

Issues and Opportunities in the Delivery of Health Care Across Cultural and Linguistic Barriers

Presented by

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Objective

- To provide families with knowledge and skills to help when communicating with health care providers.
- To help families understand important information to share with health care providers when responding to the health care system.
- To help families understand important cultural considerations when responding to the health care providers.

Why Consider Culture?

- Helps us to understand the values, attitudes and behaviors of patients
- Helps us to avoid stereotypes and biases that can undermine efforts to deliver equitable care to patients
- Plays a critical role in the development and delivery of services that are responsive to the needs of the patient
- Helps to improve the quality of services and health care outcomes

What causes Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health?

- Social Determinants such as poverty, environment, health practices, etc.
- Access to Care – no providers, transportation, etc.
- Health Care – systems and clinical decision making

Cultural competence can help
health care providers to better meet
the needs of diverse
populations.

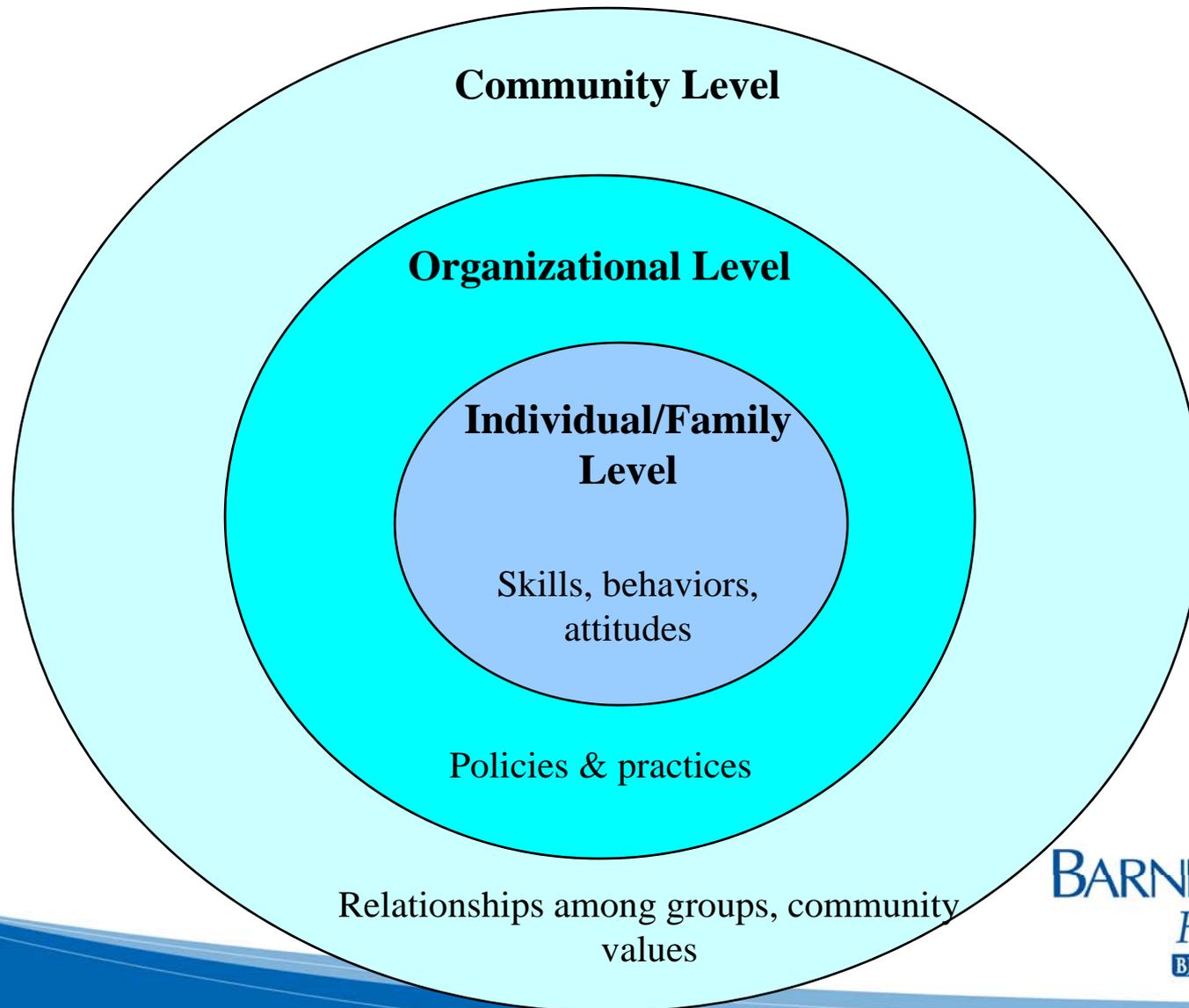
We teach health care providers cultural competence to

- Assist them to understand and respond effectively to the cultural and linguistic needs brought by patients during the health care encounter.
- Develop their skills when working with diverse patient populations resulting in improved interactions with patient/clients in the context of difference.

