

February 6, 2024

Enhancing Your Client-Advocate Relationships

Navigating Literacy and Cultural Challenges When Serving Afghan Clients

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Today's Facilitator



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Today's Speakers



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Mary Ann McLean

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Ahmad Osmani

Case Manager, DOS

Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

Name

strategies for conducting efficient, culturally appropriate intakes for potential Afghan clients with low literacy levels

2

Communicate

more clearly with Afghan clients about the requirements for immigration benefits

3

Ask

linguistically accessible questions to gather information from Afghan clients in order to prepare their cases

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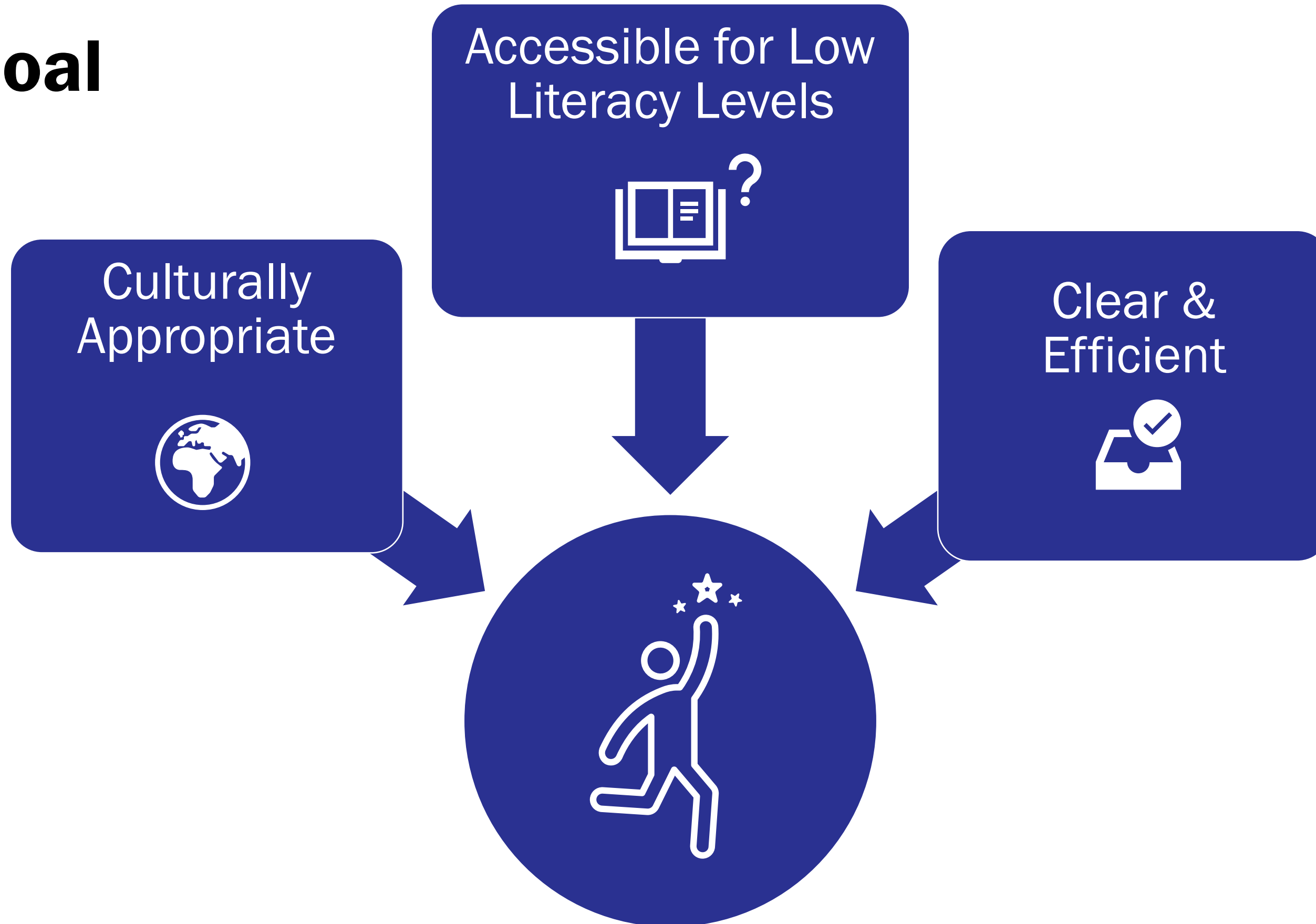
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What challenges have you faced when working with Afghan clients?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Our Goal





Afghan Culture



Photo Credit: Jonathan Wilson

Case Scenario #1

Farzad, an Afghan newcomer who entered the U.S. with humanitarian parole in August 2023, comes to your office for an intake.

While speaking with you, Farzad is unable to identify precise dates, such as dates of birth or when the Taliban came to search his house.

In what ways might this affect the preparation of the case?



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In what ways might this affect the preparation of the case?



Tips for Culturally Appropriate Intakes

- Where possible, match provider and client gender
- Follow cultural norms for shaking hands
- Ensure mutual understanding by summarizing meeting points and asking questions when uncertain
- Establish trust by emphasizing confidentiality



Linguistically Accessible



Case Scenario #2

You realize Farzad is likely eligible for asylum. When trying to get more details about his experiences in Afghanistan, he gives one-word answers. For example, when asked why he left Afghanistan, he said “the Taliban.”

