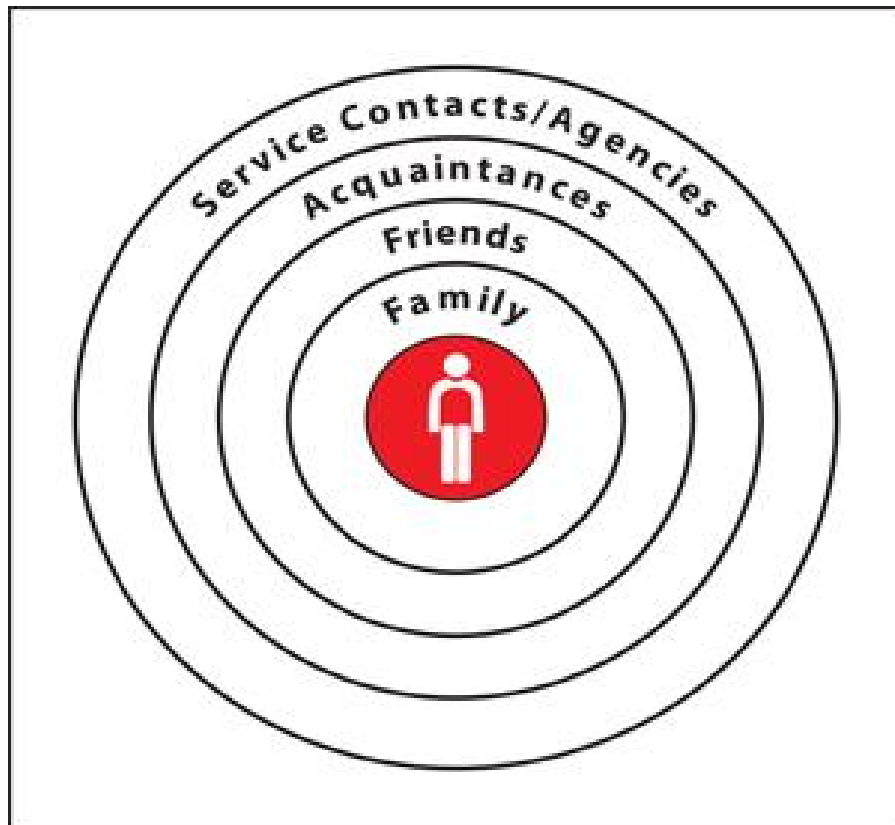


DIVERSE ... YET WITH SIMILARITIES



## Group Level - Impact on Individuals

*Rules, Values, Beliefs,  
Social Practices  
Cultural Milieu*



## GROUP LEVEL

Be Aware:

This is where  
we trip over  
ourselves!

*Stereotyping*

*Biases*

*Oppression*

*Of those who  
are unlike  
us and our  
perceptions*



# THE MORE WE ARE INTENTIONAL ABOUT OUR MINISTRY TO DIVERSE POPULATIONS THE MORE WE BECOME AWARE OF DIFFERENCES

*Every client is  
unique, with  
very individual  
preferences,  
personalities,  
hopes, and  
dreams.*

*These  
dimensions  
remind us of  
the importance  
of culture.*





## ○ Culture

- Integrated knowledge, belief, behavior
- Customary beliefs, social forms of race, religion or social group
- Set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices.



**CULTURE IS ONE OF THE CIRCLES OF CONTEXT**

Think about

How our  
Ministry  
impacts a  
persons  
culture – way  
of being.

