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Clinical Social Work Practice III with Groups

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After reading chapter 7 of *Social Work with Groups* by Zastrow and Hessenaur, I have a more in depth understanding of how to effectively work with diverse populations in a group and one on one setting. The chapter discussed stereotyping, intervention techniques, cultural competence, and cultural humility. It also described best practices for working with those in the LGBTQIA and women.

I appreciate that the reading allowed me to analyze my own stereotypes so that I can be more self-aware of my biases. It's important for social workers to examine their own biases so they do not allow them to have a negative impact on clients or group participants. It is vital to educate ourselves about different cultures and diverse groups. It can be easy to approach our clients with the perspective that our own values and beliefs are the norm. That can be detrimental when working with a client who comes from a different background or group than my own.

I particularly enjoyed reading about how the medical model ignores the environmental factors that impact a person. As social workers, we look at "person in environment", a more holistic and multidimensional approach. This allows us to take into consideration the cultural and economic impact. The medical model also does not consider the individual's strengths and resources available to them. Ethnic-sensitive practice allows social workers to delve into a person's ethnicity, culture, and minority status and incorporate that into the theories being used

during treatment. There is an emphasis on empowerment of the individual and utilization of the strengths based approach. I personally lean heavily on the strengths based approach when working with the geriatric homebound clients at my internship. Many of them are experiencing feelings of loneliness and loss of independence. It's important to help them to recognize their own strengths and the abilities they possess.

The clients and group participants I work with at my internship require me to utilize cultural humility since they come from many different backgrounds and diverse groups. I always try to come from a place of learning, especially when I recognize that my clients have a different cultural background or lived experience than I do. This chapter has allowed me to see ways in which I can continue to grow in this area. Even when I am trying to be open-minded and humble, I recognize that I still see my own upbringing and background as the norm. I want to work to incorporate more of an empowerment approach by allowing my participants and clients to teach me about their cultures and experiences. Through them explaining, I am able to gain a better understanding, but also see how they view themselves. I can help them to emphasize the resilience they have because of their past experiences and current reality. I want to be sure to validate their feelings, but also help them to recognize their own power, resources, and abilities.