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Practicing Acculturation and Conflict Management with Ethnic Minorities:

A Proposal for the Praise and Improvement of New Columbia

Jocelyn Sterling

Service Learning Capstone

CST 431

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Abstract

This study set out to examine the use of acculturation and conflict management techniques among workers who interact with ethnic minorities on a regular basis. The low income housing facility, New Columbia, was used for examination and assessment, and the Resident Services Coordinator, Lucia, was the employee directly applied to the study. When working with minorities and immigrants, workers at New Columbia deal with the integration of residents into the dominant culture and manage the conflict that arises from living in such a facility. Four crucial acculturation expectations past research has proposed were examined: help with the acculturation process, minority communication with the dominant culture, maintaining ethnic traditions while acculturating, and the dominant culture's lack of force of acculturation on minorities. Along with the acculturation-related techniques, past research's conflict management expectations were looked at as well: identifying conflict styles, understanding cultural differences in conflict styles, applying and understanding appropriate face concerns, and productive ways to mindfully manage conflict. The acculturation and conflict management expectations were then applied to the work of New Columbia and Lucia to assess the strengths of the program currently running. Observations and past stories were used to conduct the assessment of effectiveness of acculturation and conflict management techniques used. The study found that Lucia utilized many of the techniques presented in past research on acculturation and conflict management, and as a service for the residents, Lucia is successful in her use of applied practices. Some possible changes and additions to the program are presented which could put more strength on the positive aspects currently implemented.

Practicing Acculturation and Conflict Management with Ethnic Minorities:

A Proposal for the Praise and Improvement of New Columbia

The facility of New Columbia is a successful mixed income housing neighborhood that is comprised of hundreds of homes, several pocket parks, senior citizen living, community education centers, and families from different backgrounds. Many residents of New Columbia are African American, Latino, Asian, and Eastern European, while some of those people are new immigrants making a fresh start in America. These ethnic minorities and immigrants face the difficulty of being marginal citizens, speaking another language, and becoming accustomed to this society. Fortunately for them, New Columbia has resources and personnel to help with residents' problems and acculturation into American culture.

A crucial aspect of the success of New Columbia and the satisfaction of its residents is its staff, specifically Lucia, the Resident Services Coordinator. Lucia works diligently to place people into homes and to welcome residents to the community. She handles residents' concerns and problems and is the main source for conflict management in the facility. Her office is located off the main building's lobby and her door seems to always be open, willing to see anyone who enters. Most importantly, however, is the fact that Lucia seems to care about her residents and desires to meet and help each of them. Due to

her willingness to help residents and her efficient work style, Lucia has become one of the key employees at New Columbia. Thus, her work with recent immigrants and ethnic minorities is compared to past research's expectations on acculturation and conflict management. Lucia was observed during her everyday work and event coordination, and I spoke with her about many of her experiences with residents in the past. Lucia thus is an intricate part of the analysis, as I based her work off of what research says should be done

My role at New Columbia was a student volunteer, specifically working with Latina women in the community. I spent over 16 hours on site, working closely with Lucia and observing her behaviors and workmanship. I assisted in event planning meetings with Latina women, did outreach to Latino families, and was involved with several seminars. As well as experiencing the Latin culture at New Columbia, I was able to spend most of that time with Lucia, as she guided and mentored me. She also told me many stories and we often had one on one time where I asked several questions about her job, work experiences, and work ethic. I got to know many of the Latina residents over the eight weeks I volunteered and became very acquainted with the way New Columbia functions and runs.

Through my work I discovered that many of the New Columbia residents come from other cultures and countries and are foreigners to American values, traditions and norms. Due to this being so prevalent, several residents are in the process of acculturating into U.S. society. Acculturation is the process of identity change when moving from one environment to another, which involves a "long-term conditioning process of newcomers in integrating the new values, norms, and symbols of their new culture" (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 99). Also, due to the many residents at New Columbia and the varying cultures they come from, conflict is common, and therefore must be managed efficiently. Thus, an examination of acculturation and conflict management is important to determine what the appropriate methods of each should be.

