

Improving Communication through Cultural Awareness

Cultural Competence is refers a life-long process to learning to provide effective medical care to persons of varied backgrounds through use of appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors and includes:

- Awareness of one's own cultural worldview or bias
- Attitude toward cultural differences;
- Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews; and
- Cross-cultural skills

There is much evidence showing the multifactoral connection of health disparities and culture –

- Sociocultural, genetic, economic and system factors
- Patients perception of the health care system
- Quality of patient outcomes

Diversity - the way people are different varies based on:

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| • language | • culture | • literacy |
| • race | • religion | • age |
| • ability | • socioeconomic | • education |
| • gender | • sexual orientation | • weight |

Why is valuing diversity important in healthcare?

- Culture affects how patients perceive the healthcare system. Not recognizing and respecting cultural differences can adversely affect the quality of patient outcomes.
- Cultural and other differences can lead to longer visits, delays in care, poor communication and incomplete consents as well as decreased patient satisfaction and compliance
- We must create an environment where no one is left out. Diversity is changing the demands of health care. Technology and resources can help us handle these challenges.
- Health literacy (the ability to read, understand and use health information) impacts all patients

Strategies to decrease stereotyping and improve patient satisfaction, adherence, and ultimately outcomes.

- ✓ *Awareness* - bias can be detected by measuring an individual's embedded associations of positive and negative traits. Awareness leads to improved care. <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- ✓ *Self-reflection* – contemplating assumptions using case study
- ✓ *Individualization of care* rather than categorization or stereotype
- ✓ *Empathy* for the patient's perspective and life experience
- ✓ *Partnership building* – seeing each other on the same team

Resources are available – see our *Health Sciences Library website* containing resources for:

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| ▪ Effective Health Communication | ▪ Cultural Diversity |
| ▪ Patient Education | ▪ Health Disparities |
| ▪ Patient Safety | ▪ Ethics and Moral Distress |

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/library/>



*Culture Clues*TM, created by the University of Washington Medical Center, are tip sheets for clinicians, designed to increase awareness about concepts and preferences of patients from the diverse cultures including: African American, Albanian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Chinese, Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Korean, Latino, Russian, Somali, Vietnamese. End-of-Life Care: Latino, Russian, Vietnamese.

Available from: <http://depts.washington.edu/pfes/cultureclues.html>

The CIA World Fact Book at www.cia.gov provides a good overview of the geography, people, economy, government, etc. of every country in the world.

Medical Information in other languages (limited English proficiency)

<http://www.healthinfotranslations.com>

www.medlineplus.gov or www.medlineplus.gov/salud (Spanish)

<http://library.med.utah.edu/24languages/>

www.healthyroadsmedia.org

Easy to read (low literacy) medical information

www.familydoctor.org

www.medlineplus.org

www.kidshealth.org

Patient Involvement tools –

- Ask me three – Questions patients can use to help them better understand their health
 - Available from <http://www.npsf.org/askme3/>
- Newest Vital sign – An evidence based method of assessing a patient’s literacy level
 - Available from <http://www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com>

There are numerous on-line continuing education opportunities including:

<http://www.thinkculturalhealth.org/> is a case-based three-part very detailed curriculum designed to help clinicians better meet the cultural and linguistic needs of an increasingly diverse patient population. It is sponsored by the Office of Minority Health (OMH) and provides nine contact hours.

<http://www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training.htm> is called "Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency." It is sponsored by the Health and Human Resources Administration (HRSA). It contains five modules with the option of taking the test to receive contact hours.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewprogram/12540?src=mp&spon24&uac=28159BZ> “Cultural Competency in Healthcare: A Clinical Review and Video Vignettes From the National Medical Association.” 2.0 hours of CME/CE credits.

<http://www.nynj-phtc.org/cc/default.cfm> is a virtual conference sponsored by the New York New Jersey Public Health Training Center providing 2.5 contact hours.

<http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/> Health literacy and multicultural information and activities to use with patients to help address health literacy issues.