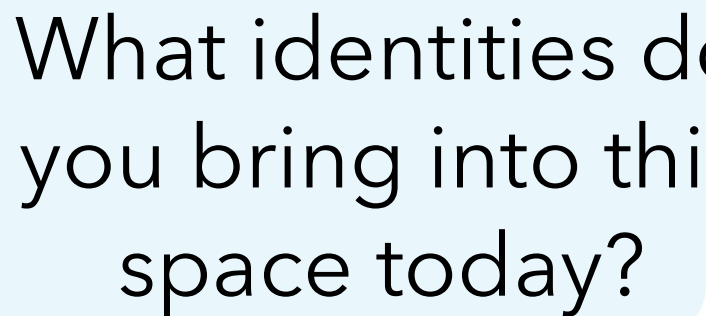


Cultivating Cultural Fortitude: Acts Of Interpersonal Courage In Times Of Uncertainty

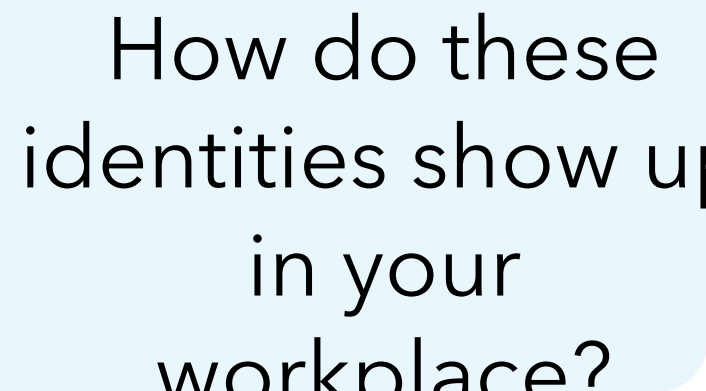
Karen W. Tao, Ph.D.

Therapy and Spiritual Care in a Shattered World: Transforming the Community of Healers
Boston University - The Albert & Jessie Danielsen Center
October 28, 2022