This study examines four acculturation expectations research suggest should be fulfilled and followed, including: help with the acculturation process, minority communication with the dominant culture, maintaining ethnic traditions while acculturating, and the dominant culture's lack of force of acculturation on minorities. These acculturation expectations are applied to the work of New Columbia and Lucia in terms of how they utilized and implemented the four crucial elements. The second part of the study focuses on the expectations and practices of conflict management: identifying conflict styles, understanding cultural differences in conflict styles, applying and understanding appropriate face concerns, and productive ways to mindfully manage conflict. As with the analysis of acculturation-related practices, these four conflict management expectations are applied to the work of Lucia with the residents of New Columbia. Finally, I propose some possible theory-driven changes for improving an already successful program.

Acculturation Expectations

Acculturation is important for ethnic minorities because they will need to communicate with American people, get a job, and become accustomed to the American way of life. Immigrants who move to a new country often experience emotional stress and disorientation in their new environment, and can often feel identity loss, rejection, and loneliness (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 117). In order for the residents' to have a successful life in the U.S., help with acculturation is needed and support should be provided. Immigrants and minorities need to rewrite their social personal selves in order for survival and success, and most importantly, to be treated fairly (Amaya, 2007, p. 199). This process becomes easier and more likely to occur through a guiding force and friendly encouragement. When an immigrant is surrounded by people from the dominant culture who expect him or her to already speak English and know their norms, that does little to assist the immigrant to begin acculturating. Rather, when people are willing to offer help and guidance in starting the process, introducing immigrants to

American norms and encouraging the integration, then the immigrant has a reason and way to begin acculturating sooner and faster (Amaya, 2007, p. 206, 207). Most times immigrants are left to fend for themselves and go through the acculturation process alone, while many Americans just want the immigrants to successfully become completely American. The process would be more successful if there was a mutual understanding between the immigrant and people of the dominant culture and a two way process of give and take would occur (Kim & Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 229).

Another crucial aspect of acculturation is communication with people from the dominant culture. The ability to communicate with individuals from the dominant culture is helpful in the acculturation process, and the more opportunities that a minority has to do so, the better assimilated he or she will be. Therefore, interaction outside the ethnic community is encouraged and should be done (Kim, 1980, p. 176). While having a family present during the acculturation process can be a good source of support and comfort, the frequent interaction with them can hinder the integration into the dominant culture. Interacting with only those of one's native culture, and speaking mostly the native language, has negative effects. Thus outside sources of communication with the dominant culture are highly recommended to help maintain frequent use of English and learning of American norms and traditions (Kim, 1980, p. 171). One main way of garnering communication opportunities with the dominant culture is through job placement. Obtaining a job can be very beneficial to a minorities' acceptance of American norms, traditions and values. Being in a work environment can not only help with learning English, the atmosphere can also encourage integration of American culture into one's own ethnic culture. Therefore, the higher up in the work force an individual goes, the more assimilated he or she becomes (Kim, 1980, p. 176).

While the goal of minorities and immigrants is to eventually acculturate into the U.S. culture by adopting the norms, values, and views of America, maintaining ethnic identity is also important to many

minorities. Assimilation can occur, in which individuals choose to adopt the dominant culture's views and maintain minimal cultural identity, and is a more severe form of acculturation (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 108). However, combining both American and ethnic oriented views can be one way to integrate into society and accommodate both the dominant culture's expectations and one's ethnic culture's teachings (Tin-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 102). The hope is that minorities will develop strong American cultural identities and become assimilated, or at least have bicultural identities, in which individuals maintain a high ethnic tradition, but also incorporate American values and practices into their lives (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 108). According to Trebbe (2007), this bicultural identity may be the best form of integration possible. Trebbe argues that assimilation is not always seen as the best way for immigrants or minorities to become part of the dominant culture, as this causes them to become resentful of and isolated from the dominant culture. Rather, Trebbe suggests that it becomes increasingly important for immigrants to maintain their native language and traditions, while still practicing the dominant language and norms in everyday life (p. 180). Kim and Ebesu Hubbard (2007) also argue for an alternative course than assimilation, one that calls for an immigrant to gain competence in more than one culture (p. 229). Minorities should not have to choose one culture over another, but should, in turn, be able to maintain their ethnic identity while becoming proficient in the dominant culture's language, norms, and traditions. One does not need to substitute new culture values for old ones, but rather add new behaviors that can be used in certain contexts and set to the side in others (Kim & Ebesu Hubbard, 2007, p. 229).

