

Cross-Culturally Responsive Care:

Key Questions to Understand the Cultural Context of an Encounter



Cultural Context: Seeing the individual in each encounter

- Please tell me about where your family comes from originally and where was your child born?
- Where have you lived most recently?
- Is there a religion/spiritual practice important to you?
- What is your first language?
- We have an interpreter available to help **me** for free. Is it OK for the interpreter to join us?

Beliefs About What Causes Illness

- What do you believe caused this problem/illness?
- How do you think this problem has affected your child?
- What worries you the most about this problem/illness?

Family Dynamics and Decision Making

- Who helps you make decisions about health care for your child?
- Who else have you asked for help/advice about the problem?
- Is there anyone else that we should include to help in decision-making?
- Who should be told about the doctor's diagnosis? (Would you give bad news to the patient directly?)
- Will anyone else be involved in follow-up care (like siblings, grandparents, etc.)?

Beliefs About Seeking Treatment & Using Remedies/Medicines

- What medicines, remedies or treatments have you tried/want to try? Sometimes people receive remedies from their home country to try. Have you tried any?
- Have you consulted a healer from your community (curandero, etc.)?

Understanding/Acceptance

- Do you have any questions about what you have heard today?
- I want to be sure I have explained it well enough. Please tell me what you understand about your child's illness/problem and how we are going to treat it.
- Is there anything that will make it difficult for you to follow the treatment plan?
- Do you have any concerns about this plan or the medications?

Special situations

Modesty Concerns

- I would like to examine you now. People in families from countries or cultures outside of the US often have important feelings they want their doctor to know about being examined. Is there anything you would like me to know before I examine you?
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Death and Dying

- What are the family traditions and rituals used when coping with dying, for the deceased person's body, the final arrangements for the body and honoring the death?
- Who is the main person to contact for the family during this time when a family member passes away?
- What else should we know in order to help the family and the child through this difficult time?