Change of

Lifestyle

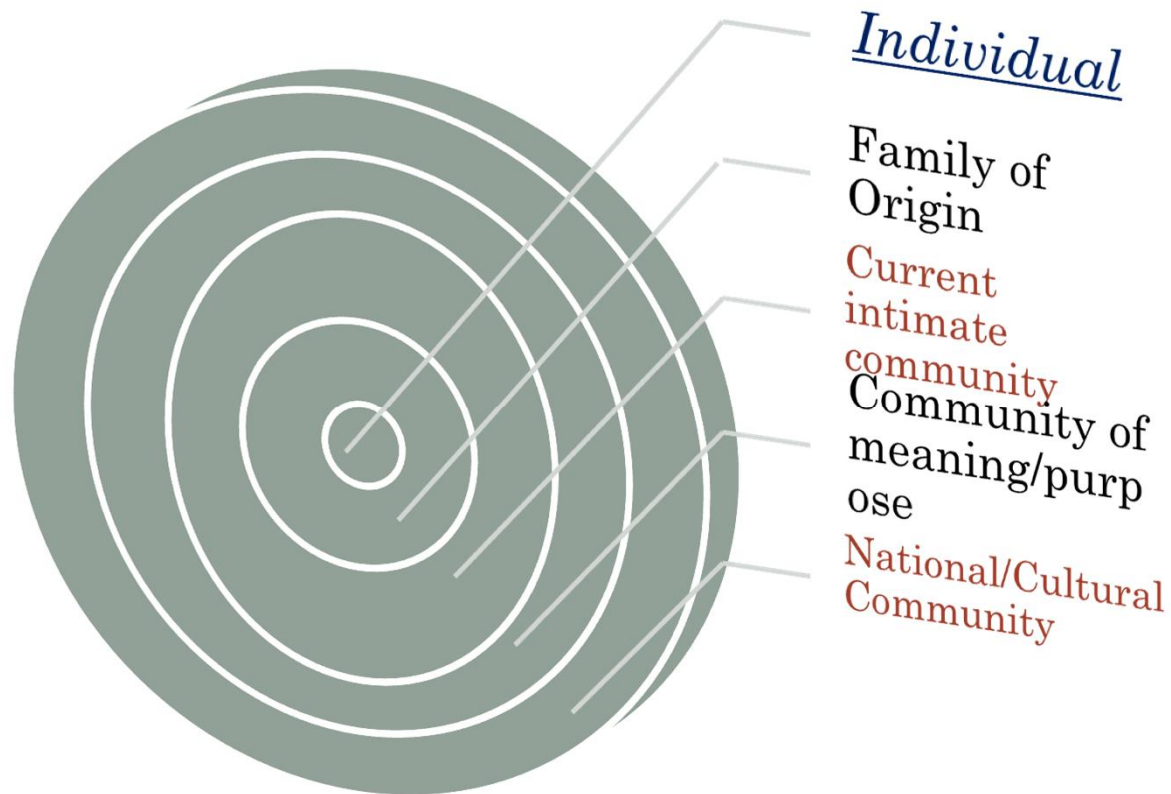
Or Belief

Is NOT Easy.



CHAPLAINS DOING “*INTENTIONAL*” MINISTRY ARE AWARE THAT THE CIRCLES OF CONTEXT CONTRIBUTE TO THE BEHAVIORS OBSERVED AND ARE KEY TO EFFECTIVE MINISTRY.

## CIRCLES OF CONTEXT





## FAMILY OF ORIGIN

- Our **family of origin**--the family we grew up in, as opposed to the people we live with now--is the place we learned to be who we are, for better and worse. From our family we learn how to communicate, deal with our emotions, and get our needs met. We also learn many of our values and beliefs from our families. We often develop our sense of self in the context of our family of origin--a strong sense of self if we are loved and kept safe most of the time; often, a damaged sense of self if love and safety are frequently unavailable

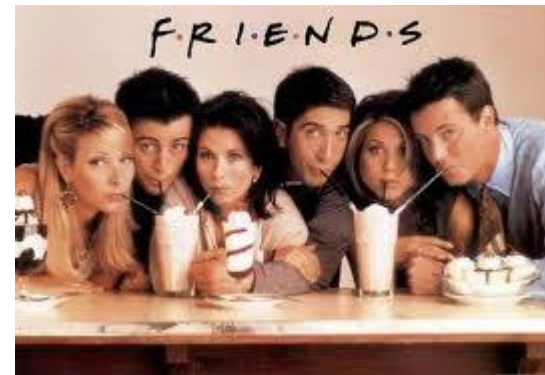


# CURRENT INTIMATE COMMUNITY

- Friends & Family & Associates
- Those of close-connection
- Those you share the details of your life with.