Lastly, while resources and assistance are crucial for ethnic minorities, they should not be pushed onto individuals. Many immigrants are not ready to be assimilated or begin that process; therefore, help should not be forced upon them, but simply provided if desired. Immigrants and minorities who are forced to learn the language and practices of the dominant culture tend to resent and dislike the country in which they must conform to and the individuals involved. This causes the

minorities to have a decreased interest in acculturating into the dominant culture and a tendency towards gathering in minority groups and only keeping in contact with those of their own ethnic background. Minorities dislike the government and people who force this upon them, and perceive the force as attacks on the legitimacy of the ethnic community, therefore leading to higher ethnic pride and resistance to acculturation. Thus, in order to successfully encourage individuals to integrate into U.S. society, American people must be tolerant and understanding of those who do not yet speak English. Along with learning English, immigrants should be encouraged to maintain their native language as well, and this bilingual aspect of a minority should be seen as a positive quality (Croucher, 2009). Immigrants and minorities should not be forced to give up their ethnic language and practices, but simply should integrate them into the process of learning the dominant culture's ways.

New Columbia's Acculturation Status

New Columbia, and specifically Lucia, seems to implement these elements of acculturation very well into their organization. In terms of support and guidance with the acculturation process, New Columbia has many resources for residents to utilize right in the comfort of their own neighborhood. Meetings and conferences to help guide residents occur several times a year, along with offices and programs that help residents with specific problems. New Columbia provides English as a Second Language courses for any resident at no charge, and also has groups that gather to help improve language.

Independently, Lucia excels at this aspect of acculturation, as she personally takes it upon herself to help new residents with their acculturation into both American culture and New Columbia culture. Lucia understands the process of transitioning from one culture to the next can be very emotionally draining and difficult, and she therefore tries to help every resident and make them feel at ease. Lucia personally meets every new resident that enters New Columbia. Within the first few weeks a

resident moves in, Lucia visits their home and meets the family. This process helps the new residents feel more comfortable with their living arrangements and community. She tells them that if they need anything to call her, which allows the residents to feel more secure and welcome in their new home. Lucia also has many one on ones with individuals to help them feel more comfortable and to make sure that they are acculturating fine into the new culture in which they have come into. Another positive I noticed with Lucia is that she goes out of her way to be friendly and comforting to New Columbia residents. When walking along the streets she strikes up conversations with many people and seems to personally know everyone she sees. This indicates that she indeed does a great job in getting to know the residents and making sure they are comfortable, which is important, as she is making their acculturation process friendly and encouraging.

New Columbia also offers great resources for the second expectation of acculturation, which discusses how frequent communication with the dominant culture will help the minority acculturate easier and faster. As stated before, New Columbia offers ESL classes to all residents for free, and often has gatherings for individuals to work on English speaking. Computer labs and paper resources are provided for individuals to be able to use to search for jobs and print resumes. Classes are held on instructions of how to write a resume, successfully interview, search for jobs, and complete paperwork. Many workers in the New Columbia offices work one on one with residents to help them obtain jobs and careers. Newspapers, magazines, televisions and other cultural media are supplied in one of the work rooms so that residents can read about American events and watch American shows. These resources allow for residents to experience American cultural influences and communication outlets, and encourage individuals' acculturation through work experience and job obtainment.

