

Communicating with Patients in a Culturally Sensitive Way



Embrace Cultural Humility

Communicating with cultural humility helps recognize power dynamics and imbalances (real or perceived) with patients and families. Showing your clinic and staff are working to understand cultural differences and reflect on how you can make a patient most comfortable will help to establish trust with your patients.



Review Your Clinic Practices

Some helpful questions to review with your team: Do they foster a welcoming environment for everyone? Are patients being asked which pronouns they would like used when being addressed? Are patients being asked about their background, practices, religion, and culture to avoid stereotyping? Ask preferred language, some of these questions may not necessarily be asked at a first visit unless rapport has been established.



Discuss Patient-Centered Care

Get patient input about collaborating in health care decisions. Are there cultural practices or herbal remedies that they have already tried—and what was the result? Ask about religious or cultural traditions that may affect choice of treatment.



Get to Know New Communities

Take time to understand the newly arrived communities or communities new to your clinic. Some questions you can ask to help ensure you're meeting these communities where they are: What are the disparities, problems, and concerns in the communities you serve? What are the most common ethnicities and languages spoken? Do you or any other staff members reflect the community you serve? What are the strengths of the communities you are working in? Consider stressors that may exist for these communities.

Source: Stubbe, Dorothy Psychiatry Online (2020, January 24). Practicing Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility in the Care of Diverse Patients

