UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH THE EVALUATION OF "BREAKING THE SILENCE: A PROJECT TO GENERATE CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE WITHIN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES"

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Abstract: This article examines the topical concept of cultural competence for evaluators by presenting reflections on the evaluation of "Breaking the silence: A project to generate critical knowledge about family violence within immigrant communities" as a case example. Experiences of the internal evaluator in relation to cultural competency are explored and implications for practice are presented. Including sufficient time to build relationships, facilitating a learning process, and developing evaluator competencies are among the salient themes presented.

Résumé: Cet article examine le concept courant des compétences culturelles pour les évaluateurs en utilisant comme étude de cas l'évaluation de : « Briser le silence : Un projet qui vise à développer des connaissances critiques relatives à la violence familiale au sein des communautés immigrantes ». La compétence culturelle liée aux expériences de l'évaluateur interne est explorée et des implications pour la pratique sont présentées. Les thèmes saillants comprennent : un temps suffisant pour établir les relations, la facilitation du processus d'apprentissage, et le développement des compétences de l'évaluateur.

▬▬▬▬   The practice of evaluation has become an integral component of program development and management, from both a funding and an operational perspective (Bozzo, 2002; Callahan, 2004; Ottier, 2005; Sieppert, 2005). Furthermore, there is growing recognition by evaluators about the importance of acknowledging the role of culture in program evaluation and agreement that culture can shape how we view and understand an issue (Bent-Goodley, 2005; SenGupta, Hopson, & Thompson-Robinson, 2004; Springett, 2003; Symonette, 2004). Although the number is on the rise (see Thompson-Robinson, Hopson,

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& SenGupta, 2004), there exist only a few examples of cross-cultural evaluations in the literature (Letiecq & Bailey, 2004). The purpose of this article is to add to our understanding of cross-cultural competency in evaluation and present implications for current practice. The original paper emerged from my participation, over an 18-month period, in a cross-cultural project exploring issues around family violence specific to immigrant and refugee communities. Beginning with an exploration of the concept of cultural competency, this article presents guiding questions, draws on the "Breaking the Silence" project as a case example, and concludes with lessons learned and implications for culturally competent evaluation practice.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND EVALUATION

Ethnicity, race, religion, belonging to a specific association, or being part of a certain community brings together individuals who encompass similar values and common beliefs and adhere to norms, customs, and the like—in essence a shared culture. King, Neilsen, and Colby (2004) describe culture as encompassing the norms that people adhere to and live by, and patterns that human groups share. Cultural competence is having an "appreciation and recognition of other cultural groups and acceptance of the inherent differences that exist among them" (Thompson-Robinson et al., 2004, p. 1). Cultural competence involves considering the uniqueness of each group, and planning and designing appropriate and relevant program evaluations, standards, and measures. Displaying cultural competence is to demonstrate an "active awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the context at hand" and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach when evaluating a program (SenGupta et al., 2004, p. 12). It includes incorporating responsive and inclusive ways to conduct evaluation by representing the experiences and beliefs of the people involved as well as considering relevant historical, contextual, and social factors in program design, delivery, and evaluation (SenGupta et al., 2004).

The Canadian Evaluation Society Guidelines for Ethical Conduct state that "evaluators should be sensitive to the cultural and social environment of all stakeholders and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to this environment" (Canadian Evaluation Society, n.d.). The American Evaluation Association's Guiding Principles for evaluators state:

> To ensure recognition, accurate interpretation and respect for diversity, evaluators should ensure that the

members of the evaluation team collectively demon-strate cultural competence. Cultural competence would be reflected in evaluators seeking awareness of their own culturally-based assumptions, their understanding of the worldviews of culturally-different participants and stakeholders in the evaluation, and the use of appro-priate evaluation strategies and skills in working with culturally different groups. Diversity may be in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economics, or other factors pertinent to the evaluation context. (American Evaluation Association, 2004)

The summer 2004 issue of the American Evaluation Association's *New Directions for Evaluation* focused specifically on cultural competence. The following definition was proposed:

Cultural competence in evaluation can be broadly defined as a systematic, responsive inquiry that is actively cog-nizant, understanding, and appreciative of the cultural context in which the evaluation takes place; that frames and articulates the epistemology of the evaluative en-deavor; that employs culturally and contextually appro-priate methodology; and that uses stakeholder-generated, interpretive means to arrive at the results and further use of the findings. (SenGupta et al., 2004, p. 13)

The above definition stresses the importance of being aware of the cultural context in which the evaluation is taking place by recognizing political, social, and historical factors that may influence evaluation questions, methodology, and the use of findings by stakeholders.

