



Intercultural Training with a focus on migration and asylum

Network „Integration through Qualification (IQ)“

Published by

IQ Competence Centre for Intercultural Opening and Anti-Discrimination

IQ Fachstelle Interkulturelle Kompetenzentwicklung und Antidiskriminierung



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This Manual is a translation and summary of the complete edition in German „Interkulturelle Grundsensibilisierung mit Schwerpunkt Asyl & Flucht. Schulungshandbuch für Trainerinnen und Trainer“, 2. revised edition, 2015

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Preamble

This manual has been developed by the “IQ Competence Centre for Intercultural Opening and Anti-Discrimination” (IQ Fachstelle „Interkulturelle Kompetenzentwicklung und Antidiskriminierung“) for a nationwide basic intercultural sensitisation training programme for unemployment agencies, with a focus on asylum and refugees. The concept was based on the “Basics of Intercultural Competence” training course already developed for the Federal Employment Agency. It is assumed that experienced intercultural trainers will use the manual and conduct the training. That is why, in some cases, detailed coaching instructions or, for example, basics of how to control and moderate group processes have been omitted. It is advised to consult the original source for preparation, especially with the exercises given. Also, statistics and the law situation (e.g. access to the labour market) are not included in this English version.

The training manual includes background information for the trainers as well as suggestions for inputs, exercises and other sources of information for trainers. It is designed for a one-day training course.

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1. Introduction and exercises to begin with

Every training is different. The goal, the participants, the duration, the general conditions vary. This training manual offers a series of exercises concerning migration and diversity. They are focused on e.g. intercultural competence, migration-specific challenges in counselling, intercultural communication, exclusion and discrimination. In the beginning of a training, the goal of the seminar and the background must be clarified and a trusting atmosphere must be created. Taking this into account, an entry into a training must be selected individually and carefully. The following exercises help the participants to get to know each other and to attune themselves to the topic.

1.1 Exercise: Sociometric line-up

Brief description	The participants pose questions based on their and their family's migration history.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attuning the participants to the topic of migration. ▪ To reflect that migration forms part of everyday life in every society.
Time	approx. 20 min.
Material	marking points, where applicable (e.g. "abroad", "in federal state X", "in another federal state", "in the city of Y")
Implementation	<p>The participants are invited to position themselves in the room according to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who has ever been to another continent? (yes/no) ▪ Who has ever lived abroad for more than three months? (yes/no) ▪ Who was born abroad, in federal state X (the venue), in another federal state, in city Y (where the office is located)? ▪ Where was one of your parents born?
Alternatives	<p>If there is no classical round of introduction in the beginning, the participants can be asked general questions in order to get "warmed up", e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who needed more than 30 minutes to get here today? (line-up in left and right-hand corners) ▪ Who drinks tea and who drinks coffee? (line-up in left and right-hand corners) <p>Questions about the participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who knows whom? (those who know each other should stand close together) ▪ Who works closely with whom? (they stand close together) <p>If necessary, this can be followed by a short introduction round with activities.</p>
Assessment	For each of the possible arrangements, some of the participants are asked to explain their location so that, if possible, everyone has a chance to speak. The definition of "people with a migration background" (in Germany) is introduced in the meeting.

Migration background (German definition)

According to the German definition in the Microcensus, people with a migration background (in the broader sense) include “all those who immigrated to the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949, as well as all foreigners born in Germany and all those born in Germany as Germans with at least one immigrant parent or one parent born in Germany as a foreigner”, Federal Statistical Office: Subject Series 1, Series 2.2 Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit, Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund (translation: *Population and employment, population with a migration background*), Wiesbaden 2013, section on: Methodische Bemerkungen mit Übersicht über die Ergebnisse (translation: *Methodological comments with an overview of the results*).

Deviating from this, the 2011 Census defines persons with a migrant background as all immigrated and non-immigrated foreigners and every German who immigrated to the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1955, as well as every German with at least one parent who came to the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1955 (Federal Statistical Office: Census 2011: Selected results, Wiesbaden 2013, p. 26).

This definition has also been valid nationwide since the 2012 Microcensus. The definition and thus the associated attributions are discussed controversially and they need to be employed sensitively.

At the Federal Employment Agency, the definition of a migration background according to Section (§) 6 of the Survey Ordinance (MigHEV) is:

- Lack of German nationality or
- The place of birth lies outside the present borders of the Federal Republic of Germany, and immigration into the present territory of the Federal Republic of Germany took place after 1949, or
- The place of birth of at least one parent is outside the present-day borders of the Federal Republic of Germany and this parent immigrated to the present territory of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949.

1.2 Exercise: Push and pull factors

Brief description	The participants work out motives for escape and migration in small groups.
Objectives	To deal with the various motives and causes of migration
Time	approx. 20 min.
Material	Small cards and pens
Implementation	<p>The participants work in small groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What could move you to leave your customary place of residence in the long term? ▪ Why would you choose a particular country to emigrate to? <p>The answers are written down on cards (preferably in two colours) and presented in the meeting.</p>
Assessment	The seminar leader presents push and pull factors.

Push factors

Reasons that may lead people to leave their country of birth. For example:

Economy

- Unemployment, hardly any income
- Poverty
- High levels of taxation
- Expropriation of property
- High cost of living

Scarcity of natural resources

- Reduction in soil fertility and the soil's environmental capacity
- Fall in the availability of "free" animal resources (game, fish and/or shellfish)

Demographic problems

- Land scarcity
- Overpopulation

Policy

- Persecution
- Suppression
- War or political unrest
- Restriction of freedom of thought and religion
- Discrimination

Natural, climatic and environmental disasters

- Floods
- Landslides, earthquakes
- Volcanic eruptions
- Rising sea level
- Droughts

Pull factors

Reasons that may motivate people to want to emigrate to a certain country. Not only do negative conditions in the home country lead to migration. People may also feel "attracted" by particular circumstances. For example:

Economics

- Economic boom conditions
- Good earning opportunities and many job possibilities
- Economic development programmes
- Economic independence

Society

- Security
- Good housing opportunities
- High level of tolerance (e.g. religious and sexual)
- Good educational opportunities
- A functioning health system
- A wide range of services, cultural and leisure activities

Policy

- Favourable immigration laws / the possibility of family reunification
- Possibility of illegal immigration
- Recognition of immigrants as a potential for innovation
- Legal security
- Peace

Nature and the environment

- Favourable climatic conditions
- Existing resources

Demography

- Sufficient space available
- Labour shortages due to demographic change

2. Intercultural competence

2.1 Introduction to the topic

Plenary discussion: The seminar leader asks the participants: “What is intercultural competence?”

Collection of keywords on the moderation cards.

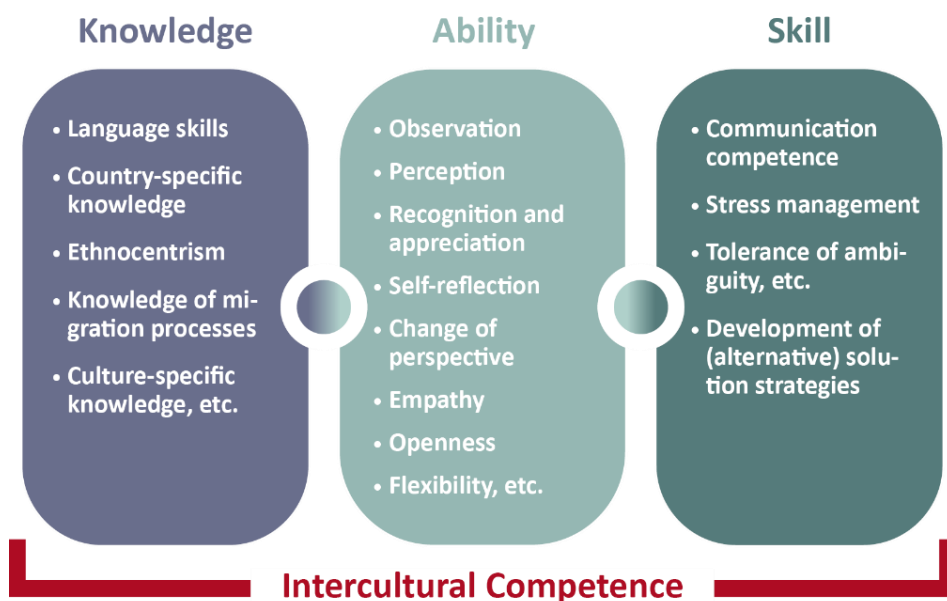
One definition of “intercultural competence”: “...the general ability to interact appropriately in different culturally overlapping situations and contexts, based on specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.”

