

## **Working in a Cross Cultural Environment: A Look into the Hispanic Culture**

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## **Faculty**

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## **Objectives**

- Define cultural competence.
- Identify the communication tool by which cultural meaning and its complexity is understood.

## **Objectives**

- List three Hispanic cultural characteristics that will influence the way they perceive the health messages you want to convey.
- Identify two ways to improve communication between the Hispanic client and the health care provider.

## **Culture**

- "Culture encompasses the set of beliefs, moral values, traditions, language and law (rules of behavior) that are held common by a nation, a community or a defined group of people."

## **Culture**

- "Culturally determined characteristics include: the language spoken at home, religious observances, customs, acceptance of gender roles and occupations, dietary practices, intellectual, artistic and leisure time pursuits."

## **Culture**

- “Cultural competence is the set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in an institution, agency, or among a group of individuals, that allows them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.”

## **Immigration Trends**

- The Hispanic population migrating to the United States differs in
  - Racial ancestry
  - National origin
  - Area of residence
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Education

## **Immigration Trends**

- The Hispanic population migrating to the United States differs in
  - Patterns of migration
  - Immigration
  - Languages
  - Cultural values and beliefs

## **The Hispanic Culture**

- Hispanic or Latino?
  - Terms can be interchanged
  - Hispanic used by the U.S. Government to distinguish those who come from a Spanish speaking country
  - Latino refers to individuals from Latin America

## **The Hispanic Culture**

- Some cultural characteristics of Hispanics include
  - Language
  - Family
  - Respect
  - Personal relationships
  - Trust and spirit

## **Language**

- The communication tool by which cultural meaning and complexity are understood
- The language we speak gives us identity and defines our nationality

### **Language**

- Spanish is the main secondary language spoken in the U.S.
- It is the language spoken in Hispanic homes with its different accents, idioms and meanings

### **Language**

- Language influences the effectiveness of communicating health beliefs, core values and description of symptoms
- Your primary language provides the ability to reflect culture

### **Language**

- Overcoming language barriers
  - Recruit, retain and compensate bilingual/bicultural staff
  - Avoid using friends, family, or children for medical interpretation
  - Foster medical interpreter training
  - Train providers to work with interpreters

### **Language**

- Overcoming language barriers
  - Offer Spanish language courses, including medical Spanish, to the staff
  - Have access to language banks and phone based interpreter services
  - Written translations

### **Family**

- It is critical in the care of a Hispanic patient to allow the involvement of the family
  - The Hispanic family is composed of not only parents and siblings, but also grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and close friends

### **Family**

- It is critical in the care of a Hispanic patient to allow the involvement of the family
  - The relationship among family members is interdependence rather than independence

### **Family**

- Individuals within a family unit are expected to aid other members of the family experiencing financial problems, unemployment, poor health conditions and other health issues

### **Family**

- Hispanic families place emphasis on etiquette, rituals and religion, celebrations and holidays, eating habits, teaching and learning significance

### **Respeto (Respect)**

- In the Hispanic culture, “respeto” dictates the appropriate deferential behavior towards others based on age, sex, social position, economic status and authority

### **Respeto (Respect)**

- Hispanic patients show respect by avoiding eye contact when in the presence of an authority figure
- Because of education and training, healthcare providers are automatically “respected” by the Hispanic patient

### **Respeto (Respect)**

- Adult Hispanic patients expect respect
  - Courteous respect
  - A mutual and reciprocal deference from the healthcare provider

### **Respeto (Respect)**

- Avoid asking direct questions related to sexual practices, alcoholism, domestic violence or mental health
  - These topics are viewed as being embarrassing because they are considered “things to be kept in the family”

### **Respeto & Addressing Mental Health**

- There are some traditional syndromes, symptoms, behaviors or illnesses experienced by the Hispanic elderly or individuals who have just arrived
- Hispanics describe being depressed as feeling “nervous” or “tired” all the time

### **Respeto & Addressing Mental Health**

- Hispanics experience depression as body aches and pains that do not go away even after receiving medical treatment

### **Respeto & Addressing Mental Health**

- Nervios (nerves)
  - Manifested by insomnia, loss of appetite, headaches, non-specific aches and pains
  - Believed to be caused by negative or stressful life circumstances or a bad personal relationship

### **Respeto & Addressing Mental Health**

- Susto (fright/fear)
  - Caused by a traumatic experience, manifested by anorexia, insomnia, hallucinations and painful sensations

### **Respeto & Addressing Mental Health**

- Ataque (fit)
  - A reaction to shock, anxiety or sadness manifested by screaming uncontrollably, crying, trembling, or fainting episode

### **Personal Relationship**

- The importance of personal relationships (Personalismo) can be considered the “backbone” of the Hispanic culture
  - Hispanic patients prefer community based clinics and organizations rather than institutional relationships

### **Personal Relationship**

- The importance of personal relationships (Personalismo) can be considered the “backbone” of the Hispanic culture
  - Hispanic patients expect their health care provider to be warm and friendly and take interest in the patient’s life

### **Personal Relationship**

- The importance of personal relationships (Personalismo) can be considered the “backbone” of the Hispanic culture
  - Even with language barriers, the non-verbal communication of the healthcare provider, speaks volumes to the Hispanic patient

### **Trust (Confianza)**

- Winning the trust of the Hispanic patient will help the healthcare provider in promoting changes in health behaviors
  - Respect the patient’s culture
  - Show personal interest
- The Hispanic patient will be compliant and appreciative of the health information received

### **Spirit**

- Definition of health involves a combination & a relationship between human will & divine will
- Medicine, tradition, traditional healing & religion work together in restoring health
- The church influences family life & community affairs

### **Culturally Sensitive Health Message Delivery**

- Identify the respected leader among the targeted community
  - Confianza: earn trust
- Ask the identified leader what the needs are in the community
  - Base your priorities on this
    - Personalismo: personal relationship

### **Culturally Sensitive Health Message Delivery**

- Target the whole family and be formal in your approach
  - Respeto: respect
- The care of a non-English speaking patient is affected by the health care provider’s level of understanding of the cultural & social factors impacting the health outcome of the patient

## **Contact Information**

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