When exploring what it means to work as a culturally competent evaluator, I question if cultural competence is a way of working, knowing or simply being. Can any evaluator be or become culturally competent? Hood (2001) maintains that evaluators from a similar cultural background are more likely to have "direct experiences" with their own racial and cultural group and therefore likely to build relationships at a faster pace. Although Hood's point is intuitively sound, it is not uncommon for programs to be evaluated by people who have different experiences from program users (Yarbrough, Shulha, & Caruthers, 2004). Evaluators of a similar background to participants may not be available or programs may include rep-resentation from a number of different cultural groups (Letiecq &

Bailey, 2004). By conducting a participatory evaluation, evaluators recognize multiple perspectives of knowledge, act as facilitators, and "assume that participants in the evaluation process create shared meaning" (King et al., 2004, p. 68). In accordance with an increase in participatory evaluation in general (Birch & Jacob, 2005; Green & Mercer, 2001; King et al., 2004; Torres, Preskill, & Piontek, 2005; Whitmore, 1998), it seems reasonable to conclude that working from a participatory approach with evaluator as facilitator, and including stakeholders in the evaluation process, has the potential to achieve culturally competent practice.

The idea of evaluator as facilitator of the evaluation process suggests reflection on how our own experiences influence the way we evaluate, connect with participants, and offer insight about a program (Patton, 2002). Based on the experience of conducting a participatory evaluation of a women's program in South Africa, Burke (1998) asked herself questions about her dual role as a white Canadian woman and an evaluator of a program in a Third World country. In searching for my own cultural competence, I too asked myself, a white mainstream Canadian woman, how my experiences, evaluation training, and assumptions influenced the way I approached a cross-cultural evaluation. In the next section, I present a summary of a project that took place in Western Canada and describe cultural competence as a conscious way of working and learning; something that develops through experiences working with diverse populations and with reflection.

CASE EXAMPLE: UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH THE EVALUATION OF "BREAKING THE SILENCE: A PROJECT TO GENERATE CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE WITHIN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES"

The case example and lessons learned sections address the following guiding questions:

1. In relation to program planning and evaluation, what activities reflect cultural competence?
2. What lessons can be drawn from this case example to contribute to our knowledge of culturally competent evaluation?

This case example was prepared by reviewing project evaluation documentation and as a result of discussion with participants. Included in the presentation of the case example is an overview of family violence

specific to an immigrant and refugee context, the project's background and objectives, the evaluation's guiding framework and use of theory, and a summary of the process and outcome evaluation. In general, having an awareness of context is important when making sense of information and specifically when considering the impact of culture. In other words, this project required reflection about how the issue of family violence may be different when considering the immigration and settlement context. This next section provides a brief overview of family violence specific to immigrant and refugees.

Context

Individuals immigrating to a new country bring with them values and beliefs about families, roles, and responsibilities and a unique cultural heritage (Ortiz, 2003). Adjusting to and learning a new system, leaving behind a family support network, gender role expectations, isolation, language barriers, and a lack of knowledge of the legal system are some of the challenges facing immigrants in a new country (Alberta Children's Services, n.d.; Erez & Copps Hartley, 2003; Moracco, Hilton, Hodges, & Frasier, 2005). In essence, the act of immigration and settlement in a new country and dealing with associated challenges can heighten stress and, without support, may result in situations of increased family tension or intensify the potential for family violence.

