



Cultural Awareness Questions

When dealing with clients from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds it is important to discover their beliefs about their illness. These beliefs are important - they can affect all aspects of care, from understanding the cause of ill health to compliance with treatment. They may also help explain the client's behaviours & attitudes & those of their family. These questions will help you discover how your client understands their illness.

- Can you tell me about what brought you here? What do you call this problem ? (***) Use the client's words for their problem)
- When do you think it started, and why did it start then?
- What are the main problems it is causing you?
- How would you usually manage this *** to make it go away or make it a bit better ?
- How have you been coping so far with this *** ?
- In your culture – is what you have considered 'severe'? What's the worst problem you think you can have from this condition ?
- What type of help would you be expecting from me/our service?
- What are your main goals for treatment?
- Are there people in your community who are aware that you have this condition? What do they think caused this ***? Are they doing anything to help you ?

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Language Competency Tips

When dealing with people from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds, it is important to communicate clearly. Encourage clients to use their preferred language, especially in stressful situations. If the client requests an interpreter or has inadequate language skills, a professional interpreter should be used. These tips will help you discover how well a client speaks and understands English.

- Ask questions the person has to answer in a sentence. Avoid questions that can be answered by 'yes' or 'no'. What? Why? How? When? questions are best.
- Ask the person to repeat in their own words some information you have just given them.
- If the person can't answer your questions easily, or can't repeat back information accurately, use **a professional interpreter**.
Telephone Interpreter Service 13 14 50

Remember!

- Asking people their name, address, date of birth and other predictable information is not an adequate test of English skills.
- Having social conversation skills in English does not always mean a person understands complex information in spoken or written English.
- Verbal skills do not always equate with reading and writing skills. Remember the need to tell people their rights and get informed consent.
- People often lose their second language skills in stressful situations, for example, when talking about mental health problems or seeking help.

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