Lucia hopes the ethnic residents will go out into the American culture, and offers resources for individuals to do so. She encourages immigrants and non-English speaking minorities to take ESL classes

and wants them to become acculturated. She does not think that they can manage living in America without knowing the language and norms of the culture, and therefore tries anything to help them along in the assimilation process, including working one on one with them to improve their English or finding volunteers to work with individuals or groups. I have witnessed Lucia's work first hand when I have attended her meetings with Latina women in the neighborhood. She tries to get them involved with the community and visits with them to see if they need assistance with anything. One of her priorities is for the women to learn English and practice it with non-Spanish speakers. Lucia worked hard to explain projects and conversations in Spanish, but to repeat it in English so that they can become accustomed to hearing and understanding the language. Also, Lucia used me as a tool for the women, as she suggested they have conversations with me in English in order to practice. She desires for these women to be assimilated and become successful in their American life.

However, although Lucia is passionate about minorities becoming acculturated, she also wants them to celebrate their native culture. She seems to do good work helping residents practice their ethnic traditions and values within the dominant culture. This is shown through Lucia's many efforts to have ethnic centered parties and meetings for the residents, so that they can revel in their culture among those who they relate to. These meetings and parties are conducted to allow residents to meet one another, feel comfortable in their neighborhood, and celebrate their heritage with neighbors from similar backgrounds. Lucia herself told me that she practices her Mexican traditions every day, and she would never want to deprive any other minority of not celebrating their heritage. Lucia said that she believes that immigrants can maintain two cultures, and while becoming acculturated into the American norms and values, residents can also maintain their ethnic traditions. While there are events that help residents celebrate their ethnic traditions, there could be more gatherings and interactions that incorporate the residents' ethnic culture into their acculturation. Also, while Lucia wants residents to

practice their native traditions, she mostly is concerned with their acculturation and puts a lot of emphasis on them assimilating and becoming successful Americans.

Lastly, Lucia does well in not forcing the residents to be assimilated and speak English. Although Lucia hopes minorities will learn English, she does not force them to only speak in English and to abandon their native language. Rather, she communicates with them in their native language, while also practicing to help improve their new language. Lucia encourages her residents to be bilingual, but realizes that not everyone will accomplish this. She practices respect in these cases, and does not want to alienate those residents who do not desire to learn English or be acculturated. For instance, Lucia conducted a health and safety training through the Red Cross for Latino residents. She sent both English and Spanish speaking individuals to the Latino houses in order for residents to hear the information in English, but if they were unable to understand, Spanish was provided. Therefore, residents were able to practice and use their English, but they were not forced to go without understanding the information or abandoning their native language, as the instructions were then given in Spanish. Lucia has also told me that there are many older residents who refuse to learn English or American traditions. Therefore, Lucia does not continually try to help them acculturate, but rather is an assistance for them no matter what they need. In one meeting there were two older Latina women, and Lucia explained to them everything in Spanish so that they would understand what was going on, while she tried to encourage the other Latina women to listen to and try to understand the English explanations.

While New Columbia and Lucia practice the acculturation expectations very well, there still remain some limitations. First of all, even though Lucia works hard to encourage the residents, many people still remain jobless and unmotivated to use the New Columbia resources. Encouraging all residents successfully is difficult, and not every person that is reached out to will appreciate the assistance. Also, even though events occur regularly at New Columbia, many residents are not involved

and do not attend events which could help their acculturation process. In addition, although Lucia does a great job reaching out to new residents and helping with their acculturation, she can only do so much, and not every resident is able to obtain a sufficient amount of attention. More New Columbia employees need to be as motivated as Lucia to go out and make house visits. Lastly, many of the residents live with their families and therefore do not get much access to outside communication sources. This can lead to a detriment in the acculturation process. Even though services exist, for most residents the main source of communication is within the ethnic community. These concerns are addressed later on and possible improvements are provided.

