

# PARENTING AND CULTURE



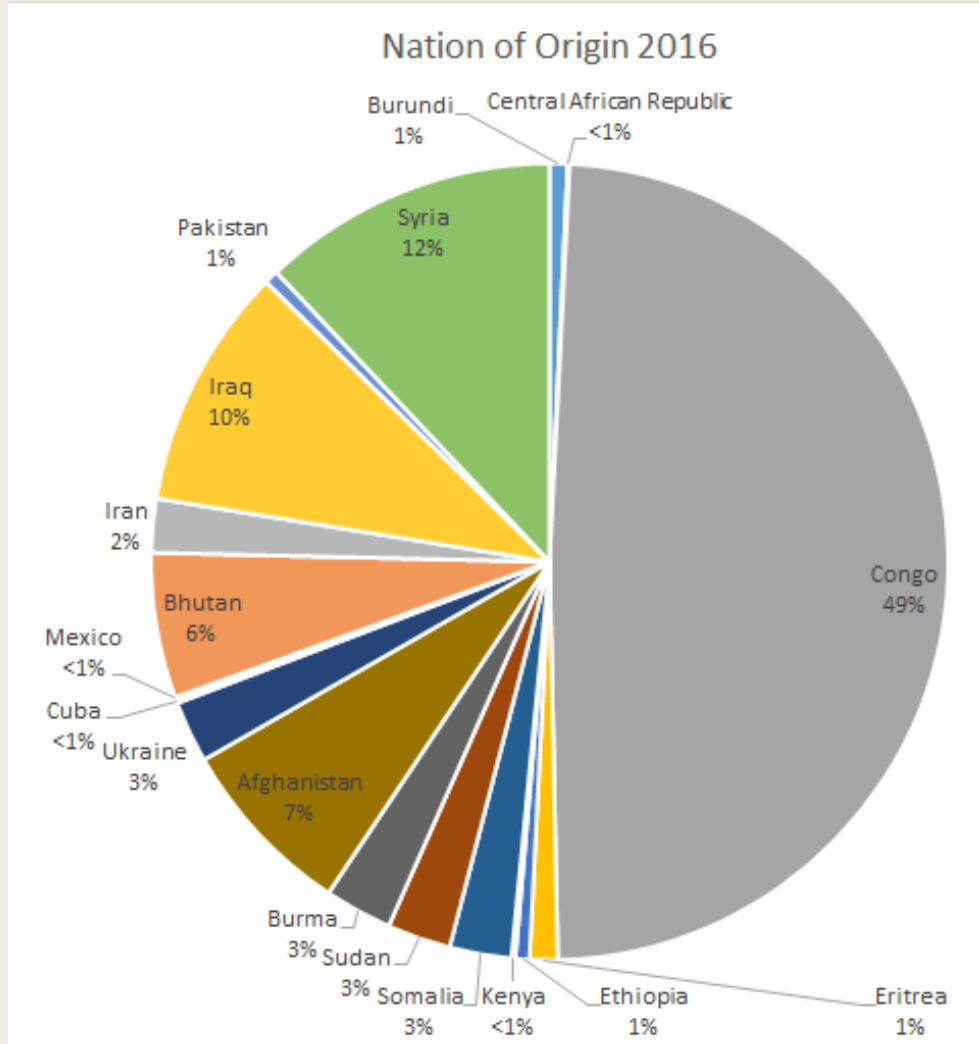
Kate Nelson, MS

# REFUGEES: a global crisis



- According to the UN refugee agency, there are more forcibly displaced people than ever before: **65 million people** or **1 in every 113 people** on earth.
- This number includes over **21 million refugees**.
- **More than half** of all these forcibly displaced persons **are children**.
- **Every minute 24 people** leave **everything behind** to escape war, persecution or terror.