What are other questions you can ask to draw out more information?



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Case Scenario #2: When you try to get more details about Farzad's experiences in Afghanistan, he gives one-word answers. For example, when asked why he left Afghanistan, he said "the Taliban."

What are other questions you can ask to draw out more information?



Tips for Linguistically Accessible Intakes

- Clients may understand questions but may give brief answers without background details
- Ask yourself: What background information do I need? Plan multiple routes of inquiry to gain necessary information
- Paraphrase to check for mutual understanding



Communicating Legal Processes



Case Scenario #3

You mention to Farzad that, based on this intake, you believe he is eligible for asylum. He asks you, “How do we do that?”

How do you answer him?



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How do you answer him?



Tips for Communicating Legal Requirements

- Start with basic description of what is being applied for
- Clearly explain what clients can/cannot do based on their status
- Describe what information is needed to support their application

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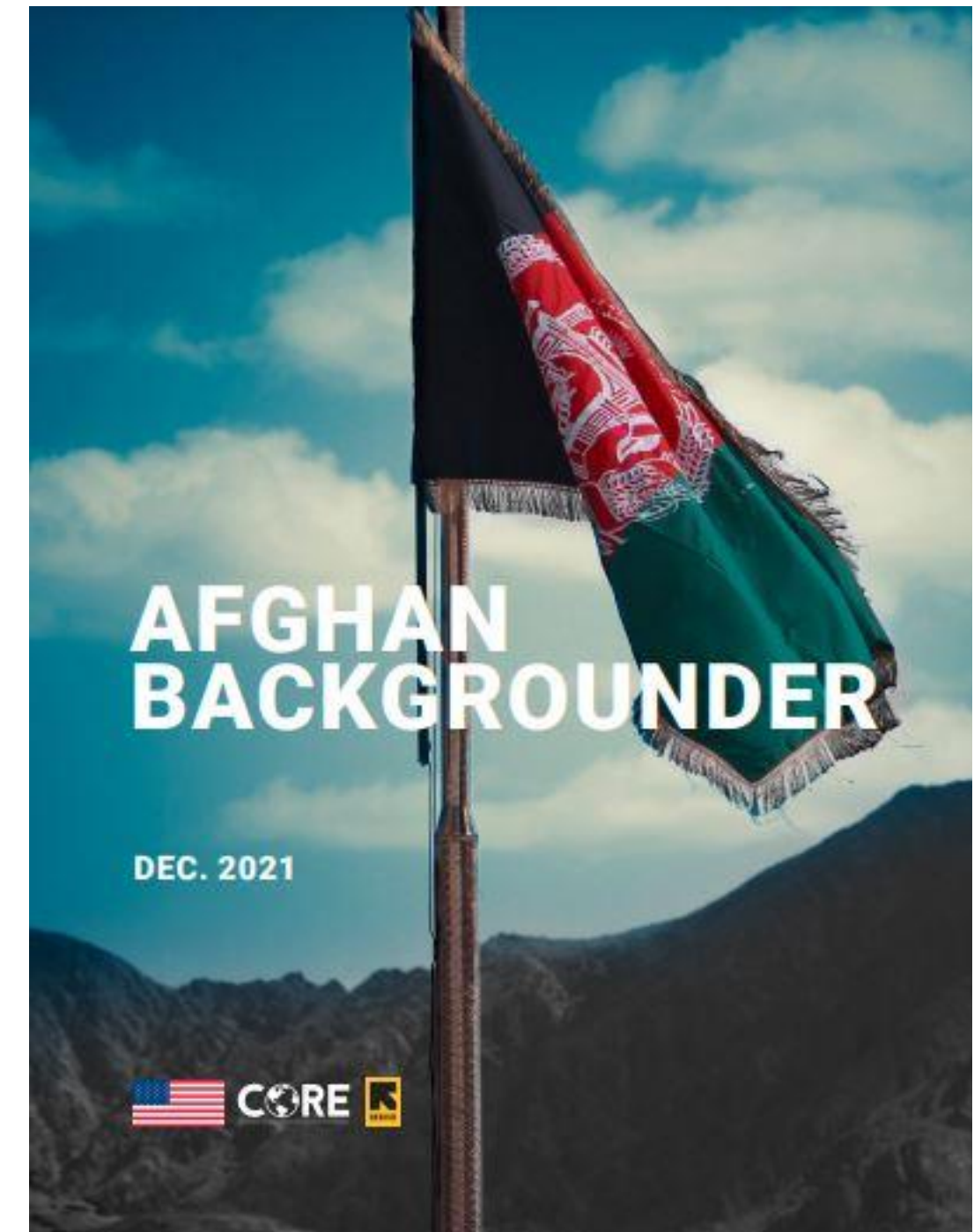
Ahmad Osmani

Case Manager, DOS



Recommended Resources

- **Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE):** [Afghan Cultural Backgrounder](#)
- **Switchboard:** [Five-Part Series: Cultural & Practical Considerations for Working with Afghan Clients](#)
- **Center for Immigration Studies:** [Immigrant Literacy - Self-Assessment vs. Reality](#)
- **IU School of Medicine:** [Information About Our Afghan Community](#)



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