Conflict Management Expectations

Identifying conflict styles is the first step in successful conflict management. Managing conflict can be tricky because every individual has different conflict styles; however, understanding the differing styles and their consequences can allow the conflict manager to be aware of what he or she is dealing with (Oetzel, Dhar & Kirschbaum, 2007, p. 184). Many studies have been conducted to determine a set number of conflict styles, but most research varies and the idea of classifying conflict styles into a few categories seems daunting and near impossible. However, five styles are commonly used, beginning with dominating, which is a competitive and controlling approach that emphasizes getting one's own way above all. The avoiding style involves steering clear of the conflict situation, while the obliging style is seen as accommodating for the other person more than for oneself. Compromising involves a give and take in order to reach an agreement, and integrating tries to find a mutual-interest solution which both the other person's and one's own interests are of high concern (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 271, 273).

Understanding cultural differences in conflict styles is another expectation of conflict management. Even after identifying conflict styles, intercultural conflict can be complex and frustrating,

due to differing cultural views and norms (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 260). One main factor of conflict variation is the individualistic and collectivist views different cultures hold. Individualistic cultures often concern themselves with individual identity, rights and needs, and are self concerning and personally responsible, while collectivist cultures emphasize group identity and needs, and practice interdependence and group collaboration. These views on values and norms can greatly determine the approach one takes toward conflict (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Maumoto & Takai, 2000, p. 414). The idea that individualism and collectivism are closely connected to conflict styles is examined further in the area of self construal. Self construal is an individual's sense of self in relation to others and has a link to cultural values, norms and communication (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel & Yee-Jung, 2001, p. 91). One's cultural background, ethnicity, environment, and upbringing help determine his or her self construal, and self construal helps determine one's conflict style. Independent construal involves the idea that an individual is a unique entity with unique feelings and motivations, while an interdependent construal is motivated to build relationships and to fit in with others. The biconstrual type is concerned with both the independent and interdependent view (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel & Yee-Jung, 2001, p. 92). Those who are biconstrual tend to use a wider variety of conflict types, while those who are just independent or interdependent are limited (Ting-Toomey, Oetzel & Yee-Jung, 2001, p. 98). To successfully understand cultural differences in conflict, individuals must be mindful of intercultural differences. In order to do this, one must learn to see the other person's unfamiliar behavior in a nonjudgmental standpoint (Ting-Toomey, 2007, p. 259).

Face concerns are also another important factor in conflict management, as they often guide an individual into one of these conflict styles. Face is an individual's positive image in social interaction, and therefore people manage conflict in different ways due to different levels of face concern. Individuals with self-face are concerned with their own image, while individuals with other-face are concerned with the other person's self image. Mutual-face has concern for both one's own image and the other

person's image (Oetzel, Myers, Meares & Lara, 2003, p. 107). The concept of face concern becomes especially prevalent during emotionally threatening or identity vulnerable situations, causing more tension and resentment during conflict. Oftentimes power distance has an effect on face concerns as well, causing individuals to become defensive. Face concerns lead people to approach conflicts in a certain way and manage problems with different effectiveness. For instance, those with other-face concern will find it difficult to manage conflict with people with self-face concern, as their motives will be very different, affecting the conflict styles they use. Individuals from different cultures will see face in different ways, as values, such as individualism-collectivism and small/large power distance, shape face concerns and styles (Ting-Toomey, 2007, p. 257). For instance, Americans are more concerned with self-face, and Japanese are other-face concerned. Understanding how culture affects face concern can be a benefit to those managing conflict with intercultural individuals (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Maumoto & Takai, 2000, p. 412).