Dr. Darla K. Deardorff

2.2 Process model of intercultural competence

Intercultural competence has become an important key skill. We live in a globalised world. We meet people with and without a migration background, at work or during our leisure time. Intercultural competence is particularly important for employees in agencies, in employment and in job centres. Every third unemployed person has a migration background (2014).

Intercultural competence has not only gained in importance in the context of counselling though but also in contact with employers, within the team or in personnel management.



Intercultural competence combines communication and action. It initially describes the ability to recognise and rethink one’s own feelings and actions in the context of one’s own “cultural” conditioning and to reflect on the behaviour of others accordingly. Diversity and differences are recognised, valued and respected and can be tolerated where necessary. Empathy, recognition and the ability to deal with conflict are just as much a part of the description of the competence as the ability to perceive different needs and take them into account.

Intercultural competence is highly complex. Above all, it calls for a specific attitude and certain attitudes. Respect, openness and curiosity are needed, but tolerance of ambiguity (the ability to endure ambiguous situations and contradictory forms of action and behaviour) is also required. Interestingly, the abilities described are not necessarily linked to intercultural experience. In order to develop them, intercultural experience (e.g. a background of migration or of time spent abroad) is not necessarily required; everyone already brings some of these characteristics with them. Furthermore, the abilities mentioned above not only improve intercultural (counselling) situations, but any interpersonal encounter. In particular, it is necessary to reflect on the idea of what an intercultural situation is: Interculturality is not only restricted to the relationship between the so-called “indigenous” and the “immigrants”; it also applies quite comprehensively to the relationship between different ways of living and includes differences in gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, physical features and socio-economic situations, as well as the differences between different working and administrative cultures.” (Schröer, Hubertus 2007, p. 9): The focus on “belonging” in the sense of national origin or ethnicity is consequently only one of many possible affiliations.

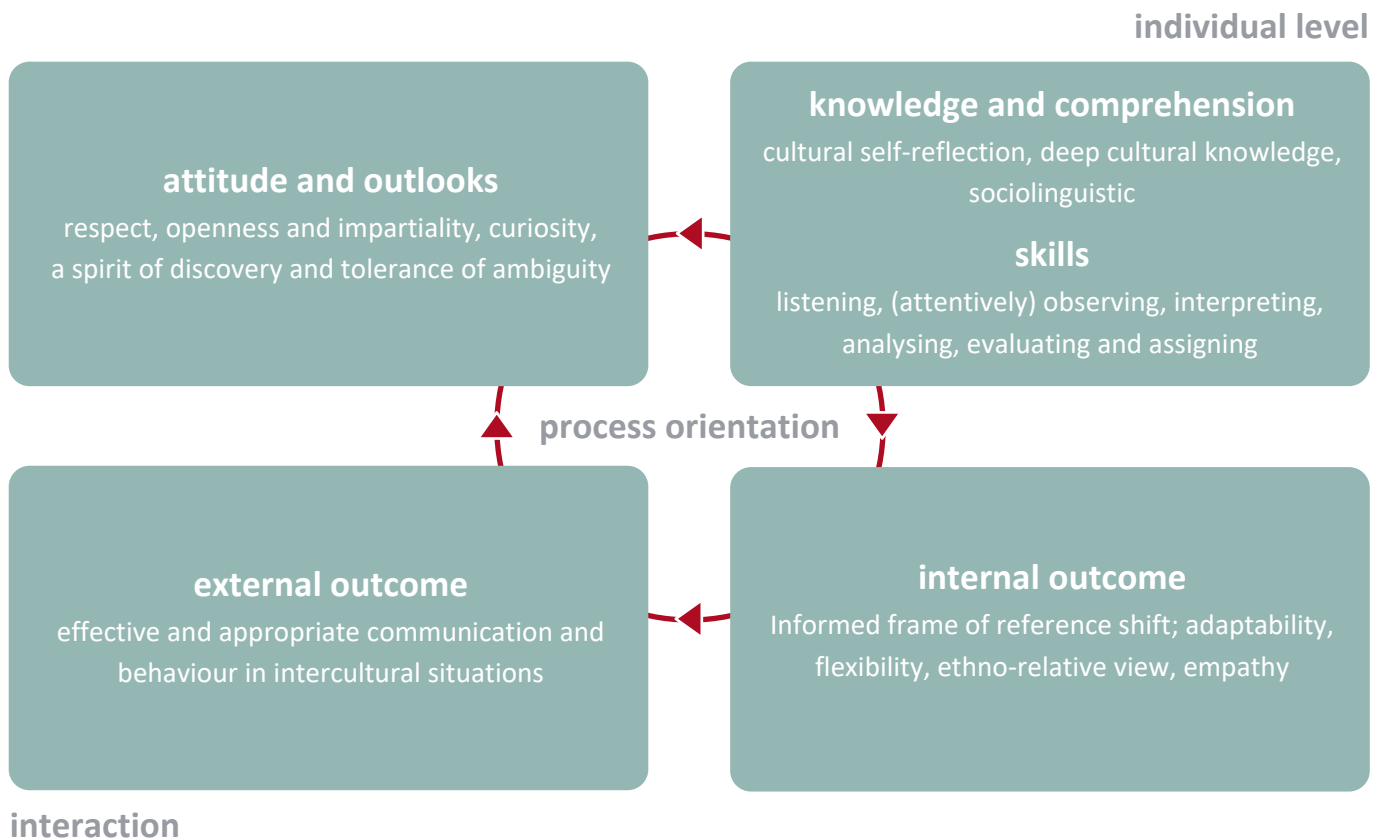
In addition, specific knowledge and understanding is helpful. In some contexts, for example, country-specific knowledge is important (such as background information on school systems and qualifications) or awareness of asylum and refugee issues. However, in professional situations where a wide variety of people from different cultures have to be dealt with on a daily basis (e.g. in counselling), country-specific knowledge loses its importance, because such a wide range cannot be dealt with – as is the case in employment agencies and job centres – and it is not necessarily conducive to achieving the desired results. The main focus should always be on the commonalities and the individual.

An internal effect sets in with the help of intercultural competence. The system of reference shifts and the ethnocentric view may change while more flexibility may emerge in the options for action and empathy. This also triggers an external effect: effective and appropriate communication and behaviour may take place in intercultural encounters.

Further explanations:

“Intercultural competence - the key competence in the 21st century?” Bertelsmann Stiftung thesis paper based on the Intercultural Competence Models of Dr. Darla K. Deardorff; Bertelsmann Foundation, 2006

The learning spiral of intercultural competence, based on Dr. Darla Deardorff



Further/different definitions and models are possible, such as

- Jürgen Straub: “Handbuch interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kompetenz” J.B. Metzler, 2007
- Jürgen Bolten: “Interkulturelle Kompetenz”, Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen, 2007

Location of the training course

At this point, the objectives of the basic training could be explained once more. The seminar focuses on the different “levels” of intercultural competence. On the knowledge level, for example, when it comes to different communication styles, as well as on the level of attitude and outlooks, when changing perspectives are concerned, for example. In order to do justice to the diversity of the clients and target groups, the topic of “intercultural competence” must be addressed – and not country-specific characteristics.

3. Culture and diversity

3.1 Introduction to the topic

Plenary discussion: The participants are asked to discuss: “What is culture for you?”

Afterwards, the concept of culture is introduced (if necessary, with the culture pyramid exercise).

3.2 The Concept of Culture

The definition of intercultural competence is based on an expanded concept of culture – in the way that it has become established, especially in the social sciences. There are a number of different definitions of culture. “Culture was (and still is) considered by many to be the way of life of a specific group of people in a specific space, who (as a result of their culture) feel that they belong together and (also as a result of their culture) differ from other such groups in other areas. The consequence is the common image of a global map of different cultures or of a mosaic where cultures are the tiles. Since Ulf Hannerz coined the terms “culture as flux” or “culture as creolisation”, the science of the 1990s has increasingly been abandoning the perspective of closed, insular cultures” (translation; Malte Christopher Boecker, 2006, p. 6).