A complex issue involving personal beliefs, values, cultural, economic, and societal pressures, family violence can include physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual components (Office for the Prevention of Family Violence, 1994). Some families may have experienced violence prior to coming to a new country, while for others family violence may be a recent development when faced with the additional stressors of immigration and settlement. Issues of family violence may go unreported or unaddressed for a number of reasons. For example, the victim may be embarrassed, feel frightened, fear potential retaliation or loss of partner, or be wary of police involvement (Valente, 2002). If reported, some victims may have difficulty accessing culturally relevant services or face discriminatory treatment (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Moracco et al., 2005). For instance, a community-based evaluation found family violence requires individuals and families to draw on personal supports and agency resources to address the issue, but cultural and linguistic barriers make accessing mainstream services more difficult for members of ethno-cultural communities (Edmonton Chinese Community Services, 2001). With

funding to develop and evaluate programs as well as offer support to families, immigrant-serving agencies and partners are well positioned to learn more about the understudied issue of family violence in immigrant and refugee communities (Bent-Goodley, 2005; McFarlane et al., 2002; Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick, 1996).

Project Background

A group of 18 members from nine immigrant and refugee communities and participating agency representatives, called the Legacy team,[1] received funding to conduct a project to generate knowledge about family violence within immigrant communities, and develop and pilot a curriculum. Throughout this project, participants explored gender roles, power issues, and factors within the immigrant/refugee experience that may affect family relationships. I served as the internal evaluator and project coordinator. I shared the coordinating role with a professional who has a strong background in providing services around family violence. As a member of the Legacy team, my role included facilitating discussions and encouraging active participation in the evaluation process (Cockerill, Myers, & Allman, 2000). My approach and intent was to facilitate a participatory evaluation in a culturally competent way.

The purpose of the evaluation was to document project activities as well as to provide opportunities for group reflection leading to adjustments and improvements along the way. A project-coordinating group comprising three members (including myself) met bi-weekly to discuss project planning and evaluation-related issues to bring forward to the larger team for discussion. The Legacy team, as a collective, was part of the evaluation by contributing reflective comments on the project as well as participating in evaluation-related activities. For example, content for written reports was based on our discussions, and drafts were circulated to Legacy team members for feedback and suggestions. Furthermore, the evaluation provided the forum for Legacy team members to discuss whether the initial project goals and objectives were being accomplished.

The three objectives of the "Breaking the Silence" project were:

- build capacities of resource people, elders, and family mediators in the community in order to better support families affected by family conflicts, disintegration, and violence;

- develop culturally and linguistically relevant information about family violence and services; and
- break the silence by finding appropriate opportunities for discussion about family violence within immigrant and refugee communities.

Framework and Theory

At the time of my participation in this project, I was enrolled in doctoral studies in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta and was introduced to the Precede-Proceed model (Green & Kreuter, 1999). I brought forward this model for consideration by the Legacy team, identified the social cognitive theory as a potential guide for the planning and evaluation of this project, and subsequently received support from participants for their use. As such, constructs from the social cognitive theory and the Precede-Proceed model provided the framework for the planning, implementation and evaluation of this project.

In designing the implementation and evaluation, the model and theory selected were appropriate for use in cross-cultural settings (Resnicow, Braithwaite, Dilorio, & Glanz, 2002). The Precede-Proceed planning and evaluation model has a strong component of participation to identify problems and define appropriate solutions (Resnicow et al., 2002). The Precede-Proceed model has been widely used in health promotion, health care, schools, and community settings in both planning and evaluation (see Green & Kreuter, 1999). The Precede-Proceed acronym stands for Predisposing, Reinforcing and Enabling Constructs in Educational/Environmental Diagnosis and Evaluation. There are nine phases in this planning model: social assessment, epidemiological assessment, behavioural and environmental assessment, educational and ecological assessment, administrative and policy assessment, implementation, process evaluation, impact evaluation, and outcome evaluation. Precede is based on the premise that educational diagnosis precedes an intervention plan (Carlson Gielen & McDonald, 2002).

Specifying a theory to frame a project evaluation elicits certain constructs to consider over others and can be used to guide program development and evaluation. Employing theory supports the idea that, based on certain actions, change is likely to occur (Chaytor & Carter, 2005). Social cognitive theory considers the interaction between environment and social change. Constructs from the social

cognitive theory lend themselves well to explaining change in diverse cultural settings and are "well suited to elucidate human personal development, adaptation and change" (Bandura, 2002, p. 271). Two key theoretical constructs were made explicit in this evaluation: observational learning and collective efficacy.