While there is no right or wrong conflict style or face concern, studies argue that some are preferable to others. The integrating conflict style appears to exhibit the most competent behaviors during conflict, and allows for an outcome that is beneficial for both parties (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Maumoto & Takai, 2000, p. 414). Another study suggests that face concerns are the best indicators of conflict styles, and mutual-face is seen as the most effective form of face concerns, as it often leads to the integrating or compromising conflict styles (Oetzel, Myers, Meares & Lara, 2003, p. 109). While it is not mandatory for these conflict styles to be utilized for successful conflict management, research would point to mutual-face concern and integrating or compromising styles to be the most preferable. No matter what the conflict style, what is most crucial in managing intercultural conflict is the ability to apply adaptive and flexible conflict communication skills. Cultural empathy should be utilized for successful conflict management, which helps individuals be aware of the cultural differences. Also, mindful listening helps people clarify and resolve conflicts in which they do not fully

understand the differing cultural viewpoints. Lastly, mindful reframing can be useful to help change the language of the conflict in order to redefine how each person involved in the conflict sees the situation (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005, p. 281-283). With these conscious communication skills utilized during conflict, the chances of the situation ending in mutual satisfaction and success are high.

New Columbia's Conflict Management Status

Lucia's work with conflict management in terms of these expectations is effective in the context of her position at New Columbia. Judging Lucia's ability to identify conflict styles is a difficult expectation to determine because I am not certain of her specific conflict knowledge. Although I do not know if Lucia can identify the main styles of conflict, from her stories I can see that she knows that different conflict styles do exist, and that she can identify how to respond to various different types of conflict. For instance, she told me the story of a conflict she encountered with a man a few years ago who was loitering on the New Columbia streets. She noticed the man's truck waiting for nearly 40 minutes in an area where drug trafficking had occurred before. Lucia decided to confront the man to see his intentions, and approached him to have a conversation. The man immediately became defensive, and told her that she was wrong for bothering him. Lucia tried to ask him if he would leave the premises, but the man would not let her talk and began threatening her. Lucia said she identified the man as a threat who dominated their conflict conversation, so she acted accordingly to that conflict style and chose to walk away and call the police, as she knew she could not manage that conflict effectively without the risk of being hurt. Thus, Lucia does know that different conflict styles exist and can identify what they are and how to respond to them, I am just not certain to what extent she is aware of all the conflict styles.

However, Lucia has exhibited that she is aware of cultural differences in conflict styles. She has dealt with many different conflicts from people of several different backgrounds, and has learned that

everyone handles conflict differently according to their background and values. Lucia told me stories of the different conflicts that she encountered in which she had to realize how their backgrounds affected their conflict style. For instance, Lucia knew a Latina woman who was very quiet and did not come to Lucia with many problems. The woman had mostly avoided conflict, and valued keeping her personal life personal. Therefore, when Lucia received a call from her saying she was being evicted and needed Lucia's help, Lucia knew the situation was serious and there must be an explanation for her lack of paying rent the past few months. Due to the woman usually avoiding conflict and her current conversation with Lucia in which she was very timid and slow to explain her situation, Lucia suspended her judgment of the woman's approach to asking for help and instead tried to find a way to allow the woman to feel comfortable enough to explain the situation. Lucia went to her house to talk with the woman in a friendly and familiar setting and found out the situation. The woman had been diagnosed with cancer and was therefore unable to work. Thus, she had been unable to pay her rent and was in debt. However, the woman had recently gotten better and could start working again, she just needed to be on a payment plan and would be able to pay back what she owed in a few months time. Instead of simply passing over this woman's phone call and letting her be evicted, Lucia discovered what the whole situation was and knew she needed to help this woman. Luckily, New Columbia set her up with a payment plan and she was able to remain in her home, all because of Lucia's willingness to take the time to discover what was going on and her understanding of different people handling conflict in different ways.