An extended concept of culture is based on a real-life approach, according to which culture represents the all-encompassing context of human behaviour (Bolten, 2007, p. 10 ff.). This is because the imagined unity of space, group and culture has proven to be a fictional one under the conditions of globalisation. Globalised financial and commodity markets, as well as worldwide media structures and migration have led to an exponential increase in cultural exchange processes. Human environments have become culturally heterogeneous everywhere. Culture is an orientation system that controls our perceptions, evaluations and actions. It forms the repertoire of the means of communication and representation with which we communicate, present ourselves and develop our ideas. Culture is a changeable, open system; cultural change is a social production process (cf. Georg Auernheimer 2002, p. 28 ff).

Culture is a system of values and symbols, which social groups reproduce over long periods of time and which gives its members orientation and a sense of purpose for their behaviour.

Culture has to be distinguished from human nature on the one hand and personality (or individuality) on the other. Hofstede illustrates this in a pyramid under the heading of “Culture as mental programming of the mind” (see Geert Hofstede, 1993).

Human nature is something that is common to us all, it is what humanity has genetically inherited and what makes us what we are. In contrast, an individual’s personality is the unique personal combination of his or her “mental programmes”. It is based on his or her character; it is partly learned and partly inherited. Culture is the sum of the “rules of the game and concepts” of how something is designed, lived out, which conforms to the norm and which is customary. Culture is a system of concepts and value orientations, i.e. a system of orientation that helps a person to find his or her way. Culture impacts the way we think and act.

One part of culture is consciously perceived and is visible at first glance, for example clothing, symbols and food. The other part of culture, such as gender roles and values, is more “hidden”.

The fact is that just because someone belongs to a particular culture does not mean that he or she can be assumed to have a specific form of behaviour – that which is common. The personality is what makes a person and primarily guides him or her. When two people who feel they belong to two different cultures meet, misunderstandings may arise due to different “rules and concepts” or due to different forms of behaviour and values. Nevertheless, the similarities (for example all basic needs) always outweigh the differences. If too great an emphasis is placed on culture, we run the risk of being guided only by generalisations, stereotypes and prejudices. Sight of the commonalities and - above all - the individual is lost.

3.3 Diversity

Often, only the characteristic culture is considered in intercultural encounters. However, a person’s identity is made up of far more factors: age, gender, sexual orientation, physical and psychological abilities, as well as religion and philosophy. In an intercultural context, social background and circumstances in life, place of residence, educational status and aspects of residence law all play a particularly important role.

In the diversity approach, the differences between people in a society are mutually assessed and regarded as an enrichment. This relates to the aspects of age, gender, origin, religion/philosophy, sexual orientation, cultural values and other parameters. It is assumed that a society as a whole can benefit from the differences of all (see IQ Diversity Management competence centre, 2014, p. 30). In contrast to Managing Diversity as a concept in commercial enterprises, the social diversity approach does not focus on profit maximisation but on social justice (cf. Czollek, Perko, Weinbach, 2009).

In this context, it is important to mention that diversity is not only a desirable attitude or a very positive approach, but that it also has a legal framework: The General Equal Treatment Act (AGG - Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz) aims to prevent or eliminate discrimination based on ethnic origin or racism as well as based on age, gender, religion/philosophy, sexual identity or physical and psychological abilities. The discrimination factors covered by this anti-discrimination law are among the central dimensions in diversity concepts. As one example of discrimination, the Federal German Anti-Discrimination Agency cites a disabled woman with a migration background who was unjustifiably rejected when looking for a flat or job (an example of multiple discrimination). Discrimination, as in this case, often relates not only to one of the social categories mentioned in the anti-discrimination law, but it occurs in an interwoven or intersectional way – this is called intersectionality. This must always be considered, although claims and legal consequences can only be asserted in connection with one of the above-mentioned grounds of discrimination. Aside from the legal framework, it is also necessary to recognise structural or institutional conditions that produce the above-mentioned forms of discrimination when dealing with discrimination (cf. Czollek, Perko, Weinbach 2012).

4. Change of perspective

“The concept of being different, i.e. otherness, is constructed in relation not only to immigrants but also in relation to old-established minorities. These construction mechanisms are supported by the images that the media conveys, which often confirm prejudices and resentments, and portray the others, the foreigners, as the cause of violence, educational problems and oppression of women. The image of women with a migrant background that the media conveys is dominated by Muslim women wearing headscarves, for example. Even in specialist publications they are presented as being backward and torn between tradition and modernity, as if a religious attitude alone were an educational deficit. However, comparing these images with the actual proportion of people with a migration background, those who belong to the religiously rooted milieu make up only 7 % of the total. This is not greatly different from the proportion of people without a migrant background, who belong to a variety of religiously rooted milieus, including sects. However, research findings do little to revise established negative images such as the “image of Turkey”. For instance, the Sixth Family Report of the Federal German Government (BMSFSF 2000) pointed out that although there are comparatively many older women in Turkey who are illiterate, the proportion of female professors there is much higher than in Germany. According to a 2011 study by the University of Hamburg, two million adults in Germany are totally illiterate (4 % of the overall population) while a further 7.5 million are functionally illiterate (14 %). But it is ‘the others’ who are perceived as being deficient” (Sabine Handschuck, 2014, p.12).

Perception from outside is accompanied by simplifications. One first step towards simplification is the formation of stereotypes, uncritical generalisations such as the view that Germans abroad may be recognised by the fact that they use towels to occupy hotel deck chairs before going for breakfast. “In contrast, prejudices are negative (or even positive) judgements that are made and spread without any prior personal experience. Different approaches exist to explain stereotypes and prejudices. The psychodynamic approach regards it as an attempt to ward off uncertainty and fear. A poorly developed self-confidence can be compensated for by belonging to a group that is perceived as being strong. Generalisations in themselves are not problematic, as they do fulfil an important function in everyday life for the individual’s own orientation and certainty of action (e.g. red traffic lights mean “stop”, shaking hands signifies a greeting). They enable tasks and situations to be mastered automatically, without consciously thinking about them. Nevertheless, generalisations about other people and forms of behaviour are often wrong and, in the case of prejudices, emotionally charged. Their consequences are not to be underestimated. This also applies to the counselling situations of those participants who aim for integration in the labour market. In the context of intercultural competence, it is crucial that we become aware of our own generalisations and develop an attitude of openness in order to reflect on and, where applicable, revise our own judgements and other people’s statements about specific people (or groups).

Self-perception and external perception are influenced by many factors. They are dependent on the individual’s own personality structure and previous experiences. Perception is influenced by social discourse. Perception can also be manipulated by the interests of influential groups and individuals” (Sabine Handschuck, 2014, p. 12)

The fact that perception is not an objective process, but an individual and culturally shaped one, becomes particularly clear when it is realised that one’s own human environment and one’s own values and evaluations are interpreted into observed patterns of behaviour.

4.1 Exercise: Albatross

Brief description	In a role-playing game presented, the participants observe the behaviour of a man and a woman who belong to a fictional “culture”. Their task is to reflect on what they observe in the meeting. Together, they reflect on which interpretations of gender roles may result from the observations.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The participants reflect on the fact that observations always include interpretations that are linked to the images of society acquired in their own cultural socialisation and which correspond to their own “inner map”. ▪ They reflect on which “codes” have influenced their own perception. ▪ They expand their ability to consider other interpretations.
Time	approx. 45 min.
Material	Chair, bowl of peanuts
Space	Semi-circular seating for the participants with a chair in front of the semi-circle and with a bowl of peanuts below it.
Implementation	A role play is announced for the participants, during which they can observe the behaviour of a woman and a man from a non-existent cultural group, the “albatross culture”. They are asked to observe which feelings and images the observations trigger in them.
Role play (approx. 5 min.)	A man and woman enter the room in silence. They bear a neutral expression and look at the group. The man begins to slowly walk away from the semi-circle of chairs, the woman follows him a clear distance behind. In a second round, the woman moves the legs of those participants who are sitting with their legs crossed so that both feet are on the floor. The man does the same with the male participants. At the end of the round, the man takes a seat on the chair, the woman kneels down on the floor next to him. Both give the group a friendly look, though without smiling. The woman reaches for the bowl of peanuts, demonstrating clearly that she intends to eat from it. Before she can take hold of it, the man takes the bowl out of her hand and eats several nuts, chewing slowly and thoughtfully. Meanwhile, the woman smiles at those present. The man passes the bowl over to the woman, who now also eats several nuts. Then the woman puts the bowl back under the chair. The man puts one hand on the shoulder of the woman. She slowly bows three times close to the ground while his hand rests on her shoulder. Afterwards, both of them stand up and walk around of the participants again, with the woman following a clear distance behind the man once more.
Assessment	The participants are asked to describe the situation observed without evaluating it. Generally, this is difficult as interpretations are often unintentionally included in the description. The moderator points out evaluations or interpretations. Together a search is made for neutral description possibilities.

