The 8IATC received funding from the Australian Government.
Cultural Issues in Adventure Programming: Applying Hofstede’s Dimensions to Assessment and Practice

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What: There is a lack of a clear theoretical framework for addressing cross-cultural issues in adventure programming.

So What: We believe that it is critical to adapt methods to align with participants’ specific, cultural dynamics in order to create space for individual and collective voice, optimal participation, and the effective transfer of learning.

Now What: Hofstede’s (2001) model of cultural dimensions can be applied in adventure programming to enhance assessment and programming.
How do we define culture?

- Pair and share artifacts.
- Report back to identify key elements of culture.
The goal: Anti-oppressive practice

- consideration of trauma and the importance of challenge by choice
- political realities
- dominant power structures
- coercion vs. client voice/choice
- pushing your limits vs. expanding your comfort zone
- what else?
Cultural Relevance, Values and Goals of Adventure Programming

Why would I go into nature? Survival, personal growth, community, individual competence, service, recreation? To better myself? To better my community? Why should I share my feelings about this experience with the group?

Ask yourself, “is this program or intervention a match or a mismatch culturally?”

How well does your experience of the sacred in nature enable you to cope more effectively with the problems of mankind when you come back to the city?

Willi Unsoeld
Hofstede’s Six Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede is a Dutch social psychologist who conducted years of research across 70 countries and identified cultural polarities that can be helpful for working in a culturally relevant way with groups. Hofstede’s dimensions have been applied in business, psychology, management, and in work with schools, families and communities.
1. Power Distance
2. Uncertainty Avoidance
3. Individualism and Collectivism
4. Masculinity and Femininity (MAS)
5. Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation
6. Indulgence vs. Self-Restraint

Break into five small groups, review definitions and discuss how you would apply these dimensions to your AT practice. What types of assessment questions would you consider based on the dimension you are discussing?
Criticisms of the Model

- Overgeneralization of culture based only on national dimensions
- False distinctions between dimensions
- Need for more of a continuum model
- It is only one model of assessment that needs to be balanced with other information.
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