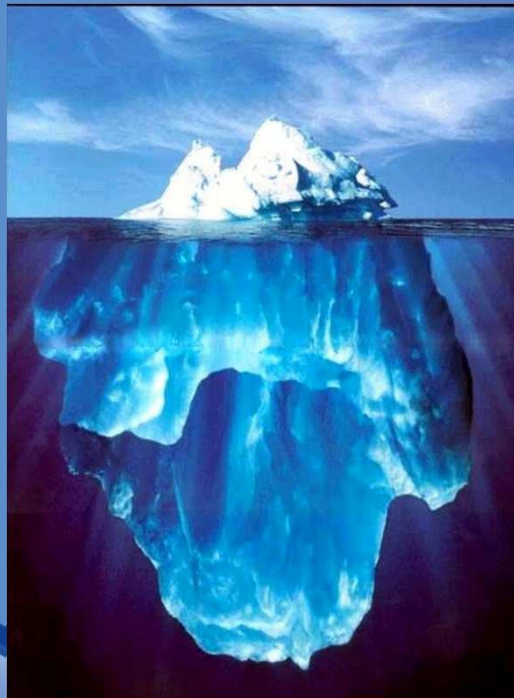


Promoting Intercultural Competencies



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What is culture?

- Culture is the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior
- It is the way of life a people pass down from one generation to the next through learning
- It is the rules for living and functioning in society that come from growing up in a specific society, and it is a set of acquired skills, habits and society-specific training that gives a group of people its identity

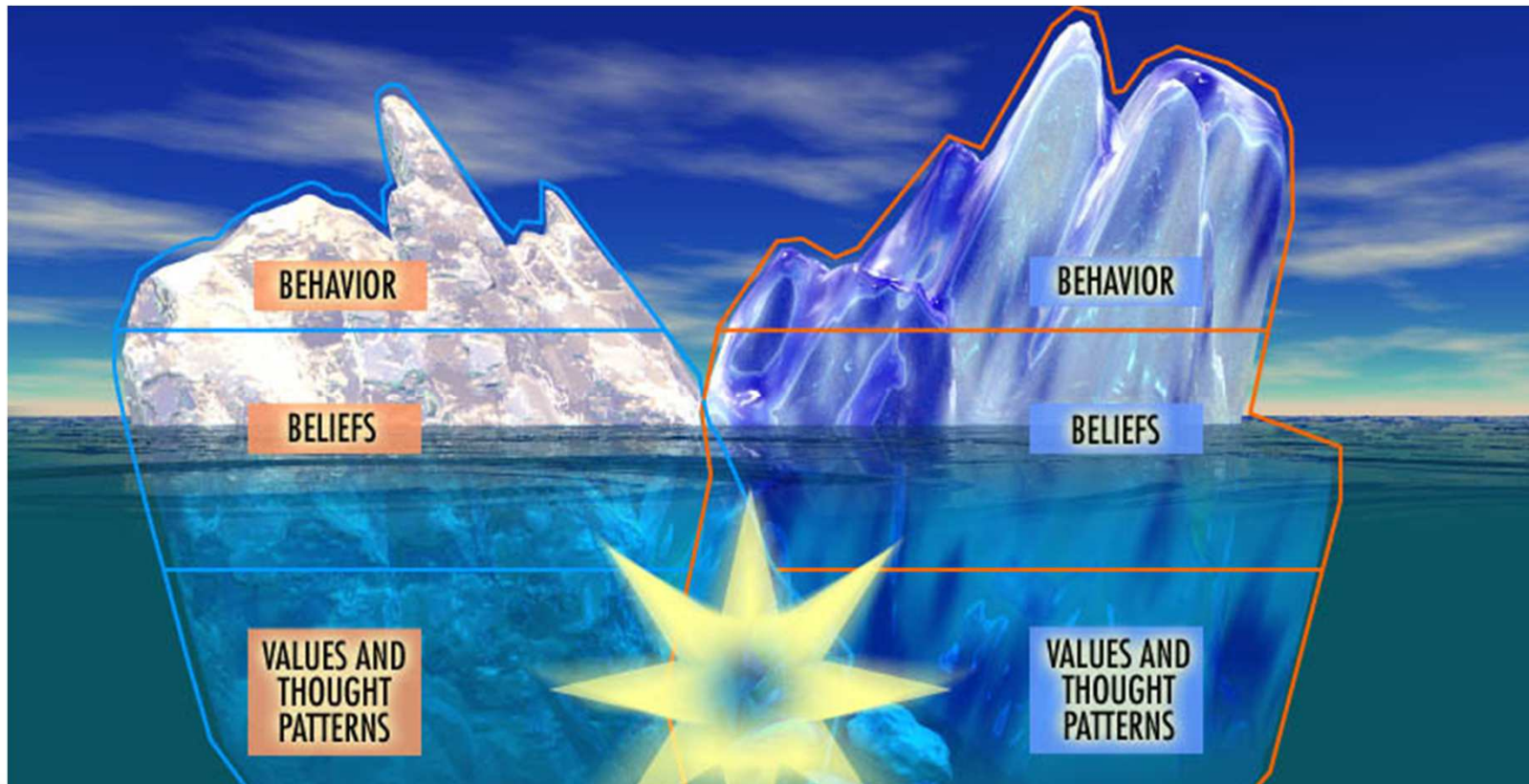
What is intercultural competency?