Evaluation version	In the spirit of intercultural competence, the participants are given the opportunity to “practice” their perceptive faculty and the task of observing closely. After the presentation they are asked to describe what they have observed. Every answer is considered valid and is written down by the moderator (on the flipchart) in three columns – though still without their headings of “observation”, “interpretation” and “evaluation”. This is a good opportunity for the seminar leader to practice the subdivision of the answers which will get easier by time. The participants can then come to the conclusion themselves that they have not just been observing; they make assumptions about possible headings of the three columns. Then, reflections are made on the actual observations that led to the interpretations and evaluations.
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Source: Hanschuck/Klawe: *“Interkulturelle Verständigung in der Sozialen Arbeit.”*, Juventa, 2006; description of the exercise by Handschuck, 2014, p. 20 ff.

Note for trainers

The “Albatross” activity is very often used in intercultural trainings. It is therefore important to ask beforehand if anyone is aware of the exercise. The exercise should not be used if more than three people know it. In order to show the variety of perspectives one can also work with ambiguous images (aka ‘reversible figures’) or the film by Amnesty International Hamburg that shows a reversal of roles.

See: “When you don’t exist” (www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O85BCs0ZZM)

Further questions for joint reflection

- Why might the separation of these three aspects be important in an intercultural context?
- To what extent are evaluations based on (cultural) interpretations and not on observations?
- Which examples have the participants experienced, where – in retrospect – the situation was interpreted in a completely different way?
- How does the separation change the scope for interpretation?

(Source: Ania Szymanska, IQ Intercultural competence Centre for Intercultural Opening and Anti-Discrimination)

The participants are then asked to discuss the images, associations and feelings that were triggered by the observation. Some will interpret the role of women in the “albatross culture” as being disadvantaged and cite, for example, her position in the room (behind the man, on the floor), the sequence (he eats first, then she does), the woman’s posture (kneeling and bending) or the man’s tactile body language (man touches woman’s shoulder) as indications of this.

Self-perception from the perspective of the albatross culture

The woman subsequently talks about gender relations in the albatross culture from her perspective: The albatross culture is a matriarchal culture that worships the earth, which is sacred to its members because it gives life. Since only women can give birth, they are allowed to approach the earth. They also have social privileges. Special reverence is paid to guests by providing their feet with extra contact to the earth,

which gives them energy. Peanuts are considered sacred food because they come from the earth and they are also a source of energy.

Men have the duty to taste the women's food beforehand and walk in front of them to ward off possible dangers. They may not sit on the ground; they must keep as far away from it as possible. That's why they sit on frameworks that are known as "chairs". A man is paid for his services in a non-material way. When he has performed his duties, he may touch the woman. She then leans towards the earth, absorbs energy, which she then passes on to the man through touch. A man is not allowed to touch a woman without first requesting this, unless this is done as a "reward".

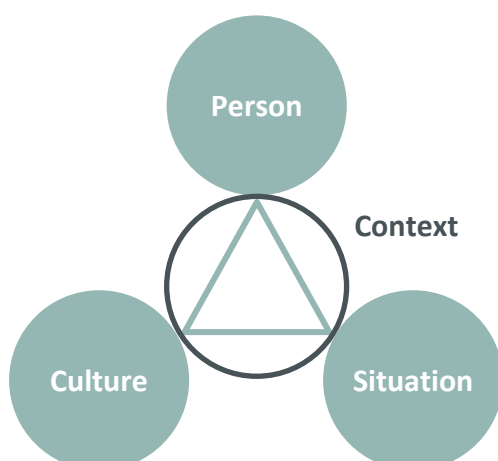
The group then discusses which "codes" have led to other interpretations. For instance, "front and back" or "up and down" are not only spatial descriptions but also social metaphors, which is made clear by the many idioms and proverbs in the German language that use them.

Transfer

The seminar leader establishes the relationship to intercultural competence, for example by explaining that a fictitious culture had been chosen deliberately (in order not to let the participants fall into the trap of thinking that they knew something about this culture and would be able to change their minds in the future about the forms of behaviour in the culture). The extent to which intercultural competence transcends country-specific knowledge and the fact that it is never possible to eliminate all questions or uncertainties in an intercultural context are explained. Further information on the non-fictional elements such as matriarchy and natural religious cultural elements may also be added.

4.2 Diversity of perspectives: A success factor in intercultural understanding

When analysing situations in which people with a migration background are involved, a cultural background is often prematurely assumed to be responsible for peoples' behaviour. Other reasons that have to do with the person or the situation and/or the respective context are then ignored. Culture cannot, however, be used as the basis of an explanatory or interpretive pattern for a form of behaviour. It is also difficult to define what the "cultural aspect" is. Not all those people who feel they belong to the "culture of the Germans" behave in the same manner. In addition, culture is frequently equated with nationality. Turks, Germans, Brazilians are described as if only the national affiliation constitutes a person. Not all Turks "tick" the same way, not all Germans are alike, etc. A person is shaped by a variety of factors: his or her gender, age, social and socio-economic status, religion and ideology, physical and mental health, membership of a group (e.g. nationality), sexual orientation and so on.



Source: Marina Khanide
model based on themes of centred interaction

One example

A female participant with a Spanish migration background arrives 15 minutes late in the morning for a weekly seminar. The other participants justify this with the statement that this is “typical for Spaniards, they don’t take punctuality too seriously”. Inquiries reveal that the participant has to bring her children to kindergarten punctually in the morning and so cannot get to the seminar on time. Consequently, the starting time of the seminar is rescheduled 15 minutes later on the other days and the participant arrives on time.

In this example, the situation, i.e. the clash between the seminar time and the opening hours of the kindergarten, is responsible for her being late and not – as had been too quickly assumed – a culturally different way of dealing with time.

Basically, encounters with migrants should not focus on cultural origin or ethnicity. The focus is always on the individual and his or her diverse personality. When analysing a situation or case, the first question to be asked is therefore always about the individual. Factors such as age, educational background or the socialisation of the clients play an important role in analysing a situation or case. Then, questions about the client’s concrete situation should be asked: what is going on in his or her environment, is there a concrete reason for the problem and so on? The question of cultural context should only be asked at the end of the analysis. Does the practice case really have a cultural background?

4.3 Exercise: The “person – situation – culture” triangle

Brief description	The participants transfer the topic of changing perspectives into practice and work with the “person – situation – culture” instrument triangle.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising awareness of the issue of changing perspectives ▪ Practice transfer
Time	approx. 30 min.
Material	Flipchart and pens
Implementation	In small groups, the participants are asked to consider where they have already experienced a situation in which culture was used to explain particular behaviour. But what else could have played a role – at the situational level, at the personal level and in relation to the context? Which approaches can you think of? The participants should describe an example in a small group using the “person – situation – culture” triangle and illustrate it on a flipchart.
Assessment	The results are then presented in the meeting.

Note for trainers

Implementation is only recommended if time is available and in order to establish practical relevance.

5. Migration-specific challenges in counselling

The migration-specific challenges in counselling are as large and diverse as the target group itself. “For example, the range of occupational qualifications and of the professional and life experience of people with a migration background may be much larger than that of Germans without any background of migration because experience from the country of origin is also included in this array. It is also possible that people with a migration background may have experienced discrimination in Germany or that they have already had to endure an odyssey of administrative procedures before they are even allowed to take their place in the labour market. Counsellors have to be able to recognise this and deal with it. Perhaps a completely different understanding of education and work may also dominate among immigrants seeking advice, for example due to the different backgrounds in the country of origin.