Observational learning: A construct from the social cognitive theory posits that people learn from other people by observing them, a form of indirect teaching. By including credible role models (Baranowski, Perry, & Parcel, 2002)—in this case other Legacy team members and professionals working in the justice system and social services—it was the intention of the project that Legacy team members learn from each other through discussions and sharing of experiences. Therefore, when a Legacy team member received reinforcement from other members upon sharing the approach of working with a family experiencing family violence, another member was more likely to develop confidence to use a similar approach when encountering a comparable situation. The goal was not to create "one view" or "one unified response" around the complex issue of family violence, but to work together to hear each member's voice and explore commonalities and differences within specific communities.

Collective efficacy: The belief of Legacy team members in their ability to facilitate change, produce an effect, and delay or prevent undesired consequences—in short their "collective efficacy"—was considered in the evaluation. Collective efficacy is not simply the sum of all members' personal efficacy (the individual's belief that he or she possesses the power to make a change), "rather, it is an emergent group-level property that embodies the coordinative and interactive dynamics of group functioning" (Bandura, 2002, p. 270). Members had a shared involvement in the project that defined their status as a group. A strong sense of cohesiveness appeared to exist among the Legacy team members from a variety of cultures, likely as a result of a shared purpose and years of working together prior to this project.

The construct of collective efficacy has practical applicability. One way to measure collective efficacy is by having group members arrive at an agreement on their perceived level of it (Bandura, 2000). Admittedly, members were at different stages in their own understanding of family violence; however, we generally agreed this project was making a difference and specific examples were shared. For instance, Legacy team members said that when working with families they now more readily recognized signs of family violence than before their involve-

ment in this project, and felt that they were gaining the necessary skills to begin to either address it or recognize the Legacy team as a forum where concerns could be brought forward for discussion. However, this deliberative approach of assessing agreement about a group's level of collective efficacy has its limitations. Related to conducting a culturally competent evaluation, issues of power, distorting of others' thoughts, and pressures for conformity must be taken into consideration. Moreover, "assessment by constructed consensus may itself change the efficacy beliefs" (Bandura, 2000, p. 76). Nevertheless, introducing the idea that the project is a group endeavour rather than the responsibility of one individual seemed to provide a sense of collective purpose for members of this project.

Although the model and theory adopted provided a comprehensive planning and evaluation framework, it required time, expertise, and resources to implement. Alternatively, some of the Precede-Proceed assessment phases were not fully completed or I took on the evaluation-related tasks because I saw them as being part of my role, mainly because I had the background in evaluation. Considering the guiding question of activities that reflect a cultural-competent evaluation and to ensure meaningful participation, this highlights for me the importance of including stakeholders in recommending and selecting an appropriate framework, theory, and methods (beyond simply asking for agreement on what is being proposed by the evaluator). According to Christie (2003), Layne (1999), Naylor, Wharf-Higgins, Blair, Green, and O'Connor (2002), and Springett (2003), some current evaluation practices may be consultative at best, rather than truly participatory. The balance from consultative to participatory can be shifted by spending sufficient time discussing the goals of the evaluation, roles and responsibilities, setting realistic timelines, engaging stakeholders in method-related decisions, and providing training and support in the planning stages and throughout the evaluation.

Process and Outcome Evaluation

The main data collection strategy for this project was the synthesizing of the monthly discussions. Conversations and group discussions where members could explore their views helped to create a feeling of trust between them (Gardner, 2003). The monthly discussions were a regularly scheduled form of focus group. Evaluators and researchers have used focus groups in evaluations exploring the impact of culture (Zulli & Frierson, 2004) and in research on family violence and among diverse populations (Miedema, 1999; Yoshihama, 2002).

For example, when exploring the experiences of battered women in Japan, Yoshihama (2002) noted that a benefit of using focus groups was the "intersubjectivity" that emerged through developing a shared understanding of family violence as a social issue. In turn, the shared understanding seemed to lessen the sense of isolation originally felt by participants (Yoshihama, 2002).