Aspects of Cultural Competence

- Building Awareness of others
- Understanding personal biases and stereotypes
- Acquiring skills, using tools and resources to enable culturally congruent behaviors
- Adapting policies and procedures to create a culturally competent environment

Trans-Cultural Competence



Why do health care providers need to be culturally competent

- Reduce long-standing disparities in the physical and mental health status of people from differing racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Respond to current and projected demographic changes in the United States
- Comply with legislative, regulatory and accreditation mandates

The value of communication

- Communication is essential for effective delivery of health care
- When there is a mismatch between a provider's level of communication and the patient's level of understanding health care can not be effectively delivered
- This misunderstanding can lead to missed appointments, misuse of prescribed medicines or treatment, even poor medical outcomes

Commonly used terms

Medical Terms	What they mean
Analgesic	Pain Killer
Anti-inflammatory	Lessens swelling and irritation
Benign	Not Cancer
Carcinoma	Cancer
Cardiac problem	Heart problem
Cellulitis	Skin infection
Enlarge	Get bigger
Heart failure	Heart isn't pumping well
Infertility	Can't get pregnant
Lateral	Outside
Lipids	Fats in the blood
Menopause	Stopping periods, change of life
Menses	Period

Commonly used terms

Medical Terms	What they mean
Monitor	Keep track of, keep an eye on
Oral	By mouth
Osteoporosis	Soft, breakable bones
Referral	Send to another doctor
Terminal	Going to die
Toxic	Poisonous

Commonly used terms

Medical Terms	What they mean
Cardiologist	Heart doctor
Catheterize bladder	Put a tube where your urine comes out
Chemotherapy	Drugs to treat cancer
Echocardiogram	Pictures of your heart
Fractured femur	Broken hip/leg
GI Specialist	Stomach doctor
Malignancy	Cancer
Metastatic	Cancer has spread
Noninvasive	Without surgery or needles or cutting skin
Pulmonary embolism	Blood clot in your lung
Radiology department	X-ray department
Hypertension	High blood pressure
Tap your knee	Put a needle in your knee and remove fluid

Get the most from your doctor visit

- Prepare a list of questions you want to ask the doctor and bring it with you to your visit.
- Each time you visit the doctor, bring all of your prescription and over-the-counter medicines with you.
- If possible bring a friend or family member who can help you to write down and remember what the doctor says. You can refer to these notes later at home.
- Tell your doctor about any new or different symptoms you are having.
- Before you leave your doctor's office, make sure you understand what the doctor has told you.
- If you have questions about your doctor visit when you get home, call the office and ask.

Checklist for patient understanding

- What is my (or my family member's) main problem?
- What do I need to do (about the problem)?
- Why is it important for me to do this?
- Where do I go for tests, medicine, and appointments?

Checklist continued

- How should I take my medicine
 - When do I take it?
 - What will it do?
 - How do I know if it is working?
 - Whom and when do I call if I have questions?

Checklist continued

- Other instructions
 - What to do?
 - How to do it?
 - When to do it?

Checklist continued

- Next steps
 - When do I need to be seen again?
 - Do I have another appointment? If so, what is the date and time of the appointment?
 - Are there phone numbers to call?

Things you need to tell your provider

- What do you think caused your problem?
- Why do you think it started when it did?
- What does your sickness do to you? How does it work?
- How severe is it? How long do you think you will have it?
- What do you fear most about your illness?
- What are the main problems your sickness has caused you?
- Anyone else with the same problem?
- What have you done so far to treat your illness.
- What treatments do you think you should receive?
- What important results do you hope to receive from the treatment?
- Who else can help you?