In such a case, we must walk a tightrope together between helping people to help themselves and paternalism. Sometimes problems can also arise due to the German language skills of advice-seekers. Solutions need to be found, whether through more comprehensible language, counselling in the mother tongue, the use of an interpreter or counselling in another language which is neither the native language of the person seeking advice or the counsellor.” (KUMULUS PLUS (2010): Migrationsspezifische beschäftigungsorientierte Beratung (translation: Migration-specific, employment-oriented counselling), p. 12 - 14).

5.1 Exercise: Migration-specific challenges

In 2010, Karl-Heinz P. Kohn from the University of Applied Sciences of the Federal Employment Agency in Mannheim conducted a survey on behalf of the “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” funding programme in order to identify the “issues and requirements that arise as common specifics of migration-specific employment-oriented counselling offered for different reasons within the employment biographies of people with a migration background who are seeking advice” (Kohn, Karlheinz P. (2011): Migrationsspezifische beschäftigungsorientierte Beratung – spezifische Themen, spezifische Bedarfe (translation: Migration-specific and employment-oriented advice – specific topics, specific needs). Results of a Delphi method survey. Brochure of the “Counselling” expert working group of the “Integration through Qualification” network. Verlagsgesellschaft Potsdam).

Brief description	The participants identify the challenges.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognition of migration-specific challenges ▪ Development of initial problem-solving approaches
Time	approx. 30 min.
Material	Small cards and pens
Implementation	The participants are asked to work in small groups to identify challenges specific to migrants among the target group of asylum seekers and refugees. The key points are written down on cards (or on a flipchart) and then presented in the meeting.

5.2 Summary of migration-specific challenges

In the context of a Delphi broadband survey conducted by the Federal Employment Agency's University of Applied Sciences, the following migration-specific challenges were identified in the counselling process:

- 1) Challenges that may arise from a possible lack of knowledge about the German education and employment systems on the part of people with a migration background.
- 2) The German language, acquired as a second language by those seeking advice, also poses challenges. It may make it difficult to function in the local working environment or to communicate during the counselling process.
- 3) The residence and employment law situation of people seeking advice in Germany also represents a challenge.
- 4) A formal recognition of certificates acquired abroad is another challenge.
- 5) Challenges arising from the discrimination experienced by migrants in Germany, whether due to the behaviour of individuals or because of structural discrimination.
- 6) The challenges involved in carrying out an assessment of potential analysis or competence because it is important that formal, informal and personal competences acquired abroad are recognised and documented in equal measure.
- 7) The challenge for empowerment in the sense of helping people to help themselves without paternalism. This is a special feature because attitudes towards vocational training and the world of work resulting from different cultural backgrounds or experiences gained in other countries may not match the realities on the ground in Germany. Advisers must recognise this and point out ways forward without patronising those who are seeking advice.
- 8) Challenges regarding suitable offers as well as funding opportunities for labour market integration or vocational qualification, primarily characterised by finding the right offer in a rather confusing environment of offers, as well as making access possible for those who are seeking advice.

These eight characteristics also apply to refugees and asylum seekers, though they may even be more severe. It should be noted that - in most cases - the migration process was not a voluntary one; sometimes it had to be done very quickly, without planning. This means that there are no preparatory phases, for instance to find out about the education or employment system (see 1.) or to acquire German language skills in advance (see 2.).

Even then, their residence status is still not secured – except following the recognition as refugee. Access to the labour market may not be granted (point 3). In principle, asylum seekers are banned from working for the first three months. After that, they have a lower-level access to the labour market (only after a priority check).

People with a “tolerated status” (*Duldungsstatus* – short-term residence permit) or an *Aufenthaltsgestattung* (residence permit for the time of the asylum request) have restricted access to the labour market (and then only after three months). Employment is only possible with the permission of the immigration authority (*Ausländerbehörde*). The granting of permission is always subject to the discretion of the responsible immigration authority. The approval of the local employment agency is also required. In addition, persons with a tolerated status who provide false or insufficient information about their identity or nationality are generally denied the permission to work.

When escaping, it is often impossible to take all the necessary papers with one, or some of them may not be available. This therefore represents a challenge when it comes to having foreign qualifications recognised. It is also often impossible to obtain the papers needed at a later stage (due to war situation or to prevalent totalitarian structures).

6. Intercultural communication

Intercultural understanding largely depends on how willing people are to understand each other.

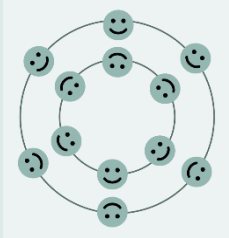
Communication can most easily be described as action involving two people in which a message is transmitted from a sender to a receiver. However, “transmission” and “reception” are shaped by the socialisation of the individuals concerned. When people from different social and cultural systems come into contact with each other, special communicative phenomena may occur due to their respective socialisation or characteristics. Communication can also follow different patterns in different systems; this often implies evaluations (of what is right and what is wrong). However, the use of different scripts in itself must not necessarily lead to misunderstandings or communication problems.

Note for trainers

It may be useful to describe communication models or theories in more detail, depending on the level of knowledge of the participants. For example: Schulz von Thun (1981): “Die vier Seiten einer Nachricht” (translation: The Four Sides of a Message”; also known as the “communication square”).

6.1 Exercise: Carousel

Brief description	Some of the participants are given a specific assignment to trigger a possible “irritation” during the course of a conversation.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To introduce the issue of intercultural communication ▪ The participants recognise that communication behaviour other than what is usual may cause irritation
Time	Pure implementation 10 minutes, with a subsequent evaluation and treatment of some intercultural aspects in communication lasting at least 60 minutes. See also the note for trainers.
Material	Tasks for participants
Implementation	<p>Half of the group leaves the seminar room. These participants each have to choose a topic that they can talk about for around two minutes (e.g. their last holiday, a movie or a book). They should be themselves and remain that way.</p> <p>The other half of the group stays in the room. These participants are given a task for the subsequent interview. They should also be themselves and stay like that. This group forms an inner circle facing outwards.</p> <p>During the conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not maintain direct eye contact ▪ Repeatedly make brief physical contact (e.g. touching the arm or shoulder) ▪ Stand particularly close to the person opposite you (e.g. half an arm’s length) ▪ Try to use lots of gestures and facial expressions ▪ Try to speak softly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Position yourself especially far away from the person opposite you (e.g. one and half times an arm’s length) ▪ Try to speak loudly ▪ Ask a lot of personal questions (e.g. about families and children) <p>If the number of people involved is uneven, one person stays in the room and assumes the role of an observer (or else the seminar leader joins in). With large groups, several participants are given the same task.</p> <p>The people from outside then come back into the room. They position themselves around the inner circle so that everyone has a conversation partner.</p> <p>The outer circle now begins the conversation. After roughly two minutes, the outer circle moves around one place (or the two circles can move in opposite directions, so that the inner circle is also active and is given new perspectives in the room). It is best if the leader of the seminar sounds an acoustic signal. In all, two or three changes are made.</p>
<p>Evaluation in the meeting</p>	<p>First, the outer circle is asked questions, for instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How was the discussion for you? What did you notice? ▪ Did the discussion go well or badly? Was there any irritation? What could be the reason for that? ▪ Where applicable, who experienced the same thing? <p>Afterwards you can either directly ask the person from the inner circle who was involved about how their experience was. Or the outer circle is evaluated first, followed by the inner circle. If there were any observers, also ask them for their impressions.</p>

Note for trainers:

This exercise is well suited as an introduction to the topic of communication. It is possible to use the evaluation to provide the path to follow in working on the main topic and in discussing the individual blocks of (intercultural) communication in detail whenever they are mentioned in the meeting. For example, if a number of people from the outer circle have expressed their opinion on the same instruction and the person “involved” from the inner circle has stated his or her instruction and described his or her experience, the seminar leader can continue to address the topic in question straightaway. This way, the group does not receive any input lectures afterwards and is continuously active and helps to shape the content of the work.

6.1.1 Non-verbal and para-verbal intercultural communication

Eye contact

Eye contact is one of the most important non-verbal forms of communication. However, there may be intercultural differences here. While in Europe and the US the direct, open gaze tends to symbolise attention, it may even be seen as dominance, a challenge or a lack of respect in other parts of the world. Gender-specific differences also exist. A woman who hardly makes eye contact during consultation may be considered shy or disinterested. However, it might also be based on a respectful attitude or be for religious reasons.

