

CULTURALLY RELATIVE CARE

- A person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture, rather than be judged against the criteria of others
- Key aspects of cultural relativity:
 - People are internally logical, to understand a behavior, you need to understand the logic behind it
 - There is no 'better' or 'worse' culture. Instead, "it's not good, it's not bad, it's just different".



Culturally relative health services are respectful of, and responsive to the health beliefs, practices, and needs of diverse patients. They can help close the gap in health outcomes among individuals by providing:

- Equitable, rather than equal, care
- Understandable care based on a clear exchange of information
- Respectful care where clients feel comfortable discussing their needs and expectations

Healthcare problems often result from hidden differences in actors' views. The first step in culturally relative care is to create a shared understanding.

HOW TO CREATE A SHARED UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN A PATIENT AND PROVIDER - QUESTIONS TO ASK AND ANSWER

1. Ask your patient questions
2. Provide your answers too
3. Use this information to create a shared understanding and treatment plan
4. Use this information to better address social needs

1. What do you think caused your problem?
2. Why do you think it started when it did?
3. What do you think your sickness does to you? (How does it work?)
4. How severe is your sickness? (Will it have a short or long course?)
5. What kind of treatment do you think you should receive?
6. What are the most important results you hope to receive from the treatment?
7. What are the chief problems your sickness has caused for you?
8. What do you fear most about your sickness?

Questions based on: Kleinman, A. (1978) Concepts and a model for the comparison of medical systems as cultural systems. *Social Science & Medicine. Part B: Medical Anthropology*. 1978. Vol. 12, pp. 85-93.

OTHER ACTIONS TO ENSURE CULTURALLY RELATIVE SERVICES

- Provide care in the patient's preferred language. Clear and easy to understand information should be given to help clients request language assistance.
 - Language assistance should include interpreters, translated written materials, signage and wayfinding, and auxiliary aids and services
 - Staff are fully aware of, and trained in, the use of language assistance services
 - Language assistance should be provided free of charge to clients. Clients should be aware of this when informed of assistance available.
- Recruit/retain a diverse workforce at all levels that reflects the demographics of the populations served
 - Advertise job opportunities using media that will reach diverse audiences
- Develop a system for gathering and incorporating feedback and suggestions from clients
 - Strategies to gather feedback should use communication methods clients are most comfortable with
 - Strategies should ensure client anonymity. Clients should be aware of this.
 - Provide notice in signage, translated materials, and other media about the rights of each individual to provide feedback, including the right to file a complaint or grievance
 - Develop a clear process to address instance of conflict or grievance that includes follow-up and ensures that the individual is contacted with a resolution and next steps
- Partner with local culturally diverse media to promote better understanding of available care and services, and how to access them

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

THIS IS ABOUT DOING WHAT WE ALREADY DO BETTER

IT IS HARD

IT IS MESSY

THERE WILL BE MISTAKES AND MISSTEPS

THERE IS NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL'

YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK

RESOURCES:

National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care: <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas>

A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice:

<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdfs/EnhancedCLASStandardsBlueprint.pdf>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Patient-Centered Care:

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/collections/patient-centered-care.html>

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