

A row of six light-colored wooden blocks with black letters, spelling out the word "Values" in a simple, sans-serif font. The blocks are arranged horizontally on a light-colored wooden surface.**YOU ENCOUNTER VALUES CONFLICTING YOUR OWN.**

When you work in a multi-ethnic environment, you may be exposed to some very strong attitudes and statements, which may conflict with your personal values. No matter what ethnic background you have, this can seem hurtful. It can be negative comments about your skin colour, nationality, religion, culture, dress or gender and even though, you work as a professional and not as a private person, and you understand that there are different attitudes and opinions, you may still, feel hurt. In addition, when you are affected by your emotions, you can tend to react with anger, disappointment or aggression, reactions that do not match to a professional relationship. Therefore, the social and healthcare professionals must be able to handle these situations without reacting either outwards or inwards, with anger or sadness. Being mindful on yourself and aware of the situations you are dealing with, should be critical elements of your daily practice, as difficult as it may be sometimes. The factor of attitude also, is essential since having a positive attitude and perspective towards situations instead of a negative one, is a valuable way to reduce and manage hurtful emotions, effectively.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

On a Christmas Eve, at a nursing home with residents of different ethnic backgrounds, the staff is very busy preparing for the traditional Christmas dinner, which is going to be served in a few hours. Suddenly, an Arab woman unexpectedly shows up, bringing with her a hairdresser to give her mother a haircut, who lives at the nursing home. The daughter demands somebody from the staff to help her, transfer her mother from her bed to a chair. A social and health care assistant explains her that unfortunately, no one from the staff has the time for it, since they are preparing the dinner and the residents. The daughter becomes very angry and says that she does not care about this ridiculous Christmas, and angrily asks why the others celebrate it, since it does not make any sense and it is stupid. The social and health care professional, who is a Christian, is emotionally affected by what is being said. She feels that her culture and religion is being stepped on. However, she is experienced and able to maintain a friendly communication, as she can separate her own personal hurt from her professional work.

SOLUTION

The solution are the same as the options - keep track of your own reactions.

OPTION 01

Take a deep breath and count to ten. Take a moment for yourself. Step back a bit and relax. Identify the reasons why you are hurt.

OPTION 02

Accept and understand why the person is expressing this view. Accept that you cannot change other people - only yourself.

OPTION 03

How do you handle similar situations? What works for you?

OPTION 04

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The I-CARE project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.