- “Those you hang with”



## COMMUNITY OF MEANING AND PURPOSE

- This circle of context relates to an individual's sense of who they are and how they walk in the world or navigate their way through life.
- This is directly related to the answers a person has to what are traditionally thought of as life's *ultimate* questions:
  - Who am I?
  - Why am I?
  - What is the meaning of life?
  - What is the meaning of my life?



# NATIONALITY – CULTURAL COMMUNITY



- In our culture – national heritage we receive a basic philosophical outlook which provides us with
  - A framework for reality
  - A way of making sense out of what we see
  - A set of ready made solutions for the problems of life



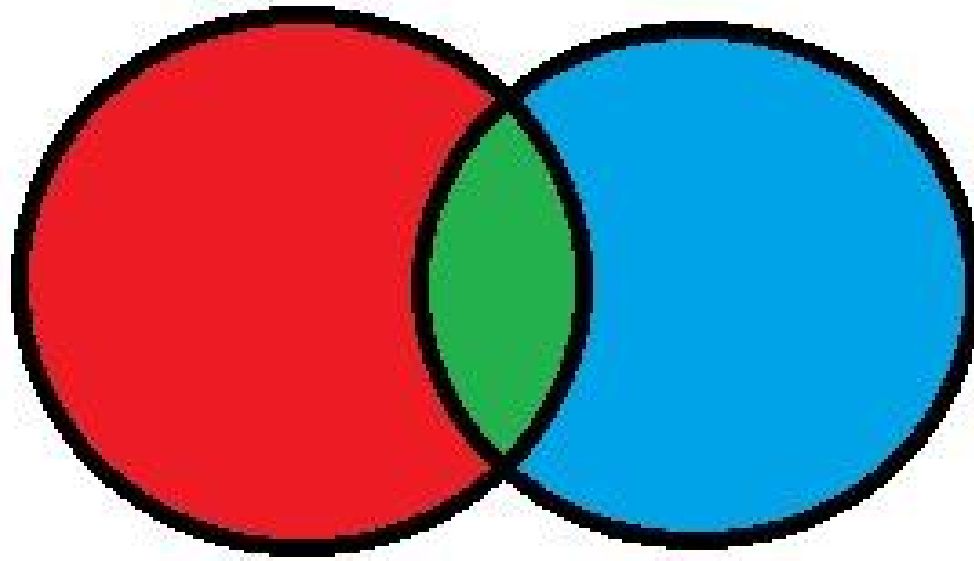
# ADDITIONAL TYPES OF CULTURES THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED IN MINISTRY

- SES (socio economic status) **Disenfranchised**
  - Physical Disability / Illness **Disabled**
  
  - Religious
  - Ethnic
  - Life Choice (Homosexual)
- } **Displaced**



# CONSIDER THIS IN YOUR MINISTRY

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**BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR MINISTRY AND  
COMMITTED TO MISSION MEANS ... APPLYING  
WHAT I LEARN AT THE CONFERENCE TO MY  
MINISTRY ....**

- **Considerations for Application** – handout
  - **The typical client at my Ministry Unit is....**
  - **In their circles of context I might find...**
  - **To have an effective ministry presence where I can share the love of Jesus, meet practical need and be a transforming influence I will need to ...**



# TRANSLATING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

## *SUPPORTING CLIENT INTEGRITY & IDENTITY*

**L** – Listen with empathy (active listening)

**E** – Elicit client worldview. (Circles of Context) Access client perception of the problem/need. Explain your perceptions.

**A** – Acknowledge and discuss differences and similarities.

**R** – Recommend  
action/intervention/treatment

**N** – Negotiate  
action/intervention/treatment

*Berlin & Fowkes, 1983; Tafoya/Wirth 1991*

