An Introduction to Cultural Competence

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The Diversity of the US Population (2010 Census)

- Nearly 1 in 12 US residents is foreign-born.
- 19.4% of US residents 5 years & over speaks language other than English at home.
- The Latino population represents 15% of the total population = 45.5 million Latinos.
Dane County’s Population

- 10.3% of population (5y & over) speaks a language other than English at home
- Latinos:
  - 21,550 (4.6% of the total population)
  - Community estimates: 45,000
- Asian:
  - 18,384 (4% of the total population)
  - Community estimates: 20-25,000
- Some of the languages spoken in Wisconsin: Spanish, Hmong, Russian, Albanian, Laotian, Khmer, Korean, Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, Somali.
What is “Culture”? 

A system of shared beliefs, values, customs, and rules 
- Provides security, integrity, belonging 
- Constantly evolving 
- Determines 
  ✓ Meaning of illness and death and their causes 
  ✓ What role each family member plays 
  ✓ How grief and emotions are demonstrated 
  ✓ What rituals are important
Why is it important?

- Build Trust
- Gather more accurate info
- Better care and outcomes
The Many Facets of Culture & Diversity

- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Physical attributes
- Religious Beliefs
- Marital Status
- Military
- Work Background
- Education
- Income
- Parental Status
- Geography
Culture...

Everybody has it...understanding yours helps you respect others

- Identify your cultural & family values
- Be aware of your personal biases & assumptions
- Challenge yourself in identifying your own values as the “norm”
What is Cultural Competence?

Taking into account patient’s spiritual, emotional, cultural, social and psychological issues to provide patient-centered care.
Generalizations vs. Stereotypes

- **A generalization is a beginning point.** It indicates common trends, but further information is needed to ascertain whether a statement applies to a particular individual. Generalizations may be inaccurate when applied to specific individuals, but, when applied broadly, they can indicate common behaviors and shared beliefs.

- **A stereotype is an ending point.** No attempt is made to learn whether a statement fits the individual in question. Stereotyping patients can have negative results.

For example, if you are seeing Mai, a Hmong patient, and think, “Mai is Hmong; she must have a large family,” you are stereotypes her. But if you think: “In the Hmong community families are often large families; I wonders whether Mai has a large family, and then ask Mai how many people are in her family,” you are using a generalization.

Source: UHC-Geri Ann Galanti
Bridging the Language Gap

- Use over the phone interpreter service
- Use truly bilingual staff
- Avoid depending on minor children, relatives or friends to interpret
  - Minor children should not have to assume the task of interpreting.
  - Relatives & friends are not neutral: they have their own opinion about the care that the patient is receiving and therefore make very poor interpreters.
Focusing on some of Dane County’s ethnic & religious communities

3 main ethnic groups
- The Latino community
- The Southeast Asian community
- The Russian community

2 religious groups
- Muslims
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
Hispanic/Latino: Many countries, all races, one ethnic group
The Latino Community

- A very diverse community
- Close ties with family & friends: medical decisions often involve them
- A wide range of educational backgrounds
- Fear of authority due to immigration status => maybe difficult to obtain correct vital information
4 Mexican Folk Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Susto</strong></td>
<td>Traumatic or frightening experience, ie a startle, witnessing death</td>
<td>Anxiety, irritability, insomnia</td>
<td>Ranges from use of herbal teas to a ritual cleansing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empacho</strong></td>
<td>Something gets stuck in the intestines, causing blockage</td>
<td>Diarrhea, indigestion, constipation</td>
<td>Herbal teas &amp; massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caida de mollera</strong></td>
<td>Occurs in infants before the fontanelle closes</td>
<td>Crying, loss of appetite, fever, diarrhea</td>
<td>Pushing up the palate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mal de ojo</strong></td>
<td>“Piercing” look (mostly affects children)</td>
<td>Fussiness, loss of appetite, insomnia</td>
<td>Protection with amulets, use of curanderos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Southeast Asian Community

- Hmong is the largest Southeast Asian community in the Madison area
- Patriarchal/clan structure
- Health beliefs & practices
  - Physical illnesses => use of herbalists
  - Illnesses of the soul => shaman is consulted
  - Use of cupping, pinching & coining
  - Blood is finite and not replaceable
The Russian Community

- Mostly elderly => multiple health problems
- Suffered persecution (Jewish)
- Highly educated
- Used to socialized medicine => confusion about & mistrust of US medical system
- Mental illness: very negative connotation. Former Soviet Union mental institution were under KGB & political prisoners were often kept in mental clinics.
Muslims

- Modesty: women should be touched & examined by female providers whenever possible
- Fasting during Ramadan: no food, no liquids or sexual activity from dawn to sunset
  - Exempt: mentally ill, children, elderly & chronically ill
  - Need to make up for it later: Pregnant & nursing women, menstruating women, the sick & travellers
- Death: body needs to be washed ASAP, wrapped in clean white cloth & buried (preferably the same day)
- No religious prohibition against organ donation
Jehovah’s Witnesses

- **Advance Medical Directives:** no blood transfusions (non-blood volume expanders are acceptable) Minor children might have an ID card indicating parents are Jehovah’s Witnesses

- Organ/tissue donation are acceptable to some

- No special ritual for the sick or the dying
Cultural Competence Pointers

- Check your own pulse
- Show empathy, curiosity and respect
- Be sensitive to non-verbal language
- Ask questions and listen to the answers
  - What do you think caused your problem?
  - What worries you the most?
  - How would you like to see this situation resolved?
  - Who do you like to have involved in decision making?
- Address comments/issues if raised: do not ignore or feed into stereotypes
- Experience other cultures

Sources: Kleinman questions
Management Sciences for Health/Dr. Like
What is culturally competent health care?

- Respect & understanding of patients differing health beliefs by
  - becoming aware of your own culture & biases
  - becoming comfortable with differences
  - respecting & valuing the values & beliefs of others
  - thinking flexibly
  - behaving flexibly

**EMPATHY, CURIOSITY & RESPECT**