

Exercise on Cultural Factors & Variations

Cultural Factor	Cultural Variation	My Cultural Orientation
View of Mental Health Issues		
Holistic Health View	Does culture recognize MH issues or consider it part of holistic mind/body?	
Attribution	Source of MH issue? Biological, magical, psychosocial or punishment?	
Degree of Stigma	Stigma reduces access to MH care. How and intensity can vary by culture.	
Social Positioning		
Discrimination	How and in what form is discrimination experienced? Intentional exclusion?	
Equality	Different roles of people in culture? Consider equal treatment vs status.	
Stereotypes	Consider both provider's and consumer's preconceived notions of other's cultures. Is there a mismatch?	
Acculturation	How acculturated can impact attitudes toward seeking/accepting services.	
Formality	How do people want to be addressed?	
Lifestyle		
Housing	Many generations reside together? Consider the dynamics of families based on where they live.	
Education	Consider the value their culture places on education and attainment.	
Social Class	Western culture income mainly dictates social class. In others may be level of education, social connectedness and/or family history.	
Development through life	Norms for life-cycle events may differ across cultures.	
Age	Cultural norms & beliefs about age? Some value elders, some value youth.	
Gender	Some cultures prescribe gender roles	
Dating	Dating limited or non-existent, or open and up to the individual	
Marriage	Arranged or semi-arranged? Monogamy, polygamy or single valued?	
Divorce	Acceptable or not? Physically separate without formality of divorce?	
Sexual activity	Discussions and activity open or taboo?	
Sexual orientation	Attitudes about sexual orientation vary across cultures.	

Based on Table from: Samuels, J. Schudrich, W., & Altschul, D. (2009). *Toolkit for modifying evidence-based practice to increase cultural competence*. Orangeburg, NY: Research Foundation for Mental Health. Pp.19-21 <http://ssrdqst.rfmh.org/cecc/>. Karin Lettau, MS

Exercise on Cultural Factors & Variations

Cultural Factor	Cultural Variation	My Cultural Orientation
Health		
Use of drugs and alcohol	Beliefs about appropriateness, amounts patterns? Abstinence, 12 Step, or harm-reduction	
Specific health issues	Prevalence of health issue by culture?	
Family/Kin Relationships		
Family constellation	Nuclear family, extended family, or close non-family members?	
Disciplining children	Norms and style of discipline?	
Power in relationships	Family member has more power based on age, gender, role or other factor	
Communication	Style of communication?	
World View		
Religion/ Spirituality	Many cultural groups seek first help for MH issues from clergy	
Religion/religious practice	Family history of religion/practices impact person's daily life?	
Views of human nature	Belief that people are basically good or inherently bad	
Views of interconnectedness of people	Autonomous nature of human action or interconnected & responsible for promoting social good?	
Views of nature	Believe humans should conquer nature or live in harmony with nature?	
Concepts of self -Individuality vs. Collectivism	Identify primarily with self or are individual needs/desires are typically subordinate to those of the family or community?	
Control -Locus of control	External or internal?	
Other		
Outlook	Optimism or pessimism or realism?	
Time & managing time	Belief time is not of concern, events unfold slowly can affect scheduling.	
Religion/ Spirituality	Many cultural groups seek first help for MH issues from clergy	
Religion/religious practice	Family history of religion/practices impact person's daily life?	