# REFUGEES IN IDAHO



Refugee children at a reception centre in Rome, Italy.  
UN Photo/Rick Bajornas



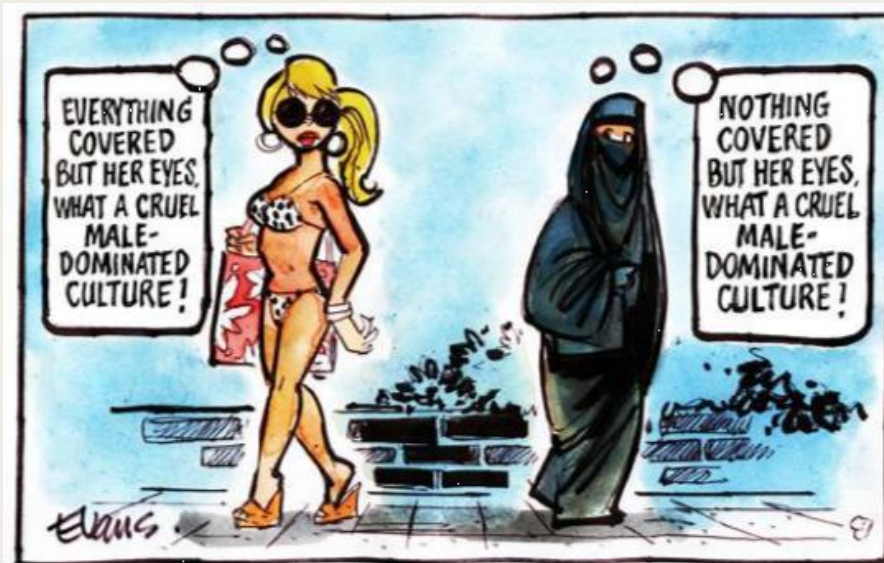
# Starting at the Beginning: What is Culture?

- English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor, "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."
- Simply put - culture is the **full range of learned human behavior patterns**.
- Culture is universal among all human groups and even exists among some primates.



# ETHNOCENTRISM

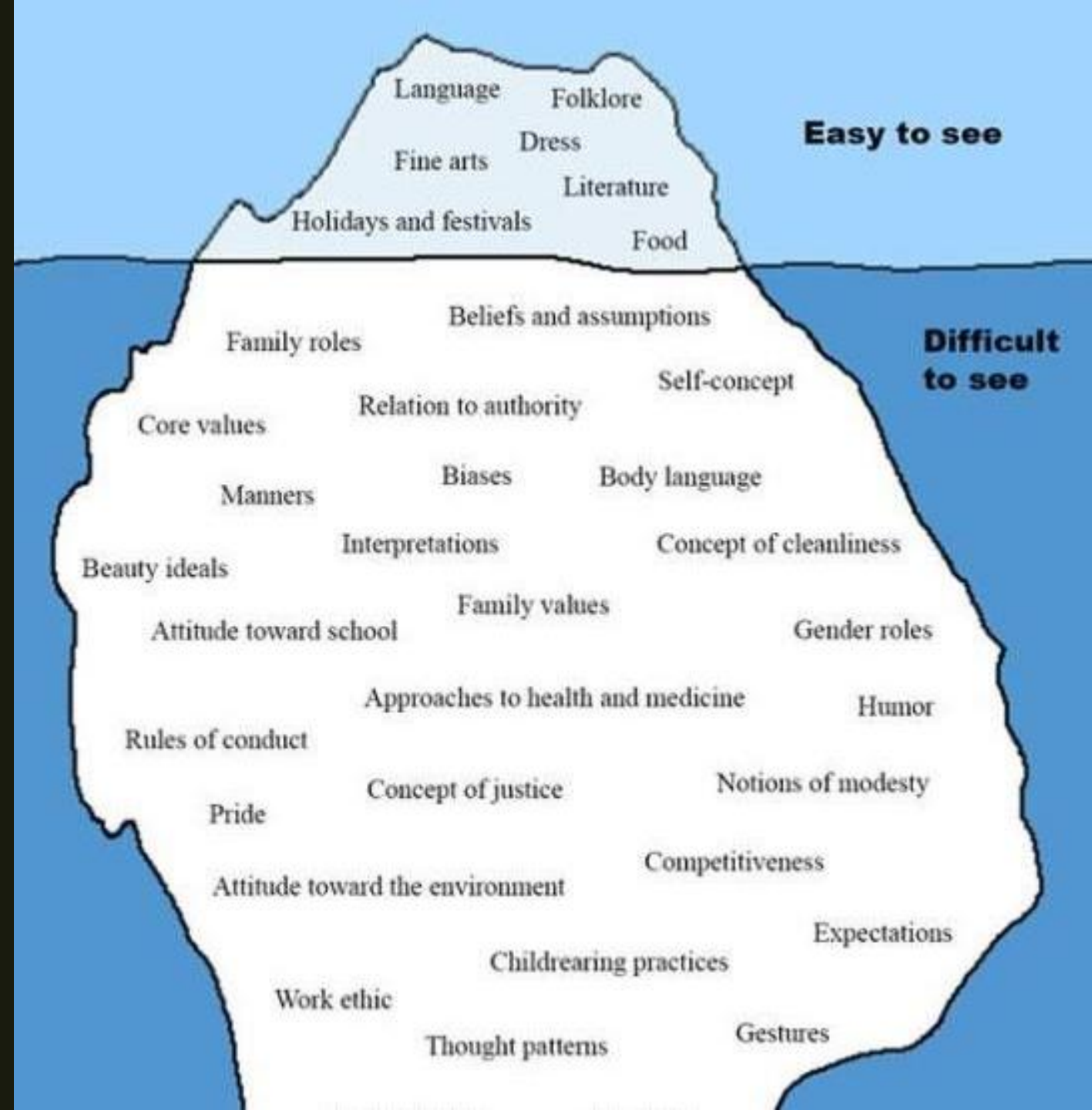
- Since most humans believe their culture is the **best** and **only way to live**, there are small amounts of ethnocentrism everywhere in the world.
- **Small doses** help to **create a sense of cultural pride** and to build strong, cohesive groups.
- But **taken to extremes**, and certainly when it includes an unwillingness to be tolerant, **it can be destructive**. Ethnocentrism is at the heart of colonization and genocide.



