

Cultural Competency Check Card

Basic communication tool to ensure cultural competency

Key Questions to Establish a Basis of Understanding of Illness

- What do you think is causing these symptoms?
- Do any of your family or friends also have this problem?
- What have you tried to get better? i.e. medicines, home remedies, etc (to ascertain if patient is using alternative treatments).
- Have you talked to family, friends, religious networks or other people about the problem.
- What kind of treatment are you seeking from me?
- What do you expect to happen as a result of the treatment?
- Who would you like to be part of this process (i.e. family, friends, interpreters, healers, community members)?
- Do you understand why you have to come back to the hospital (if follow-up is needed)?
- Do you agree with the diagnosis and suggestions?
- How is this condition viewed in your culture or religion?



Alberta **Children's** Hospital

Cross Cultural Dialogue Enhancement

A culturally competent clinician strives for impartiality, understanding, empathy, patience, respect and trust.

Speak clearly

- Pitch of voice, rhythm, rate of speech, emphasis, and emotions are all aspects of language that vary among cultures.
- Ensure that the patient understands what you are communicating.
- Offer to write instructions down or repeat them using a trained interpreter.
- Avoid jargon, expressions and complicated medical terminology.

Non – verbal communication

- The meaning of facial expressions and silence varies across cultures.
- Avoiding direct eye contact is a sign of respect in some cultures. Smiling may be a sign of agreement, apprehension or showing of politeness.
- Silence could be used to convey non-acceptance or disapproval, as well as agreement.

Respect different health beliefs

- Do not hesitate to show interest in a cross-cultural exchange of information, i.e. "I am interested to know more about how you view this illness in your family" instead of avoiding the subject or completely ignoring it.

Use all available resources, including:

Child Health Diversity Program 403-955-7742

Interpretation and Translation Services 403-955-1199

Enhancing Cultural Competency: A Resource Kit for Health Care Professionals

Adapted from Cultural Awareness Tool - Understanding Cultural Diversity in Mental Health, 2002 West Australian Trans-Cultural Mental Health Centre, Multi Cultural Mental Health, Australia. For further information contact Linda Kongnetiman at 403-955-7742.