Physical contact and distance

Cultural differences also exist in terms of physical contact and distance between people. In Germany, a generally larger physical distance is common, usually equal to the length of outstretched arms. In Latin American countries and the Arab world, this personal “comfort zone” is much smaller. Often, the shorter physical distance is also accompanied by more touching. During a conversation, for example, the arms or shoulders are touched over and over again in order to establish non-verbal contact. However, this does not apply without any restrictions: Where social barriers exist, physical contact and a small physical distance are also unusual and inappropriate, for example between men and women, employers and employees or between figures of authority and citizens. In some Islamic countries, physical contact in public, even when a married couple are holding hands, is considered inappropriate; nonetheless, it is common to see two men holding hands.

If the participants should be or want to be activated again, they can be asked to stand in pairs at a discussion distance that they find comfortable. Once all the pairs have found the right distance for themselves, they are asked to increase the distance by taking a small step backwards (and then one forward) and to see how this changes the content and quality of conversation.

Gestures and facial expressions

Researchers agree that facial expressions exist which represent the six most basic emotions and that these are understood worldwide. These include anger, sadness, joy, surprise, disgust and fear. Nevertheless, gestures and facial expressions may differ in terms of how clearly they are shown and how strongly or frequently they are used. In Asia, for example, more attention is paid to the area around the eyes in order to read emotions while in Europe, more consideration is paid to the mouth.

Gestures may also be interpreted differently:

To signalise “yes”:

- Nodding the head: widespread all over the world
- Rocking the head back and forth: India, Pakistan and Bulgaria
- Throwing the head backwards: Ethiopia

To signalise “no”:

- Shaking the head: widespread all over the world
- Throwing the head backwards: Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Greece
- Snapping the hand up onto the chin: Southern Italy, including Sardinia

Another example: forming a circle with thumb and index finger:

- This gesture comes from the world of diving and signalises that “all is well”. When used in everyday life though, it has two very contradictory meanings. In some cases, it is used as a gesture of praise or recognition and means something like “very good”. On the other hand, it is considered an insulting gesture that means “a...”. The respective meaning can be read from the context of the communication situation and the facial expression accompanying the gesture.

- If an instructor uses this gesture in Germany, he or she is trying to tell the trainees that they have done a good job.
- If an instructor uses the same gesture in Turkey, it will mean something quite different. There, finger and thumb formed to a circle symbolises an eye and has the meaning: “Take a closer look.” It is used to point out mistakes with the aspiration that they will be discovered and corrected by the person spoken to after he or she has taken a closer look.

Volume

There may be cultural reasons as to which volume is considered normal and appropriate (in the course of a normal conversation). The way the language sounds to non-native speakers also frequently contributes to this (e.g. German is often perceived as being a very “harsh” language).

Speaking out loud is often a demonstration of power and is actually reserved for people in authority. A rather softer speaking tone is often considered to signify shyness or restraint. In the Turkish language, on the other hand, a soft tone of voice is rather an expression of good manners. Children are therefore educated to speak more quietly. Anyone who speaks softly is therefore showing his counterpart recognition and respect. However, this is different in discussions: In the Turkish language, people attempt to assert themselves by speaking loudly. In German one tends to listen to discussion partners who are objective and calmly weigh things up.

Further sources

- www.planet-wissen.de/gesellschaft/kommunikation/koerpersprache/pwwbkoerpersprache100.html
- www.meineweltistanders.wordpress.com/2009/08/23/schau-mich-an/

Transfer

Afterwards, the participants in the meeting discuss which intercultural differences in non-verbal and paraverbal communication the participants have already experienced in their professional experience.

- Which examples can you think of?
- How did you deal with it (e.g. not shaking hands when greeting; very short physical distance etc.)

The seminar leader explains the meaning of “around-the-corner” communication by means of a sketch (use of flipchart). By turning the body into a semi-lateral position, a greater tolerance exists towards the closeness of a discussion partner. This can lead to a relaxation in intercultural discussion situations, in which the distance behaviour of those taking part differs greatly.

Note for trainers

Care should always be taken when using examples from different countries in order to avoid stereotype thinking (“labelling”). For example, not all Germans hold an arm’s length to be an appropriate distance. It always depends on the person, the situation, in some cases the culture and the context (the “person - situation - culture” triangle).

6.1.2 Object- and person-oriented communication

In a professional context, we are used to communicating in a factual way. Firstly, a matter is clarified and then, if necessary, something personal is discussed. In person-oriented communication, which is often found in an intercultural context, a relationship first has to be established. An issue can only be clarified when we know something about the person and when one can assess him or her. Questions about personal matters (e.g. from a client in a consultation about marital status) often serve to establish person-oriented communication – and can sometimes be perceived as encroachments.

6.1.3 Direct and indirect communication

People who are used to direct communication tend to give instructions or provide information explicitly and clearly. It is expected that they take clear positions and express both criticism and approval openly, even if this risks social confrontation. Conflicts are even considered productive if they lead to more truth and greater clarity. Honesty is an important value.

Members of cultures that communicate indirectly tend to convey messages in an encrypted and implicit manner. Direct statements are sidestepped, mainly because of the need to avoid attacking others and to maintain social harmony.

In the direct conversation strategy, conversations are held in order to achieve a defined goal. A very direct route is usually chosen so that the discussion partner can adjust to it and not waste any time (for example: “I am here because I am looking for a job.”).

With the indirect conversation strategy, people are happy to approach the conversation partner via “detours”, they want to learn things from each other and ask about how one feels. The goal of the conversation is pursued rather casually, even indirectly. Questions about how people are doing or about the welfare of the family are typical. One wants to get to know one’s counterpart first, to be able to assess him or her and to build up a relationship before pursuing the goal of the conversation.

Direct communication	Indirect communication
Opinions and concerns are expressed directly.	Opinions and concerns are expressed indirectly.
Honesty is an important value.	The preservation of harmony and “saving face” is an important value.
Polite phrases are used to tone down “directness”.	Analogies are often used in order to clarify concerns.

Worldwide, an indirect style of communication is more common. However, this depends very much on the context (e.g. parents who are used to communicating indirectly in the working environment would tend to communicate directly with their children).

Characteristics of indirect communication are, for example:

- The word “no” is hardly ever used (in some languages it does not even exist)
- In the case of difficult or problematic situations, the subject of discussion turns to third parties, or else analogies are made
- A sudden change of topic may be a sign that: “I don’t want to talk about it”
- A manager or a figure of authority will not be contradicted or asked unsolicited questions

Example 1:

A young woman from Vietnam, who has only been in Germany for five years, is invited for a job interview. She has got very good grades. During the interview she looks downwards a lot, only answers those questions that she is asked and does not ask any questions of her own.

The interview ends unsuccessfully. The human resources manager or the owner of a company thinks that the candidate is very shy, not very self-confident and tends to show little interest.

However, the candidate wanted to express her respect and was pursuing a strategy of indirect communication.

Example 2:

Mr. Meier: “Mr. Wu, can you come in on Saturday to check the machines?”

Mr. Wu: “Yes ... did you know ... Saturday is a special day.”

Mr. Meier: “How is that?”

Mr. Wu: “My father will be turning 80.”

Mr. Meier: “Well then, do give him my congratulations.”

Mr. Wu: “Thank you very much, thank you very much for understanding.”

Questions to the meeting:

What is Mr. Meier assuming?

What has Mr. Wu understood?

Will Mr. Wu turn up on Saturday? (The answer is “no”.)

The German language also contains subtleties - such as irony - that fall under the heading of indirect communication. Instead of directly expressing what is meant, this tells the opposite story. Irony is not common everywhere in the world, so the statement might well be taken literally. Irony can only be recognised from the intonation of the sentence, which requires very sophisticated language skills on the part of the discussion partner.

6.2 Giving advice using language sensitivity

In everyday counselling, in addition to the professional counselling activity, it is essential to handle a variety of challenges, which mainly concern the linguistic level: Linguistically, complex information must be passed on to the clients (also with German as a second language) and questions have to be answered. How counsellors can use the tool of language in their practical counselling work in a language-conscious and language-sensitive manner is explained in *“Sprachsensibel beraten. Praktische Tipps für Beraterinnen und Berater”* (translation: “Language-sensitive counselling. Practical tips for counsellors”), a manual published by the IQ Competence Centre for Work-Related German Language. A further training concept on *“Praktische Tipps für die Beratung von Kund_innen mit Deutsch als Zweitsprache”* (translation: “Practical tips on advising clients with German as a second language”) has also been designed and tested to help in this area.