- Cultures can have widely varying perspectives
- These perspectives influence the way that a person develops relationships, responds to situations, and operates in a professional setting
- Intercultural competency is the ability to comprehend and navigate the ways that culture can influence behavior, relationships, and the results of collaboration and interaction

The iceberg analogy of culture



The iceberg analogy of culture 2- culture clash



Why is intercultural competency important in our field? What challenges do we face?

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Nuclear power development and nuclear safeguards require significant international collaboration
- Many collaborators come from extremely diverse backgrounds
- Gaining the skills to anticipate potential conflicts based on cultural misunderstanding improves efficiency and effectiveness in many scientific endeavors, and the overall outcomes of joint political and technical endeavors

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

- Technical specialists are not always convinced of the relevance of intercultural issues to the nuclear field
- Could be considered costly and time-consuming
- At face value, can be seen as falling outside the wheelhouse of engineering, law, safeguards

What does becoming interculturally competent entail?

- Intercultural preparedness is not merely travelling, learning a foreign language, or being exposed to other cultures
- Developing competency requires thinking about the challenges posed to our work by a multi-cultural workforce in a way that prepares employees and staff for potential incidents or misunderstandings
- It is impossible to avoid all intercultural misunderstandings, but learning to anticipate them and deal with them is key to developing any training program on culture

Overarching goals and benefits of training on intercultural competency

- Come to a common understanding of “culture”
- Introduce some key concepts from anthropology and intercultural communication
- Recognize that our cultural differences influence how we communicate with each other
- Identify how we can more effectively communicate across cultures despite the differences that seem to divide us
- Provide staff culture-specific training in anticipation of engaging abroad or with foreign counterparts

Training program development 1 – a broader understanding of culture

- Address overarching intercultural empathy issues
- Learn about cultural paradigms:
- (examples, there are many more)
 - Individualism versus collectivism
 - Uncertainty avoidance
 - Egalitarianism versus hierarchy
 - Attitudes towards time
 - Notions of masculinity
 - Type of culture (ethnic? Organizational? Etc)
 - Attitudes toward space (proxemics)
...and many more...

Training program development 2 – culture-specific

- Examine ‘cookbook’ components of culture for a specific region
- Learn about useful generalizations regarding a specific culture (NOT stereotypes) in order to be prepared for potential interactions
- Example for discussion: Cookbook elements of preparedness for interacting with Americans

Thank you for your
attention.

Any
questions?

Key experts cited:

- Bennett, Milton
- Hall, Edward T, and Mildred Reed Hall
- Spradley, James
- Weaver, Gary