

Engaging Participants with Respect

StoryCorps DIY: Fundamentals Course (<https://diy.storycorps.org/courses/storycorps-diy-fundament...>)

IN PROGRESS

 Lesson

 Materials

At StoryCorps, everyone who comes into the interview space should feel comfortable and respected. Practicing **Cultural humility** is essential to this process.

What is cultural humility?

Cultural humility is the practice of approaching culture not as an expert, but as a learner. Cultural humility promotes a process of continual learning, reflection, and reframing of one's own ideas and perceptions. While the term "culture" usually refers to non-majority communities (i.e., whiteness is seen as the norm, but communities of color have "culture"), in this case, cultural humility acknowledges that every person has culture(s).

How does it help?

Nobody has complete knowledge of a culture; all people have their own inherent biases. An active awareness of your own limitations to understanding allows you to be open to new ideas and new perspectives. In this way, you work not just to know about another culture, but also to relate to it.

Why is it important?

Most people move between cultures several times on any given day. An individual's personal culture is shaped by any number of factors:

- ✓ Ethnicity
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Skin Color
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Physical Ability
- ✓ Class
- ✓ Sexual Identity
- ✓ Religion
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Politics

Instead of assuming someone’s cultural experience, give the individual the space to self-identify. Allowing people to decide which aspects of their personal experience are important enough to share builds trust, forms a connection, and empowers their voice. Remember as well that even if two people belong to the same cultural identity, their definition of, experience of, or understanding of this culture may not be the same.

Cultural humility in practice

Here are some tips for practicing cultural humility during your interview, or in everyday interactions.

Check your assumptions

You can’t be an expert on someone else’s life, no matter how well you know the person. Recognizing your partner as a whole person, with thoughts and experiences beyond the context of your interactions, can be a powerful act of humility. In this interview, Chris Lopez recognizes that although she is quite close to her son, Gabe, there are things she did not know he struggled with before coming out to her as transgender.

▶ "I WAS WORRIED THAT YOU LIKED ME AS A GIRL."
([HTTPS://STORYCORPS.ORG/STORIES/CHRIS-AND-GABE-LOPEZ-160501/](https://storycorps.org/stories/chris-and-gabe-lopez-160501/))

Transcript-Gabe-Lopez (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/diy.storycorps.org-assets/uploads/2019/10/Transcript-Gabe-Lopez.pdf>) Download

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Language

Be mindful of your choice of words. Ask what language the person feels most comfortable using in reference to his or her culture or identity. As this animation shows, the pronunciation of someone's name can also be a point of cultural humility.



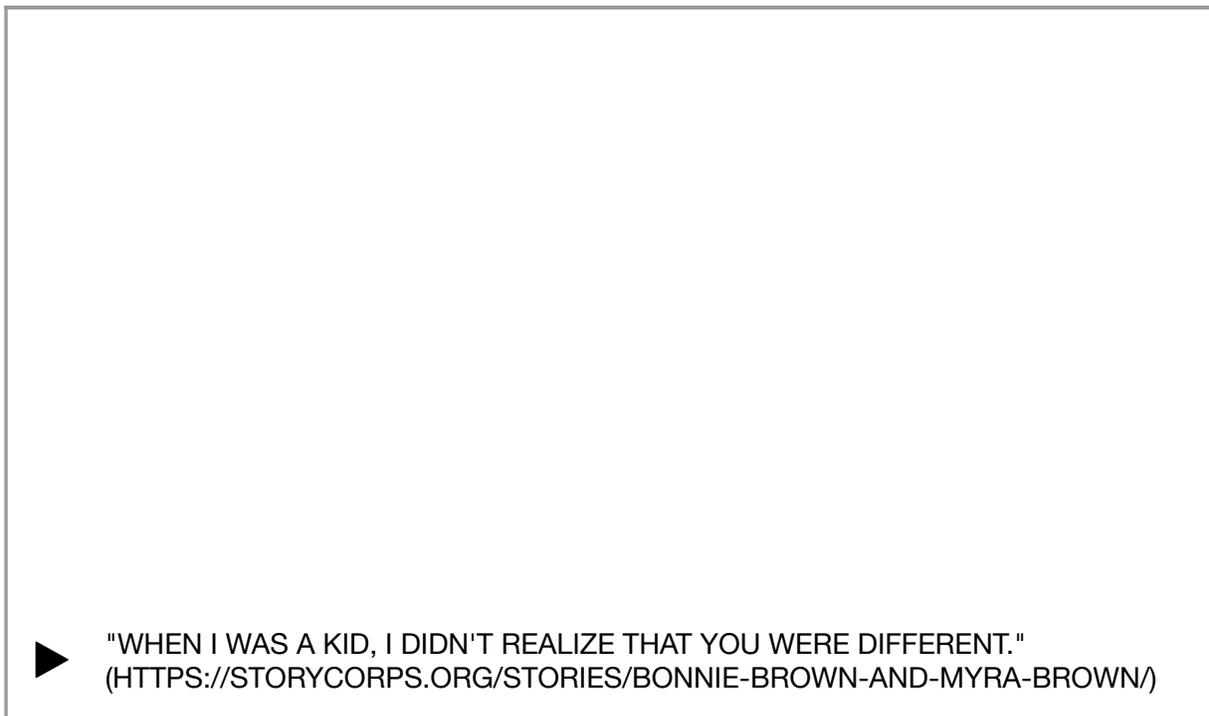


Transcript-Facundo-the-Great (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/diy.storycorps.org-assets/uploads/2019/10/Transcript-Facundo-the-Great.pdf>) Download
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Fix imbalances of power

Every voice has power, and every person has the right to be heard. Give value and consideration to the perspective that someone else can contribute to a conversation. Bonnie Brown has intellectual disabilities. In this interview her daughter, Myra, both highlights her mother's strengths and asks Bonnie to share her own experiences in her own words.

It is also important not to place the burden of teaching/instructing/explaining on a marginalized person.



Transcript-Myra-and-Bonnie (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/diy.storycorps.org->

assets/uploads/2019/10/Transcript-Myra-and-Bonnie.pdf) Download

(https://s3.amazonaws.com/diy.storycorps.org-assets/uploads/2019/10/Transcript-Myra-and-Bonnie.pdf)

Remember: the process is the goal!

Cultural humility is a lifelong process of self-evaluation, self-critique, and learning.

For more information, refer to San Francisco State professor Vivian Chávez’s documentary *“Cultural Humility: People, Principles and Practices.”*
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaSHLbS1V4w)

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