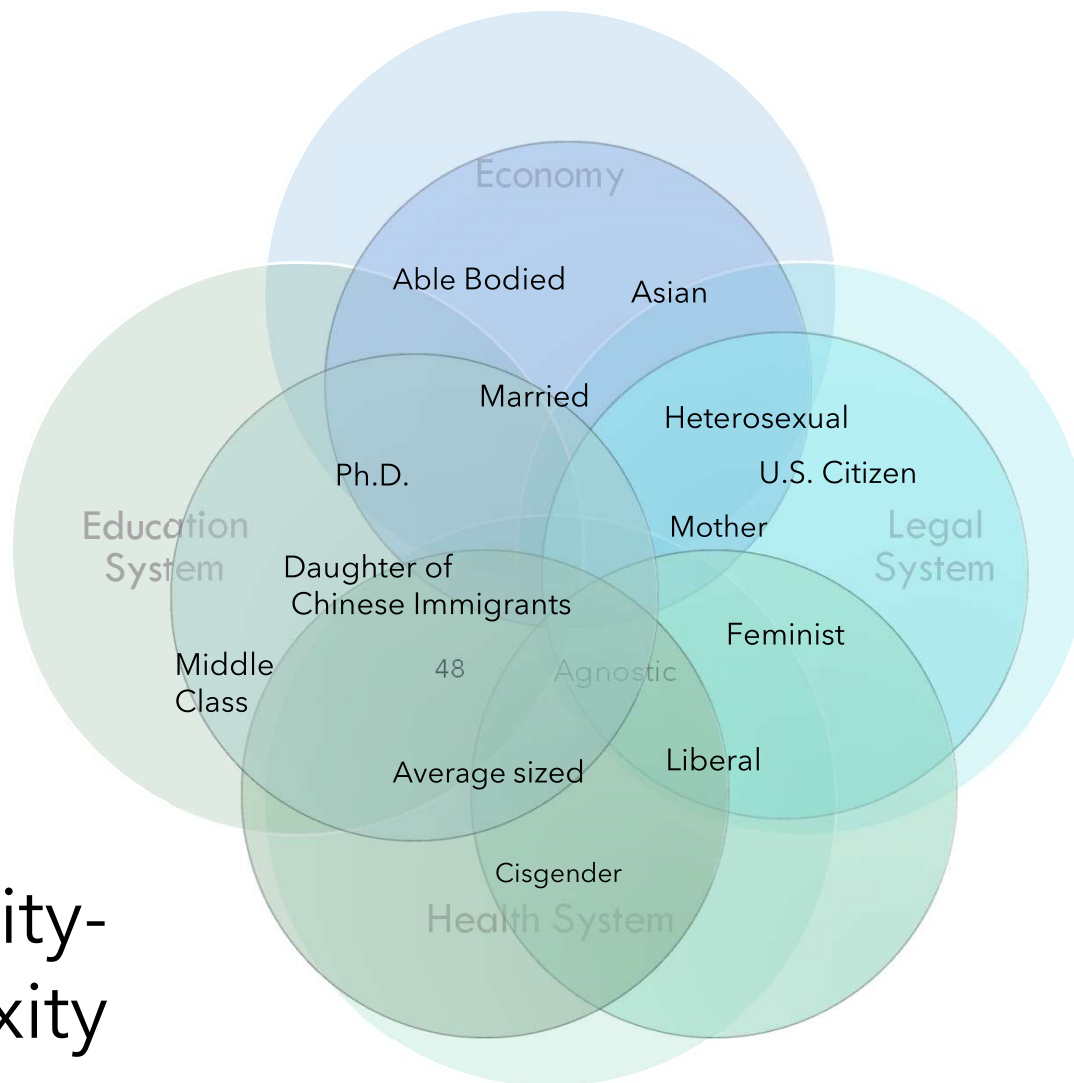


What identities do
you bring into this
space today?



How do these
identities show up
in your
workplace?

Intersectionality- Complexity



Tao, K.W.
(2022)

reflection

Recall an interaction where things did not go as expected because of a racial interpersonal rupture (e.g., microaggression; stereotype) with a friend, client, relative, therapist, or colleague

- What shows up in your body right now?
- How did this interaction affect your relationship?
- If you processed the interaction, what prompted you to do so? How did it change your relationship?
- If you decided *not* to talk about it, how come? How did it affect you / the relationship?
- What do you wish had happened instead?



Tao, K.W.
(2022)

Interpersonal cultural “a-ha” moments... happen all the time

The more we think we know someone or about a group of people, the less we know. Every interaction is a new cultural interaction. There is always more to learn (and unlearn).

- How do we sit with **ambiguity** and the unknown?
- How do we cultivate **cultural fortitude**?
- How do we **depolarize** our own beliefs, attitudes, and values?
- How do we **presence** unlearning just as much as we presence learning?

warding off the "danger of a "single story"

Chimamanda Ngozi
Adichie (2014)

Overly **simplified** story and potential stereotype we form about people, groups of people, or places.

We rely on a **thin slice** of a story as the whole and only story

Confirmed by people **who think like us** and who we surround ourselves with

Automatic images, feelings, and thoughts related to a story (Implicit Bias)

We can also form single stories **about ourselves**.
(e.g., internalized racism; internalized sexism)

Tao, K.W.
(2022)

sticky path between intention & impact

Cultural rupture - breach of a generally harmonious relationship

- Cultural missteps
- Cultural invalidations
- Cultural nullifications
- Cultural violations



Cultural Fortitude

Cognitive, emotional,
physiological, and interpersonal
strength in the face of
psychological discomfort, which
can spark desire, motivation, and
courage to move toward cultural
repair and relational healing

(K.W. Tao, 2020)

we have all been there



Deliverer

The diagram consists of three elements arranged horizontally. Each element is a rounded rectangle with a light-colored center and a darker-colored border. The first element has a purple border and a light purple center. The second has a dark teal border and a light gray center. The third has a blue border and a light blue center. Each element contains a single word in black text.