The "Breaking the Silence" process evaluation served to characterize the group, describe the implementation, and document project changes and the rationale for such changes. The outcome evaluation phase involved examining the original objectives and assessing the extent to which they were met by means of keeping track of hours spent on various activities, individual and group interviews, and a final questionnaire. Upon the completion of the funding period, Legacy team members had spent approximately 50 hours over an 18-month period formally discussing how family violence is defined and viewed in Canada (see Appendix for a summary of topics). As a result of this project, statistics about family violence cases in the justice system involving individuals from different cultures are now being tracked by the Edmonton John Howard Victims Assistance program (court support for cases dealing exclusively with domestic violence). After a file review conducted by the staff of the program in 2004, it was found that approximately 32% of their current caseload are identified as being immigrants or refugees (a caseload consists of close to 100 files). Curriculum encompassing a set of methods to deliver content and profile the most relevant way to integrate exploration of the issue of family violence in participating communities was developed and piloted. Finally, to give focus to the project, a Legacy team member developed a continuum of care and action. Table 1 describes a continuum from prevention, to assisting people in crisis (safety plan, emergency supports), through to long-term support.

A list of completed activities, however, does not necessarily provide sufficient support to conclude meaningful change has taken place. Questions remain, such as: As a result of the work of the Legacy team, are communities currently discussing the issue and recommending changes or supports within their own structure? If so, are there other reasonable explanations for this change or can it be attributed to this project? Additional evaluation of the curriculum and assessing attainment of longer-term outcomes remains to be done. Furthermore, additional research is needed to understand the nuances of diverse cultures as they relate to family violence and the impact of stereotypes and discrimination (Bent-Goodley, 2005; McFarlane et al., 2002).

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE: TIME TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, FACILITATING A LEARNING PROCESS, AND DEVELOPING EVALUATOR COMPETENCIES

In answer to the guiding question posed at the beginning of the case example, a number of lessons can be drawn. In this section, I present three themes, suggest evaluation-related considerations, and note implications for future practice.

Time to Build Relationships

Perhaps one of the more salient lessons is the firsthand knowledge I gained about the importance of investing the necessary time to build relationships with participants and other stakeholders. The concept of "time" is important "in the sense of allowing time … that there is time to build trusting relationships … (because) when projects cover sensitive topics it may not be easy for people to contribute honestly with a stranger" (Gardner, 2003, p. 71). Furthermore, stakeholders like to contribute to evaluations in different ways and therefore evaluations should be flexible to accommodate various levels of par-

Table 1
Continuum of Care and Actions

Deepening our understanding of the issues:
A learning circle among community leaders and resource people
1. Changing gender roles and parents roles – issues of gender equality and children's rights.
2. Conflict between "individual-based" rights versus more traditional values about collectives and owner-ship
3. Need to develop new "problem solving" for maintaining family harmony.

Intended audience (For WHOM)	Newcomers Young couples Expectant couples Mothers and fathers Youth				
Strategies	Community education and prevention	Early detection and intervention	Crisis support	Post-crisis support	Long-term support
Actions (WHAT)	Part of settlement orientation—Canadian laws that affect families Marriage Preparation Prenatal Classes Parenting group Youth groups	Culturally relevant mediation and intervention Conflict analysis and problem-solving skill development	Collaborative support with shelters and police (spousal violence teams)	Victims Assistance Programs	Counselling Legal support Financial support

Developed by Yvonne Chiu, Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, 2004, as part of this project.

ticipation (Gardner, 2003; Green, Mulvey, Fischer, & Woratschek, 1996). In support of allowing sufficient time, Letiecq and Bailey (2004) remarked on the need to allocate significant upfront time to build trusting relationships with individuals who may mistrust or be suspicious of outside evaluators. A challenge to ensuring "sufficient time" and an implication for practice is justifying and negotiating the extra amount needed with funding agencies (Letiecq & Bailey, 2004; Ottier, 2005). In the case of the Legacy team project, we requested and received two extensions (equaling approximately one year) before submitting final reports to the funders. Activities consistent with being a culturally competent evaluator are advocating for sufficient time in the planning stages of the evaluation, engaging in dialogue with stakeholders by discussing an appropriate evaluation framework, and identifying opportunities for participation throughout the evaluation process.