6.2.1 Exercise: Checklist for language-sensitive counselling

Brief description	The participants will deal with their use of language.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants reflect on their own use of language in their counselling work ▪ They receive initial advice on a language-sensitive counselling
Time	Pure implementation 5 minutes. Evaluation approx. 30 minutes.
Material	Checklist and pens
Implementation	The participants are asked to fill in the checklist on language-sensitive counselling work. This is followed by a plenary discussion on some points and recommendations.

Checklist (template):

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Do you pay attention to your use of language when talking to clients?				
Do you use correct language when speaking?				
Do you use idioms or proverbs (such as “don’t sign every piece of bumf”, or “put something to the acid test”)?				
Do you speak slowly?				
Do you speak clearly?				
Do you allow questions (even linguistically simple ones) and allow time for them to be answered?				

Do you offer help in formulating ideas during the conversation if you notice that bilingual participants “don’t know what to say next” in German?				
Do you take the time to explain?				
Do your questions and technical explanations refer to concrete things in the everyday life of your clients? Do you provide a few examples?				
Do you use facial expressions and gestures to aid understanding?				
Has the information material that you use been designed to meet the needs of the clients?				

Source: IQ Competence Centre “Work-Related German Language”: *Sprachsensibel beraten. Praktische Tipps für Beraterinnen und Berater* (translation: *Language-sensitive consulting. Practical tips for counsellors*), 4th Edition, March 2015

6.2.2 Selected ways of helping when dealing with people in a language-sensitive way

- For many specialist or technical terms, more easily understandable everyday words exist that have the same meaning. It often helps to add explanations (e.g. seniority = how high up someone is in a company; cost absorption = i.e. when costs are taken over)
- Avoid using words of Latin origin or foreign words (e.g. de facto instead of actual; resumé)
- Use short and simple sentences (instead of “due to a shortage of personnel we were unable to process your documentation in a timely manner” it is better to write: “We couldn’t deal with your paperwork because some staff were sick”)
- One idea = one sentence
- Instead of using nouns, it is better to use verbs (Instead of “The absorption of costs” it is better to say “the costs will be absorbed” or “we will absorb the costs”)
- Do not use idioms (instead of “You have free rein” say “You can do it however you want”)

Further information

IQ Competence Centre “Work-Related German Language”: *Sprachsensibel beraten. Praktische Tipps für Beraterinnen und Berater* (translation: *Language-sensitive consulting. Practical tips for counsellors*), 4th Edition, March 2015

Dealing with multilingualism

- Use international technical terms (e.g. “document”)
- Use a foreign language together
- Use multilingual information material
- Use symbols and images
- Use online dictionaries
- Work with interpreters

6.3 Recommendations in intercultural communication

- Personal form of address (importance of names)
- Clarification of roles: Which expectations does my counterpart have? What is my role? What is possible for me in this role and what is not? Clarification of the role of the institution, as well as of which expectations can be met and which are unlikely to be met
- Use pictorial examples: e.g. not “execution of the lawsuit for eviction”, but “your furniture will be carried out of the apartment ...”
- Ask fewer “yes/no” questions, but more “W-questions”:
 - What questions do you have?
 - Which questions are still open?
 - How can I help you (further)?
 - What else do you need?
 - What is (still) not (quite) clear to you?
 - What did you not understand?
 - What would you like to do next?
 - What are your next steps going to be?
 - What else can I do for you?
 - What other information do you need?
 - What else do you want to know?
- Pay attention to unspoken words or sudden changes of topic
- Address the problem or difficult subject by means of analogies
- Permit and use loops in conversation; show a readiness to listen
- Take your time, have patience
- Say the most important things not only at the beginning but also at the end
- Reproduce what you have heard in your own words:
 - Did I get that right that you ...?
 - Do I understand you correctly that ...?
 - May I summarise that (once) again ...?
 - Do you think that ...?

- Summarise things (allow them to be checked)
- In the event of a lack of language expertise: short sentences, don't use foreign words, explain technical terms, avoid officialese and abbreviations
- Keep your emotions under control; irritations (e.g. gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and physical distance) may have a different meaning than what you assume; do not interpret over-hastily
- Seating arrangements: "Around-the-corner" communication
- Hand out business cards or other memo items (flyers and a list of the documentation)

7. Cultural concepts for coping with everyday life

"Cultural concepts for coping with everyday life are understood to be ideas prevailing in a social group about what is considered appropriate behaviour, which forms of communication are taken for granted and which behaviour is assessed *and how it is assessed* in specific contexts. Cultural concepts determine how we perceive others and how we see ourselves.

If forms of behaviour that are taken for granted do not match, irritation and misunderstandings or even conflict can be caused, since the "expectations of normality" are being frustrated. This may make intercultural processes of understanding more difficult, may make people insecure or angry and the forms of behaviour may be judged as "incorrect" behaviour. This may also result in devaluation and rejection of people who, in own's own perspective, do not behave as expected.

Human behaviour cannot be interpreted by cultural patterns of explanation alone. This way, culturally acquired (learned) concepts of coping with everyday life would be reinterpreted as characteristics of persons, while the complexity of an individual and the context of his or her life would simply be reduced to "culture". When this happens, we speak of culturalisation. The opposite idea, namely that cultural concepts of coping with everyday life do not play any role in professional or private encounters, is called "de-culturalisation". In an intercultural encounter situation, it is always important to reflect as to whether irritations are due to culturally different concepts of coping with everyday life or whether completely different factors are crucial.

Descriptions of cultural concepts therefore reveal expectations of normality in specific contexts. They cannot predict the real behaviour of people in particular situations. For example, people may still behave or perceive the situation differently than expected for a variety of reasons, even though they may be familiar with the prevailing cultural concept. The cultural diversity of societies means that very different concepts work simultaneously and that people use different concepts in different situations. For example, one expectation of normality in a German work environment is that communication is "direct". Nevertheless, for example, job references are formulated "indirectly". A person who has learned a different concept of time management in his or her socialisation will have to adapt very quickly to the prevailing concept of time management in work life in Germany, without this being perceived as an achievement in terms of adaptation.

Confronting cultural differences is a method developed by the Dutch cultural anthropologist Geert Hofstede, who has acquired a reputation through his research on cultural differences at a national level. Different designations are used in specialist publications. He himself speaks of "cultural standards", Christine Tuschinsky uses the term "cultural components", Edward T. Hall refers to the differences he has explored as "cultural dimensions" while the

comparative psychologist Alexander Thomas refers to “cultural orientation systems”. In general, this depiction is limited to the juxtaposition of behavioural orientations, without taking into account the facts that concepts can overlap and that they are not only influenced by national or ethnic origin but by many other factors, including generational affiliation, gender, the length of stay in a social group, the level of education and membership of a milieu.

Hence, it is very important to repeatedly point out that what is being discussed is the description of concepts, **not** the description of individuals. Nevertheless, the danger remains that working with cultural concepts leads to the “pigeonholing” or “labelling” of people and that existing stereotypes and prejudices become consolidated. At the same time, however, the method does offer the chance to identify differences and discuss whether and in what form they should be taken into consideration in everyday work life” (Sabine Handschuck, 2014, p. 34 ff.).

7.1 Cultural category “individualistic – collectivistic”

Cultural categories are stereotypical descriptions of groups of people. Cultural categories do help to describe the characteristics of larger groups of people. However, it hardly makes much sense to simply talk of “the Chinese” or “the Germans”. In any interaction, one is usually dealing with a “somebody”, a concrete counterpart, in other words with an individual. And this individual – even if she or he is Chinese or German – is only very inadequately described by the generalising cultural category. In other words, it would be an enormous coincidence if the acquired cultural category also adequately describes a Chinese or German person.

However, cultural categories fulfil a different task: They provide words for descriptions. It is only then that we can process the experiences through reflection and develop appropriate reactions and alternative courses of action. Incidentally, the cultural background of the person I want to describe plays only a minor role.

For Geert Hofstede, a cultural category is a content-related description of cultural patterns or of imprints in the socialisation process. Cultural categories are usually presented as ideally typical pairs of opposites. In their behaviour, cultural groups move between the poles described. Yet cultural categories do not reflect reality. They are merely a kind of “tool” with which the complex reality is reduced to a pattern that can be explained.

