

Cultural Conflict Resolution

Foster/adoptive parents and social workers who work with racially and ethnically diverse families soon come to realize the strategies for parenting, appropriate disciplining techniques and handling conflict differ greatly across cultures. For example, people who come from community-oriented cultures generally tend to utilize indirect, less-threatening approaches since the ultimate goal is to maintain and save the relationship. On the other hand, people who grew up in individualistic cultures value honesty, direct expression of ones' feelings and thoughts, and open communication. This workshop which is supported with case studies will shed a light on the different approaches used by different cultures/subcultures of people who live in the United States and aim to raise awareness about one's own values, communication style and patterns in handling conflicts. This insight might be essential for foster/adoptive parents, caseworkers and administrators who work foster children or work closely with biological parents of a different ethnicity.

Trainer: Issam Smeir, LCPC

Issam Smeir is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor who specializes in conflict resolution and cross-cultural counseling. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Wheaton College and currently works on completing his doctorate dissertation in counseling education and supervision at NIU with an emphasis on cross-cultural conflict resolution. Issam is the former development director for Manara Ministries in Jordan/Middle East, and relief work took him to over 25 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, Persian Gulf and North Africa. In 2001, he joined World Relief DuPage as a clinical counselor working directly with clients from various ethnic back grounds. In 2008, Issam became the national trainer for World Relief. Besides World Relief, Issam provides consultation services to the (DCFS) Department of Children and Family Services in Illinois, Chicago Public schools, and HIAS. Issam's expertise includes cross cultural communication, cross cultural conflict resolution, marital conflict, coaching and ethical and professional regulations. Besides consulting, Issam is an adjunct professor at Judson University where he teaches graduate level courses such as Global Leadership, International Human Rights, & Advocacy for Social justice.