This story is also an example of Lucia's ability to identify face concerns as well. Lucia figured out that the woman wanted to save face and not have anyone know she was being evicted or had cancer. Therefore, she was careful in her approach to the situation, and chose to deal with the woman very delicately. Lucia went to the woman's house in order to allow her to see that Lucia was other-face concerned and to make the situation more comfortable. Lucia is aware of face concerns and uses her

understanding in conflict management. Another example is when she was approached by another resident who was angry about his water getting turned off. Lucia said that she realized that he was concerned with his self face and was embarrassed that he was unable to pay the bills. Lucia concluded that his self-face concern made his conflict style dominating, and she experienced him being very hostile and disrespectful toward her. Lucia wanted to preserve his self-face concern, but also wanted to maintain her own face, therefore, she tried to calm him down and offered assistance services he could go to. She arranged a payment plan and told him “this happens to many residents, so do not worry, we will figure the situation out.” Therefore, she was able to save his self-face by reassuring him that the problem would be resolved, and by letting him know that he was not the only resident to ever get his water shut off and therefore should not be embarrassed.

All of the conflict situations observed in this study exhibit Lucia’s ability to manage conflict successfully. She tends to have mutual-face, in which her concern is directed toward the other person’s problems and self image, but she also takes into account how she will be represented and seen in the conflict situation, and how her reputation will follow her in what she decides to do in the conflict. Lucia also shows that she is mindful of cultural differences among herself and the resident she is conversing with, and she has proven to be flexible and adaptive to each situation. Lucia told me that in conflict situations she tries to suspend judgment of the person involved, while also mindfully taking into account the culture she knows about them and how that may affect their approach to the conflict. A final example that encapsulates all of these areas is from an interaction I witnessed her have with an older Latina woman involved with one of the project planning meetings I attended. At the time I did not fully understand the conflict situation, as I could not understand the Spanish, but later Lucia explained to me the concern the woman had and her approach to confronting Lucia. During the meeting, Latina women were finalizing a date to set for the Latin Christmas fiesta that was to occur, and when the date was decided, the older woman tried to subtly suggest a different date. She went around in circles trying to

say why other dates would be better, while the other women were just telling her that the date they already decided was fine. Lucia said that she could tell that the woman had a problem but did not want to say what it was. Lucia realized that the woman did not want to confront the issue head on in front of many of the other women, so she decided to preserve the woman's self-face and ask her at a later time. Lucia said they would finalize the date at the end of the meeting, and moved onto other topics. Later on, when the women were working in smaller groups, Lucia confronted the older woman alone and asked her why she desired the date of the party to be changed. The woman continued to make excuses and stray from the main point, and Lucia, knowing the culture of the elder Latina woman, and that she would choose to be considerate and careful with her complaint, reworded her attempt at asking the woman. Through mindful listening of the woman's tactful attempts at changing the date, Lucia reframed her questions in order for the woman to feel comfortable enough to state her problem. The woman had been concerned with the date of the party because she was meant to have surgery that day and wanted to be able to attend the party. The woman did not want to inconvenience the whole group or Lucia, but she desired to be a part of the celebrations. Through this information gathering, Lucia was able to resolve the situation and a new date that worked for everyone was found, without the older woman losing any face.

Limitations in successful conflict management at New Columbia do occur, and not every aspect is complete and perfect. First of all, whether Lucia is aware of all the conflict styles is unclear. The likelihood is not high that every New Columbia worker is knowledgeable about all conflict styles, and this can be detrimental to their ability to identify conflict types and understand how to respond to them. In addition, it is not easy to predict or quickly know another person's conflict style, therefore, the employee may be able to get a sense of the resident's conflict approach, but cannot guarantee the direction the conflict will go. This makes the ability to effectively deal with every conflict type more difficult and harder on New Columbia workers. These limitations are discussed in the next section.

Summary and Advice

Through this study of the work of New Columbia, and specifically Lucia, the use of acculturation and conflict management are seen as productively used. Lucia is a model for other workers at New Columbia and in related fields, as she performs well in each aspect of acculturation and most parts of conflict management examined in this study. Lucia offers much personal guidance and help to any resident who desires assistance in any part of the acculturation process, but she never forces acculturation upon anyone, just offers her hand to those wishing to take it. While encouraging English speaking and communication with outside sources from the dominant culture, Lucia also supports the continuation of ethnic traditions and the celebration of one's native culture. In terms of conflict management, Lucia could use a clearer vision of the different conflict styles, but does well to understand the basic ideas that culture and values affect conflict styles. Lucia also understands face concerns and utilizes that understanding to alleviate stress in conflict situations and to discover how the conflict should be managed. Finally, Lucia exhibits a good understanding of mindful and adaptive communication, and seems to partake in the most productive forms of conflict management.

