

What are Cultural Patterns?



We all have Cultural Patterns. They shape how we see the world. They shape what we value. They also shape our judgments and prejudices. These patterns come from our family, our community, and our experiences growing up.

Our Cultural Patterns are shaped by:



We can think of these Patterns like special glasses we put on so that we see some things and not others. People with different special glasses will see different things. Their story about events or a situation is just as real to them as your story is to you. Understanding our Cultural Patterns helps us understand other people better. **When we notice one of our Cultural Patterns, with work and practice, we can choose whether to keep it or let it go.**

Where do Cultural Patterns come from?

We share some Cultural Patterns with our family members and other people in our community. However, no one will have exactly the same set of Cultural Patterns because our lives are all different.

Some of our Cultural Patterns come from stories passed down by parents, grandparents, and other older people we knew. Their words may stay in our mind and can either open or close our heart.

Other Cultural Patterns come from people who have spoken to us, or modeled for us, how they think we should behave. We absorb all sorts of messages from our cultural values and traditions.

All of these Cultural Patterns together create how we see the world. The stories handed down to us affect what is important and what gives meaning to us. Our identity is partly formed by our Cultural Patterns.

Our Cultural Patterns can connect us and help us.

- They give us our core values.
- They provide shortcuts to understand and navigate the world.
- They help us feel we belong to a group of people with whom we feel safe.
- They help us celebrate.
- They can remind us of our strengths.

Our Cultural Patterns can also limit us and cause harm.

We make decisions based on our own Cultural Patterns. When we only see the world using our Cultural Patterns, we don't see the world from other people's perspectives.

We don't see their truths. We don't see how the world looks to them. We miss that their truth and how the world looks to them is both real and important to them. This can limit or harm our ability to have a relationship with them.

When we judge others, we can't really hear them. This prevents us from understanding the other person.

We discriminate against others based on our judgments. We make choices for others based on what we believe and not on what is true for them. This can lead to prejudice, racism, and injustice, harming people of color and others that are disadvantaged. It gives more opportunity and wealth to those already in positions of privilege and power.

We can work to change the Cultural Patterns that we don't want anymore.



Exploring our Cultural Patterns



Our Cultural Patterns are unique to us. No one will have precisely the same Cultural Patterns, even members of our family. Because Cultural Patterns influence our identity, thinking and talking about them can be difficult. It can stir up resistant parts of ourselves or tender and vulnerable parts of ourselves. It is especially important to be sensitive when we are talking about Cultural Patterns with others.

How do I explore my Cultural Patterns?

- Begin by naming my Cultural Patterns. Explore which Cultural Patterns might be helping me and which might be limiting me.
- Look for and celebrate the Cultural Patterns that give me joy and belonging. Name and celebrate positive ethnic, religious, or family traditions that have been passed down to me.
- We all have blind spots. We simply can't see what we can't see. Cultural Patterns can be one of our greatest blind spots. They can be like fish not knowing they are in water.
- Recognize it is normal human behavior to have Cultural Patterns that judge and think less of others. These Patterns can lead to discrimination and excluding people.



Think about where my Cultural Patterns come from (and finish these sentences):

My favorite cultural or family celebrations or traditions are _____

I learned to trust and have confidence in myself from Cultural Patterns that came from my _____

When I love and trust others, it comes from family members or others like _____

When I judge or think less of other people, it probably comes from _____

My Protective Patterns were probably inherited from _____

What can I do?

- Notice what connections I see between my own Protective Patterns and the Cultural Patterns I inherited from my parents, grandparents, or other family members.
- Talk with family and friends about what Cultural Patterns are and how they show up in our families, community, religion, and politics.



Thank You FOR READING

This handout is from the *We Are Resilient™: Introductory Handout Set For Families* book by Dovetail Learning, which contains handouts on all the mindsets, patterns and skills in the We Are Resilient™ approach. Purchase the book and learn more at dovetaillearning.org.

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We Are Resilient™: Introductory Handout Set For Families

\$17.00

If you are looking for something to help families, this book provides tools to manage stress, strengthen relationships, and adapt to change. The book of 34 one-page introductory handouts explains the mindsets, patterns, and skills in simple language and provides real-world examples. The Protective Patterns handouts describe how each Protective Pattern might be showing up in our life and how it might be helping or hurting us. The Resilient Skills handouts describe when and how to practice the skills, how families can model and coach the skills, as well as ideas to think about and activities that can help us integrate the skill into our life.

Topics include:

- What is Resilience?
- How Can We Become More Resilient?
- What Are Resilient Mindsets?
- What Are Cultural Patterns?
- What are Protective Patterns?
- as well as a handout for each Resilient Mindset, Protective Pattern, Centering Skill, Connecting Skill, and Collaborating Skill.

Families, teachers, healthcare providers and others will appreciate these helpful handouts.



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