Redefining The Work: Passion, People, and Perspective

Megan-Brette Hamilton, PhD, CCC-SLP
Chief Staff Officer for Multicultural Affairs, ASHA
mhamilton@asha.org

Speaker Disclosure

• Financial:
  – Chief staff officer for multicultural affairs at ASHA
  – Strategies for Successful Classroom Communication

• Nonfinancial:
  – ASHA member
  – Researcher, author, presenter
  – Honeybee Connection podcast
  – Resources at www.meganbrettehamilton.com/

Megan-Brette Hamilton, PhD, CCC-SLP
ASHA
Agenda

Introduction

Our passion for people

Same people, new perspective

What it means to be culturally responsive

My passion changed my perspective

Clinical take-away

Next steps

Learning Outcomes

• Identify one new dimension of client/patient/student diversity that you hadn’t previously considered

• Select an area of DEI to focus on in your practice
Our Passion for People
What about people got you here?

I wanted to...
• help people
• represent my community
• express my ideas from my perspective
• work with children
• help adults re-find their voice
• improve quality of life for others

Along this journey, a lot has changed

In the field...
• terminology
• diagnostic criteria
• assessment practices
• best practices
In your own practice:
• setting
• skill set
• perspective
Same people, different perspective.

We still work with people who use AAC devices...
But we are learning to use a voice that may be familiar and comforting to them.

We still work with people who have difficulty swallowing...
But we are learning to consider how food is viewed and the ways meals are eaten based on preference and culture.

We still work with people who come to us for voice services...
But we are learning to affirm the voice they desire.

We still work with people who have communication challenges following a stroke...
But as we assess and treat them, we are learning to consider the dialect they spoke before the stroke.

We still work with children who have articulation challenges...
But we are learning to consider what features of their pattern are influenced by their dialect or another language.

We still work with people who have tinnitus or challenges with balance...
But we are learning to consider how mental health may impact how and what we decide to treat.

Perhaps what has also changed is the visibility and the authenticity of our clients/patients/students.
What it means
to be culturally responsive

How has our work changed?
It’s not more work.

It’s a different way to look at the work we already do.

We are understanding what it really means to be an effective communicator.
We are learning to see different parts of their identity, not just the communication part.
How does our practice change when we realize that reading a book every night before bed isn’t possible for this family due to work hours?
How does our treatment plan for dysphagia change when we realize that fasting is a part of their meal schedule?

How do our goals change when we realize that Black ASL is their most comfortable and confident way of communicating?
How do we consider trauma and other factors when counseling our client’s communication needs?

My passion changed my perspective
We all come from different backgrounds and have different experiences.

African American English is a rule-governed systematic way of talking.

Communication is culturally embedded.

There is no one right way to communicate.

Recognizing, validating, and celebrating the different ways we speak the same language

Using positive, noncomparative language to more accurately reflect linguistic features of AAE

**Plurals:**
- In M/GAE – marked by ‘s’
- In AAE – ‘s’ is dropped

OR

In AAE, plurals may be marked by number:

1 dog
2 dog
Redefining The Work: Passion, People, and Perspective
By Megan-Brette Hamilton, PhD, CCC-SLP

What’s your passion?

What will be your new perspective?
Clinical Takeaway

Growth can be uncomfortable at first, but then... growing our skills in a new way is what we’ve always done.
When you do the work, you can feel like you are delivering more effective services because you are seeing them.

Next steps...
Learn about someone’s background you are unfamiliar with.

Grow on your journey of being able to serve more culturally responsively.
Choose an area of practice passion.

Determine a dimension of diversity you’d like to focus on within that passion.

Identify the continuing education/professional development experiences you need to build this new perspective.

See someone differently.