Alternatively, results of a non-culturally competent evaluation, as seen by members of the Legacy team in past evaluations, are evaluators who get upset or angry when using their cultural lens and become negative about the slow change process. Legacy team members advise that change can be slow but this does not mean that nothing is being done. In short, culturally competent evaluators have a role to promote and engage in dialogue through in-depth discussions working toward finding a shared meaning by taking the time necessary to develop an understanding of the participants and the project (King, Stevanh, Ghere, & Minnema, 2004; Lee & Walsh, 2004).

Facilitating a Learning Process

Ensuring time to build relationships relates to the theme of facilitating a learning process throughout the evaluation. When evaluating a project exploring family violence in a multicultural context I surmised that the process of collaboration throughout the evaluation was as important as measuring outcomes. Cross-cultural evaluation is a mutual type of work, a process and not just an end product (Legacy team discussion, May 2005). Cultural competence includes an attitude of being open-minded, finding out the reasons behind the way things are, and having an acceptance and willingness to learn. Evaluators who get excited over the "exotica" of different cultures may miss identifying relevant issues. Alternatively, those who are rigid and look only through their own lens may miss a collaborative learning opportunity. Ultimately, as a Legacy team member pointed out, a culture exists with being an evaluator and we bring certain assump-

tions, values, and beliefs to the table. Therefore, learning throughout the evaluation takes place both ways.

Culture changes and does not remain static amidst the practice of program development, implementation, and evaluation. Culturally competent evaluators are flexible and adapt to that change, all the while trying not to rush the process. For example, at one point in the evaluation I had to ask myself whose agenda I was trying to push forward. At times, my structured approach, with specific timelines, seemed inconsistent with the exploration of the issue of family violence by Legacy team members. As part of the process evaluation, twice during the project we respectfully discussed what was working and what could be improved upon. As a result, I decided to become less structured in my facilitation of discussions, relied less on a set agenda as a list of items and questions to work through, and participated in a more free-flowing discussion. I also became more relaxed about group discussions not always starting and ending on the agreed-upon time and less concerned about the comings and goings of people throughout our scheduled time together. I recognized that it was the participation that was important. Concepts like a fixed and firm start/end time and structured agendas should be relevant to the context and the ebb and flow of the group.

In short, including a number of different ways to collect data, providing opportunities for reflection by discussing how the project is unfolding, and making assumptions explicit by acting as a bridge to build understanding amongst participants are activities consistent with being a culturally competent evaluator. Fortunately, evaluators have a myriad of skills and approaches, which include technical, interpersonal, and facilitation skills (Stevahn, King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005) to draw on to ensure that the evaluation is culturally appropriate. With each new experience, we gain a new appreciation of which skills and approaches to apply.

Developing Evaluator Competencies

To explain the third theme, I draw on the work of Stevahn et al. (2005) and their analogy of evaluators being like well-equipped travelers bringing all the tools necessary for a successful trip. After years of work, the authors established a taxonomy of *Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators*. King et al. (2001) conducted an exploratory study designed to assess the level at which evaluators from different backgrounds perceived the importance of Essential Evaluator

Competencies. The list of competencies was originally identified in a class of advanced graduate students and further developed by the authors. A group of 31 diverse individuals involved in the field of program evaluation engaged in a "Multi-Attribute Consensus Reaching Process" about proposed competencies. Participants rated the importance of having "cross-cultural skills" (a competency listed under the cluster of General Skills for Evaluation Practice) at 90.32 (within a range of 50–100). This rating is about midway for that cluster, as compared to the highest rating given to "logical and critical thinking skills" at 97.58 and the lowest "computer application skills" rated at 84.84. Included in the study was a sample of qualitative responses. When discussing cross-cultural skills, a respondent identified the need for evaluators to develop group facilitation and cross-cultural skills when working with community groups and believed that too much emphasis is put on teaching technical skills and not enough placed on interpersonal ones. As an evaluator who was evaluating a project at the same time as trying to understand what it means to be culturally competent, I agree that additional instruction and dialogue in the area of cross-cultural skills would be beneficial as part of evaluation training.

