

Cultural Competency: Clinical Practice Components

Awareness of Values/Attitudes

Awareness of Own Cultural Values and Biases

- Aware of and sensitive to own cultural heritage and self-identity with relation to ethnic and cultural definitions
- Aware of own background/experiences, values and biases and how they influence psychological processes and affect clients
- Able to recognize the limits of own cultural competency and expertise
- Acknowledges and is aware of own racist, sexist, heterosexist, or other detrimental attitudes, beliefs, and feelings
- Aware of differences between self and clients in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation and other socio demographic variables
- Aware of cultural transference and counter transference and defensive reactions
- Engage in critical self-reflection regarding personal identity and attitudes to other groups, self-monitoring, and self-correction
- Understanding of how oppression and discrimination personally affect oneself and one's work
- Valuing and respecting humility and willingness to learn from others; open mindedness

Awareness of Client's Worldview

- Values/respects differences, diversity among and within a cultural group
- Respects religious and/or spiritual beliefs of others
- Respects indigenous helping practices and community networks
- Values bilingualism
- Can be nonjudgmental

Knowledge

Culture-Specific (Etic)

- Possesses specific knowledge of normative values/beliefs about illness, normality/ abnormality help-seeking behaviour, culturally unique symptoms and interventions, interactional styles, and worldview of main cultural groups with which one is working
- Possesses specific knowledge about cultures one serves to anticipate barriers to access
- Possesses enough knowledge about cultures ones serves to avoid breaching client's taboos, health care beliefs, or rules of interaction
- Knowledge of service resources for culturally-appropriate care

Culture-Generic (Etic)

- Aware of institutional barriers that prevent some diverse clients from using mental health services
- Knowledge of history, experience and consequences of oppression, prejudice, discrimination, racism, and structural inequalities
- Knowledge of the heterogeneity that exists within & across cultural groups and the need to avoid overgeneralization and negative stereotyping
- Good understanding of socio-political system and its treatment of marginalized groups in society immigration, poverty, powerlessness, etc.
- Knows how discriminatory practices operate at a community level.
- Knowledge of own social impact and communication styles
- Knowledge about personal dynamics of acculturation, ethnic identity development and cultural identification
- Understanding the process by which clients internalize oppression, what it looks like, and some outcomes related to powerlessness

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Skills

Pre-Engagement

- Help-seeking pathways

Engagement

- Establishing rapport and therapeutic alliance in culturally congruent way considering culture-bound interpretations of verbal and nonverbal cues, personal space, and eye contact
- Educates clients in the nature of one's practice
- Cultural empathy
- Establish goals collaboratively
- Ability to inspire hope, maintain a strengths perspective focussing on resilience.

Assessment/Feedback

- Ability to assess issues as client's level of acculturation, acculturative stress, and stage of gay or lesbian identity development
- Ability to modify standardized tests/assessment tools and qualify conclusions appropriately (incl. Empirical support where available) for use with identified groups, with consideration of their inherent cultural biases
- Conduct assessments through open-ended questions to elicit client's perceptions and beliefs, concepts/definitions of health, disease, health care utilization and healing; Elicit Explanatory Model of Illness (Kleinman)
- Integrate physical, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions in assessing problems and strengths
- Use of cultural consultant
- Assessment of family dynamics and support systems
- Knowledge of culture-specific diagnostic categories
- Ability to ascertain effects of therapist-client language difference (incl. Use of translators) on assessment and intervention

Treatment/Intervention

- Ability to use cross-cultural communication skills—send and receive and generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal responses, use patience, listening and tolerance of silence to leave space for client
- Ability to problem-solve based on client perspective
- Can seek consultation with traditional healers or religious/spiritual leaders and practitioners in treatment of culturally diverse clients
- Ability to work with interpreters
- Ability to empower client and families through community-based organizations
- Confidence in one's ability to provide quality care to patients of diverse cultures
- Ability to negotiate interventions based on indigenous and mainstream perspectives and strategies
- Advocate for client-centred care
- Support clients in identity pride, building on strengths and encouraging self-definition

Closure/Discharge

- Ability to define appropriate circumstances in which should re-consult with client and family members.