Components & Levels of Culture

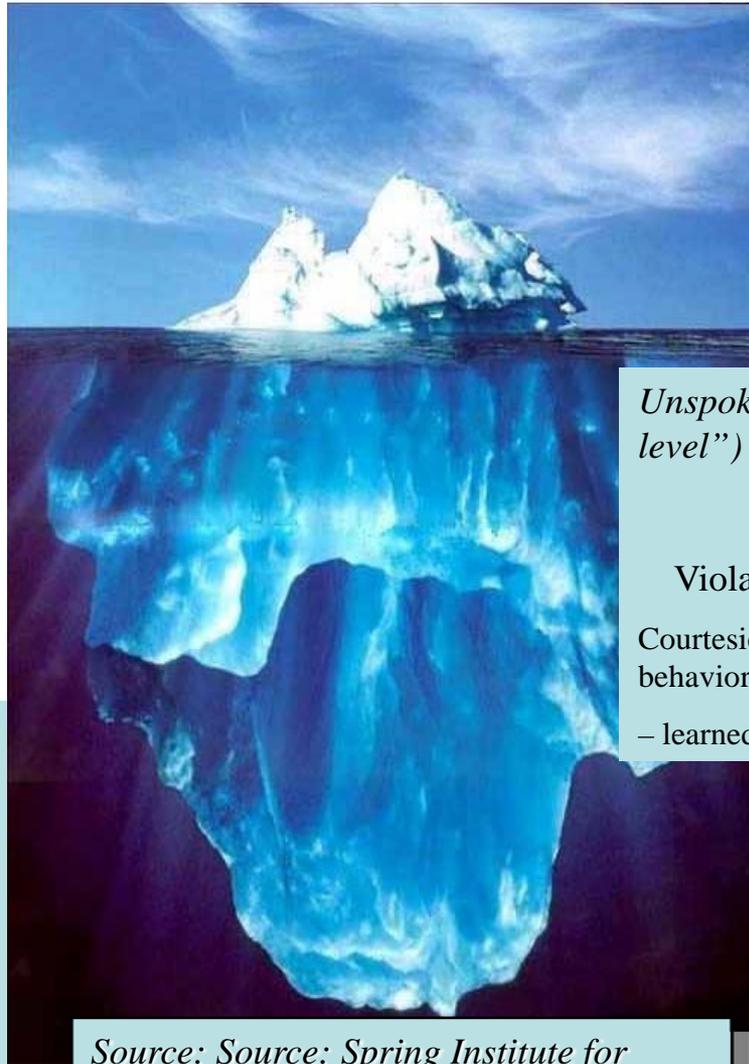
Visible Culture (“above sea level”)

Emotional loading low

Few misunderstandings

Food, music, language, architecture

- learned cognitively



Unspoken Rules (“partly below sea level”)

Emotional loading high

Violations produce negative feelings

Courtesies, use of time, punctuality, eating behaviors, social interactions, shopping

– learned by trial & error

Unconscious Rules (“completely below sea level”)

Emotional loading intense

Violations taken personally, affecting relationships

Touching, space, body contact, tone of voice, non-verbal communication – learned through modeling, usu. in early childhood

Source: Source: Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning

Why We Should Care about Cultural Differences?

When we don't know they can ...

- lead to frustration
- create distrust
- impede treatment/actions
- adversely affect clinical outcomes

Variations in communication

It's Not Just Words

What is your conversational style? Does any of the descriptions below apply to you?

1. Silence means respect.
2. Silence means you are acknowledging the listener or you heard the speaker.
3. Saying “no” may be rude.
4. Silence may mean no.
5. When you answer questions you may be blunt and to the point.
6. When you answer you may tell a story to give the answer.
7. When you are angry you may speak loudly or repetitively.
8. When you are angry you may simply emphasize something very strongly.

In your culture do you have rules about touching?

1. Are there cultural prohibitions against touching certain parts of the body – the head, the feet before the head?
2. Is physical contact among those of the same gender such as greeting with an embrace or walking hand-in-hand, more appropriate than among unrelated persons of the opposite gender?
3. Is examination of the genitals by someone of the opposite gender may be problematic for you?

Variations in communication

In your culture do you have rules about eye contact?

1. Is avoiding direct eye contact a sign of respect? – an effort not to invade one's privacy, or may be appropriate behavior b/w genders?
2. Is eye contact a sign of strength?

In your culture does personal space have significance?

1. Is standing too close perceived as “aggressive”?
2. Is backing off perceived as “distant” or “cold”?

In your culture what kind of value do you have for time?

1. Is clock time valued more highly than personal?
2. Is greater value placed on interacting with people and completing interpersonal encounters?
3. How important is being “on time”?

Other considerations

1. In your culture do you have practices or rules about birth?
2. In your culture do you have practices or rules about how to handle your baby after birth?
3. In your culture do you have practices or rules about death?
4. In your culture do have rules about who should be told your health information?
5. In your culture are there health practices that must be followed?

Conclusion

1. Communication is critical to your ability to get good health care.
2. If you don't understand your doctor or nurse, tell them.
3. Ask them to use examples or pictures to make it more clear to you.
4. Tell the doctor everything you know about your illness so they can have the full story. This will result in you getting the right tests ordered and perhaps the right diagnosis for your problem/

Questions?

Thank you,
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