Important: collectivist and individualistic behaviour can be found in every country and every culture – albeit in different forms.

Implementation

The “collectivistic” and “individualistic” cultural categories are presented to the participants and explained on the basis of examples related to work. Worldwide, a collectivistic orientation is more likely to be found; people who migrate to Germany, for example, may be confronted with a more individualistic orientation system (though this might not necessarily be the case).

Possible examples:

- 1) A collectivistic orientation may reflect on the choice of occupation. It is not the person alone who decides what he or she would like to do later in life; the family / parents also take part in making the decision. On issues of education or other important decisions, it is not only the parents, but also grandparents (as well as uncles and aunts) who have a say.
- 2) Children learn to be independent at a very early age in individualistically oriented societies. For example, the children themselves can decide on when the lunch break is taken in the kindergarten.
- 3) Whereas children can have their own bank account at a very early age in an individualistically oriented society, the financial resources are shared with distant relatives in collectivistic societies. In some cases, people who have emigrated may send money home.
- 4) There is a high degree of networking in collectivistic-oriented societies and information is often passed on orally; people want to be up-to-date about their counterparts (welcoming questions point this out such as: How are you? How is your mother/father?). In individualistic societies, emphasis is placed primarily on written documents (e.g. minutes of meetings and contracts).

Subsequent transfer: E.g. plenary discussion

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with cultural categories?
- Have you ever encountered references to cultural categories in your work (e.g. in counselling)?
Collect examples.
- Can the situation/circumstance be attributed to a cultural category or did other factors play a role?

Note for trainers

At this point, it is always a good idea to mention the “situation – person – culture triangle” as well as the context in order to counteract any possible culturalisation.

Collectivist	Individualistic
People are born into extended families or other “we-groups” that will protect them later on and to whom, in return, they give loyalty.	Everyone grows up aware that they only have to care for themselves and their immediate (nuclear) family.
Children learn to think in the “we”-form.	Children learn to think in the “I”-form.
Harmony should always be maintained while direct discussion should be avoided.	Saying what one thinks is a characteristic of an honest person.
Financial and other resources should be shared with relatives.	Individual ownership of resources, even by children.
High-context communication	Low-context communication
Misconduct leads to feelings of shame and loss of face, both for the perpetrator and for the group	Misconduct leads to feelings of guilt and loss of self-esteem

Source: Geert Hofstede (2006): *Think Locally, Act Globally. Main differences between collectivist and individualistic societies - I: General norm and family*

8. Exclusion and discrimination

Anti-discrimination work is an important element of intercultural work. Every discrimination is based on a social categorisation in which people are assigned to specific groups. On the one hand, this categorisation can simplify the complex environment. On the other hand, it can create a demarcation from another group. Such demarcations may manifest themselves in the form of stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination or racism.

Stereotyping

“... must be equated with social categorisations of facts; they become social stereotypes when they are shared by many people within a social system” (Tajfel, 1982, p. 41f).

Functions of stereotyping

- Maintenance of group ideologies
- To emphasise differences between social groups
- To establish a demarcation from other groups

(see Henri Tajfel, 1982)

Prejudices

... are stereotypes with affective components and an evaluation.

Functions of prejudices

- Prejudices create a “we”-feeling, the sensation of belonging together
- They serve to maintain and increase self-esteem
- They offer control
- Legitimisation of hierarchies
- Offer “knowledge and orientation”

(see Andreas Zick, Beate Küpper and Andreas Hövermann, 2011)

Discrimination

“... means first of all to separate, to distinguish. (...) This distinction is often associated with an evaluation as well as a devaluation. If this devaluation results in certain people suffering disadvantages, it becomes discrimination” (Fritzsche and Schuster, 2009, p. 4).

Discrimination can be direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious.

(see Fritzsche and Schuster, 2009)

Racism

“Racism is an ideology, a structure and a process by means of which certain groups are regarded as essentially different and inferior ‘races’ or ethnic groups on the basis of actual or ascribed biological or cultural characteristics. As a result, these differences serve as an explanation for the exclusion of members of these groups from access to material and non-material resources” (Philomena Essed, 1992, p. 375).

Actual or invented differences between cultures are emphasised and justified by biological and genetic disposition.

- Racism implies social superiority or power.
- Racism emphasises biological or cultural differences.
- Racism links people’s specific characteristics (such as skin colour, nationality, origin, religion and gender) to certain attributes (for example criminal or sexual energy) and evaluates this.
- The consequences: exclusion, marginalisation, “eradication” of “the others”, legitimisation of an unequal distribution of rights, material resources or privileges.

Source: Lachmayr, Kóródi, Bednarschewski within the framework of the project “IQE – Interkulturelle Qualitätsentwicklung in München” (translation: “Intercultural Quality Development in Munich”)

8.1 Exercise: In the middle of society

Brief description	The group stands in the largest possible circle around a poster labelled “Centre of Society”. Role cards with two details about a social role are handed out. The moderator reads out a variety of different social situations. If the participants think that the situation matches their role, they move a small step towards the centre of the circle.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The participants recognise the unequal distribution of access to resources. ▪ They reflect on different ways of influencing exclusion processes. ▪ They reflect their own external images and assessments of social roles.
Time	approx. 30 min.
Material	Role cards and instructions for action
Space	The exercise calls for a large room.
Implementation	<p>The group is asked to stand in a circle; role cards then are distributed. The participants need to think briefly about “their” role and keep it to themselves.</p> <p>The seminar leader reads out a number of different social situations. Every person who assumes that the situation applies to their role takes a small step towards the centre of the circle. Those who think that the situation does not apply to them remain standing. Subsequently, the participants are asked to look at the distribution in the room and to realise which persons they notice in particular. Standing in their positions, they are asked by the moderator about how they feel in their position and which role they are playing.</p>

Assessment	The members of the group reflect together on the assumptions that led them to take a step forward or to stand still. Which role attributions were decisive, which clichéd images played a role, which exclusion factors became visible?
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Source: Handschuck/Klawe (2004:308ff); description of the exercise from Handschuck, 2014, p. 25 ff.

Social situations

- You are in the area around the railway station. The police are stopping passers-by at random and carrying out spot checks of their personal details. You are very unlikely to be checked.
- A green space is being redesigned by the parks department in the area where you live. Public participation is desired. You have the chance to have an influence on the design.
- You would like to spend an enjoyable evening at a club. You are checked by the bouncer. He waves you through and wishes you a lot of fun.
- You visit an apartment that matches your needs. The rent is also acceptable. You are very likely to be one of the people to be shortlisted.
- You lost a tooth (an incisor) in a fall. You have a pivot (pin) tooth inserted. Your health insurance covers part of the costs.
- The local elections are coming up. You receive your polling card by post.
- You would like to learn how to play golf. You apply for membership in a golf club and are accepted.
- Your neighbours are going away for a week. You are asked to water their flowers while they are away.
- A citizens' action group is committed to having a traffic-calmed zone established. You are proposed as a speaker at a hearing.
- A couple, teachers from Germany, has moved into the neighbourhood. They are having a party to get to know their new neighbours. You are invited, of course.
- New lay judges are being appointed at the criminal court. You are proposed as a lay judge.
- You want to buy a new laptop. Since you are currently short of money, you apply for a small loan. It is granted to you.

Role cards (template):

You are an asylum seeker from Ghana and live in a housing facility on the edge of town.	You are dependent on using a wheelchair and work in the computer industry.
You work in a senior position in the city administration and are professionally recognised.	You are a devout Muslim and wear a headscarf or sport a full beard.
You are homeless and live on the street, mainly from donations.	You are a member of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and offer their publications on the street.
You do unskilled work and live in social housing.	You have German citizenship and are dark-skinned / black.
You work in management and speak with an American accent.	You are a salaried member of staff, married and childless.
You are a Jewish quota refugee and have studied music.	You are a single parent and have three preschool children.
Your education in Bosnia is not recognised in Germany. You work as a cleaner.	You work in a counselling centre and are Kurdish.

9. Completion of the training

Feedback is needed to evaluate and improve the seminar. If one of the goals is to advise and support the participating organization further, a transfer of the themes is required. This training manual offers only exercises concerning migration and diversity. The end of the seminar must be individually adapted to the conditions and goals. We hope you have received good suggestions and ideas!

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