<http://home.earthlink.net/~youngturck/Chapter8.htm>

# CULTURE IS...

- LEARNED
- BASED ON SYMBOLS
- SHARED
- INTEGRATED
- DYNAMIC





# PARENTING AROUND THE WORLD





# The Fulani: Working by the age of four





# The Yanamamö: Girls marry earlier than boys



# The American: over parenting & growing orchids



“ I challenge parents to think about how much our perceptions of our kids as dependent and needy fuel the reality of their dependence and helplessness. ”

– Jessica Lahey, author of *The Gift of Failure*

“To make a child happy you have to give him all of his needs, but I can’t give him all of his needs,” Modyan says. “But what I can do for the moment is make them laugh and make them smile. That’s all I can do.”





“I try my best to keep them learning, to keep teaching them something, so they are always learning something,” Ziad says.

Ziad lives with his family in a tent settlement in Lebanon since fleeing the war in Syria. Conditions in the camp are dire — hunger, poverty, poor sanitation and inadequate shelters are rampant — but Ziad has found purpose running an informal school to keep the settlement’s children, including his own, moving forward.

About 10 kids meet in his tent twice a week to learn basic subjects and values, and do activities that help them express their feelings.

“The importance is not just teaching subjects, but teaching hope. It’s going to give them an effort so they can do something in their future,” he says. “If you don’t give children hope, it’s the same as losing a whole generation, because this is all they have. The future is all they have.”



“[I say] you’re safe here and you will not see what you’ve seen in Syria,” Hanan says.

Her young children, all of whom are under the age of 5, have only known war in their lifetimes. When they arrived on the shores of Lesbos, Greece, with Hanan, they expected to find violence and destruction there, too.

“When we arrived on this island there were many planes flying over, and that made them scared. It was very hard for them to adjust,” Hanan says. “But I try always to comfort them and make them aware that these are normal things and there is no war in this country.”

“And I am trying to do activities with them like speaking English [and] going with them to different activities to make their life normal again. Bit by bit they are actually adjusting very well.”