The study shows that Lucia is doing great work and should continue to utilize her knowledge and work ethic as she does. Possible program changes also might enhance her ability to do so. In terms of acculturation, meetings and seminars could be conducted to teach other workers how to work with residents in terms of acculturation. Lucia could train other workers at New Columbia, who also deal with and manage residents, to work one on one with the ethnic minorities and seek out communication for acculturation improvement. Employees could meet with various residents one on one or in groups and converse with them both in English and Spanish, in order to help them learn English faster. Following in Lucia's footsteps, workers also could visit residents who are new or in need. When an employee hears of

a resident having difficulty acculturating, he or she could make a house visit to spend time with them on their English or help guide them toward their goal in self rewriting.

Furthermore, more meetings and events could be put on at New Columbia to help the residents either become more acculturated by meeting more members of the host culture and communicating with them, or feel more comfortable with their acculturation process by celebrating their ethnic heritage with others who share their ethnicity. As noted before, although there are some events that take place that encourage ethnic celebration, more could be beneficial for the community and their view of New Columbia's care of its residents. However, since most of the immigrant residents at New Columbia live with their families and communicate primarily with those of their ethnicity, many are unable to acculturate as effectively and end up relying on their ethnic friends and family for human interaction and communication. Therefore, parties and meetings could occur with minority residents and American residents or volunteers who can help create English communication channels. Having the minorities communicate with Americans will allow them to learn the English language and American norms faster. This communication also could help immigrant minorities feel more confident about communicating with other Americans and allow them to go out and find their own English speaking channels to further their acculturation. Employees also could encourage residents to go out and attend activities outside their own community. Perhaps employees could set up individual or group field trips, in which residents go to events or meetings outside of New Columbia, such as card groups, knitting clubs, or luncheons.

As I said earlier, many residents are still unemployed and do not use the resources at New Columbia for help. Therefore, New Columbia employees could also be prepared to help immigrants and minorities with job placement. Although there are already resources at New Columbia in this area, more of a focus needs to be put on individuals to use these resources and to ask for help. If each employee

met with the families that move into New Columbia and encouraged them to obtain a job where they can move up and garner more responsibilities, then the individuals will become more acculturated over time. This can also be done through seminars held for residents, one on one activity with residents, and follow up house visits to make sure they do not need any help and are on their way to getting a job.

In terms of conflict, many employees need to know the correct ways to manage conflict. First, a seminar could take place in which each New Columbia employee learns of conflict types and how they affect a conflict situation. Lucia herself lacks confidence in this area, and a seminar learning about conflict styles would benefit her work, along with teaching other employees the same valuable information. Workers also could learn about how culture affects conflict styles, and a lesson on how to deal with different situations could take place. This will allow for an explanation on how to manage conflict in a mindful manner, and also could provide mock interactions in order for employees to practice before they work with residents.

Conclusion

Overall, Lucia's excellent work deserves great organizational support from New Columbia in these two areas. She is on her own a lot of the time, working extra hours to help make the lives of the residents happy and successful. The best result would be for other employees to work as hard as Lucia and help her out with all of her outreach, extra activities and meetings, and problem control. With additional support and assistance as resources permit, Lucia could be a pioneer for low income housing organizations, and New Columbia could benefit greatly from this expansion.

With these improvements, and the already stellar work ethic and performance by Lucia, New Columbia could become a safe haven for immigrants and minorities. The already successful use of acculturation and conflict management has helped many minorities feel confident and comfortable in more mainstream American culture. Greater support and more widely used practices will make New

Columbia's work force as best as they can be. Luckily, New Columbia already has such a hard working and dedicated woman to act as a model and guide to other employees.

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