Receiver

Witness

what do we do?





calling in

(Ngoc Loan Tran, Loretta Ross)

A stance we take following, experiencing or witnessing a cultural rupture

Centers on **compassionate** engagement with person who enacted interpersonal rupture (e.g., microaggression)

Self-compassion for times when we have initiated an interpersonal rupture

Frames human beings as “**mutually inclusive**”

- We happen together

Allowing	Allowing mistakes to happen and shifting our perception of them from “red flags” to opportunities for transformation
Reminding	Reminding myself that this is someone I care about and I really care enough to discuss this with.”
Acknowledging	Acknowledging my own reactions to a microaggression that has occurred and checking in with myself internally before responding
Identifying	Identifying the behavior, prioritizing the values I and the other person both share, and inviting this person into a conversation

calling in

Tao, K.W.
(2022)



calling out

Publicly names instances of oppressive behavior and language use by others.

Defines and polices who's "in" and who's "out"

Perpetuates a politic of disposability and cancel culture

Highlights a binary - good/bad right/wrong

calling in is not about...

- Being “nice” or “soft”
- Letting go of accountability
- Pathologizing or devaluing anger, rage, and outrage that emerges for people who hold marginalized identities
- Lessening the impact of a microaggression, or avoiding hurt feelings or conflict

Tao, K.W.
(2022)

Cultural Courage for Receiver - "Be Brave"

Breathe deeply

Recognize and assert what you **feel, need** and **want**

Acknowledge and respect the full spectrum of reactions

View interaction as a potential for mutual growth

Engage with your heart, mind, and body

I am choosing to discuss this hurtful thing you said because we are friends/we have worked together/we are in this community together and I believe that you will be open to this dialogue.

I am calling you in because it is important for me to be seen and valued for the identities that have been disrespected or dismissed.

intention - receiver

example

I really value our relationship and hope we can talk about something that happened between us...(describe situation without blame or shame)

Is this a good time for us to have this conversation?

- Yes → Continue
- No (breathe) → I'd like to follow up soon, so would it be ok for me to check in with you later today or tomorrow?

Cultural Humility for Deliverer - "Be Loving"

Listen deeply

Observe by quieting internal dialogue

Validate what Receiver is sharing with you

Engage with intention and authenticity

Say "thank you"

I am afraid/sad/guilty of how I am showing up. And I am grateful you care enough about me to call me in. Thank you.

This is an opportunity for me to show up for you. Thank you for moving toward our relationship. It takes courage and I am grateful.

intention - deliverer

example

Thank you for sharing this with me and letting me know. This took courage.

[Listen]

I really appreciate you bringing this to my attention, and I want to continue talking.

[Reflect.....]

Cultural Connection for Witness - "Be Here"

Highlight the invisible and make it visible

Empathize and support Receiver *and* Deliverer

Recognize your own values, biases and assumptions

Engage in Calling In with Deliverer

I would like to be an ally and accomplice for folx who do not have the institutional power to say or do something.

Small acts of disrupting racism (sexism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) **will** lead to broader systemic change.

intention - witness

example

With Receiver – *I noticed what just happened (share what you observed) and am checking in to see if you wanted to talk about it.*

- [With your permission, I'd like to bring this up with _____ .]

With Deliverer: Use **BRAVE** approach



Cultural Fortitude

Cognitive, emotional,
physiological, and interpersonal
strength in the face of
psychological discomfort, which
can spark desire, motivation, and
courage to move toward cultural
repair and relational healing

(K.W. Tao, 2020)

For me, forgiveness and compassion are always linked: how do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed? ~ bell hooks

I rather see things as they are than as I wish they were, because then I can build the things I want to see if I pay attention to reality. ~Loretta Scott

My deepest gratitude to:

Liz Abrams
Kathryn Norsworthy
Sue Morrow
Donna Hawxhurst
Jesse Owen
Project ARIISE Team
Culture, Well-Being, &
Diversity Lab



Thank You!

k.tao@utah.edu

www.cultureanddiversitylab.com

University of Utah