More recently, Stevahn et al. (2005) presented a revised taxonomy in an effort to arrive at an agreement of overall essential competencies for evaluators. The authors suggest that adopting this revised taxonomy will improve training opportunities, promote the advancement of research on evaluation, and work toward the professionalization of the field. Included in the revised taxonomy is "demonstrating cross-cultural competence" (number 6.6, replacing "cross-cultural skills"), listed under the category of interpersonal competencies. To name only a few related competencies in that category, the list also includes facilitation of constructive interpersonal interaction, use of verbal/ listening communication skills, and reflective practice (see Stevahn et al., 2005, for a complete list). Based on the growing recognition of the importance of cross-cultural competency in evaluation, an implication for practice is that this topic and associated issues should be included as part of the curriculum offered by educational institutions with programs in evaluation and added to the Essential Skills Series offered by the Canadian Evaluation Society.

CONCLUSION

In considering our own assumptions around culture and engaging in discussions with participants when planning and undertaking

evaluations, the perspectives of the people we are working with will be recognized by means of culturally and contextually appropriate evaluations. This article presents information about a significant and relevant topic for evaluators and highlights a number of important considerations. Including a message of having an awareness of similarities and differences among various cultures, this article provides a review of literature on cultural competence, addresses a gap by contributing a case example of a cross-cultural evaluation, and adds to our understanding of related issues. Furthermore, this case example supports the idea that an evaluator of a different background from that of participants can competently evaluate a program within a cultural context using a participatory approach. In answer to the guiding questions posed at the introduction of the case example and based on the literature reviewed, there are many ways to demonstrate cultural competence in evaluation. Namely, evaluators should include sufficient time to build relationships; offer a variety of opportunities for participation; engage in co-learning about the issue by facilitating a learning process; consider historical, political, and contextual factors that may influence the evaluation; and ultimately draw on a myriad of skills and related competencies appropriate to the specific culture and context of each evaluation.

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NOTE

1   Legacy team members represent the Spanish, Punjabi, French/African, Kurdish, Ethiopian, Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Eritrean communities. Partnering agencies include the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, Edmonton Women's Shelter, Edmonton John

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APPENDIX

A Summary of Legacy Team Discussion Topics

> Participants spent time contrasting Canadian views to that of their homeland. Factors within the immigrant/refugee experience impacting on family violence were identified. Gender roles and power issues were discussed from the perspective of both men and women in the group. The following is a summary of some of topics that guided the monthly discussions:
>
> • How can dialogue around family violence begin within communities? What steps can be taken to identify each community's comfort level with the issue?
> • What trends are we seeing in regard to family violence? Discussions suggested that gender dynamics, cross-cultural relationships, abuse from parents and in-laws, and marriages where one spouse has been in Canada 5–10 years prior to the other were emerging trends.
> • Youth-specific focus group. The youth members stated that they must be part of the solution and that we all must work together to address the issue of family violence.

- A discussion, facilitated by SAFE Place Shelter, and Office for the Prevention of Family Violence, provided an overview of the cycle of violence, available services, and an overview of the immigrant experience. Specifically mentioned were isolation, eroded self-esteem, loss of connection with family, culture shock (lasting 1–2 years), exploitation at home and work, and difficulty accessing legal services—all factors that give power to the abuser. An abuser can assert control by giving misinformation about immigrant status or threatening to take away sponsorship or landed immigrant status. Culture barriers include experiences from home country, limited legal resources, lack of protection, lack of community support, and overall violence. Gender differences were also discussed.
- How can we break the silence? In sum, we can break the silence by sharing information, addressing secrecy, looking at the environment and individual situations, valuing trust, and building relationships.
- A discussion was held to explore various cultures' relationship with the justice system. There remains some mistrust based on experiences from home countries and the mandatory charging policy in regards to family violence.
- Two formal discussions were facilitated specifically for men to share their experiences and thoughts around family violence. Participating men suggested the importance of supporting "family harmony" and sharing stories of resolution.
- A resource-sharing meeting was held with discussion about how best to integrate a family violence curriculum into existing programs.

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