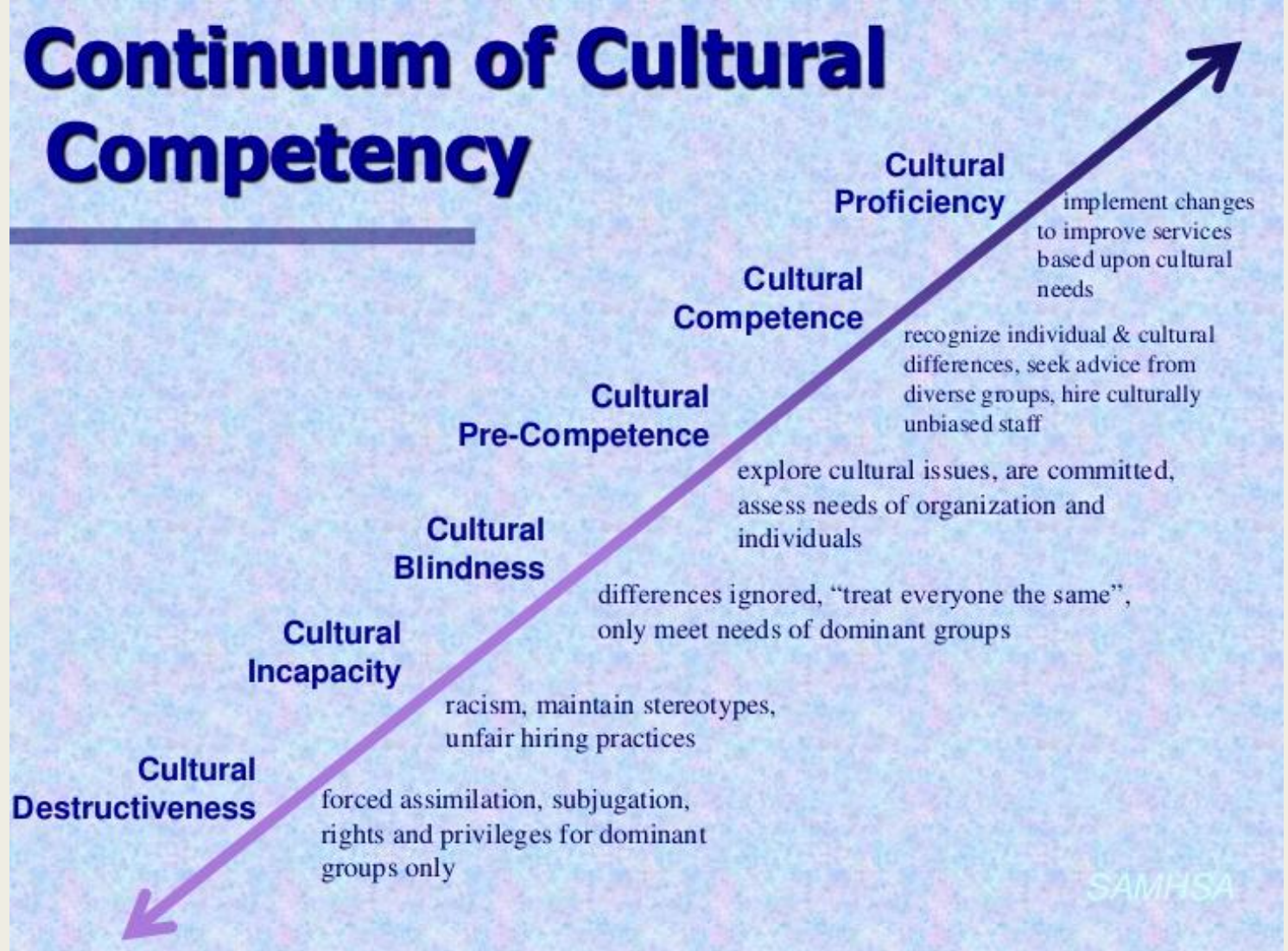




# THE GOAL: CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

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Implement  
changes to  
improve services  
based upon  
cultural needs





# Best Practices

## Follow the Leader

(and let your client be the leader)

- Powers of Observation
  - Shoes: on or off?
  - Eye contact: polite or threatening?
  - To handshake or not handshake?



# Best Practices

## Help Parents Understand the Whats, Hows, and Whys of Our Services

- If a client's reactions are mismatched to our expectations, rather than reactively assume anything negative about their personality, motivation, or intelligence, we can take a reflective, questioning stance:

“What do I not yet understand about my client that led to this breakdown, and/or what does the client not yet understand about the implicit norms of this service?”

Excerpted from *Memory at Work in the Classroom* (pp 178-181), by Francis Bailey and Ken Pransky, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. © 2014 by ASCD.

# LET'S GET REAL

- Why do you only have one child?
- Americans, the smilers.
- Tarin and the quiet room.
- Why so many January 1<sup>st</sup> birthdays?
- They don't even know where their kids are!







YOUR  
EXAMPLES





# WE ARE MORE ALIKE...

- With so much emphasis on identification of differences among peoples, it is easy to forget that nearly **all parents regardless of culture seek to lead happy, healthy, fulfilled parenthoods and to rear happy, healthy, fulfilled children.**





# THANK YOU.

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