

GETTING TO KNOW OTHER CULTURES

ETHNIC GROUP	African American	Chinese	Hispanic/Latino	African/Nigerian
Primary Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural southerners may speak distinct dialect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandarin Chinese, and Cantonese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spanish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 250 languages spoken Many speak English
Attitudes and Beliefs about Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dress right for the weather History of poor or nonexistent access to health care. Lack of trust of health care system Stay away from people who are sick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illness is caused by spirits, improper emotions or taboo behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supernatural powers are believed to cause disease (i.e. Evil Eye) Being “out of balance” causes illness—too much heat or cold referring to properties; not temperatures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies on extended family during illness
Diet and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food is an integral part of the culture Traditional foods may contribute to obesity and chronic illnesses (high blood pressure and diabetes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May prefer traditional Chinese cooking to the Western diet. “Congee” is a rice pudding given to sick children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rice, varieties of beans, tropical fruits, root vegetables (potatoes, yucca, plantain), tortillas, fish and meats (goat, chicken and rabbit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot and spicy food Staples are yams, beans and rice Chicken, meat or fish in pepper sauce
Traditional/Folk Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses home remedies: black strap molasses for colds; honey and lemon for sore throat Butter on burns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acupuncture and dermabrasion is practiced. May use Western medicine and traditional herbal treatments concurrently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often uses traditional healers Use of amulets and rituals performed by folk practioners Uses herbs (mint tea, cinnamon) during illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses treatments from extracts of roots, herbs, tree bark and leaves Some believe in the “Evil Eye”. May wear types of protection
Communication Styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of different speech patterns do not indicate lack of intelligence or competence May use large gestures to enhance verbal meaning May hesitate to say “no” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct eye contact is considered disrespectful Frequently smiles to convey negative emotions (i.e. anger) Do not readily report discomfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customary to shake hands when greeting Many hand gestures are considered rude Beckons by waving all fingers, palm down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private space not necessary Positions themselves close when interacting
Cultural/Courtesies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considered respectful to call adults by Mr. or Mrs. Sensitive to body language and tone of voice that may not be respectful May hesitate to self-disclose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to value emotional restraint and self-control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect is very important Expects caregiver to show warmth to patient and family May agree with provider out of respect; won’t necessarily comply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bow one’s head when greeting Agrees with authority to avoid conflict
Family Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended family is a strong institution The church is an important social and spiritual institution in this culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family is the foundation of Chinese society Father is typically spokesperson and decision maker in public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The male is viewed as the authority in the family Women are usually responsible for care of children and household Often rely on extended family network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close-knit Nigerian Fathers tend to be decision makers Spanks to discipline children

ETHNIC GROUP	Asian-Indian	Japanese	Vietnamese	Somalia
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English is commonly used for national and commercial needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japanese 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal language is Somali (related to Swahili)
Attitudes and Beliefs about Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consuming certain foods can cause temperature imbalance Diet, hygiene, work and rest patterns must be in balance for health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stresses importance of harmony and balance among themselves, society and the universe. Use of mental health services may be considered shameful to family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices “animism” (worship of spirits and natural forces), along with Buddhism and Catholicism Sickness is believed to come from the wrath of the gods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belief in the “Evil Eye” Practices female circumcision
Diet and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Indians are vegetarians Fasts during certain times of year Honey is given to newborns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish, soybean protein (tofu), rice, noodles and vegetables are main diet staples. Some are lactose intolerant—avoids milk products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Vietnamese are lactose intolerant; do not consume much milk Traditional diet is mostly rice, fish, and vegetables, plus pork or chicken; Older people still prefer a traditional diet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black and brown teas Green vegetables, corn and beans in some regions Rice Some familiar with Western foods, such as pasta and canned goods Fasts during Ramadan (Islamic religion)
Traditional/Folk Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugar water is fed to babies until the mother’s ritual bath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices many of the Chinese medical practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acupuncture is used for musculoskeletal ailments (i.e. arthritis, pain and stroke) Herbal remedies and tonics are used for illness, massages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire-burning (using a stick from a special tree) Herbal remedies, casting and prayer Pneumonia is treated with fire-burning and herbs
Communication Styles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct eye contact is considered disrespectful Generally considered impolite to express disagreement with elders May nod “yes” when meaning “no” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will smile easily, regardless of underlying emotion. Often laughs in situations that others may find inappropriate Speaking in a loud tone with excessive gestures is considered rude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and men do not touch each other “Salam Alechem” (God Bless You) and handshake is common greeting
Cultural/Courtesies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May shake head from side-to-side to say “yes” Pointing is considered rude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to value emotional restraint and self-control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May take appointment times literally, will arrive late to avoid appearing overly enthusiastic Will not vocalize disagreement to avoid confrontation or disrespect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somali women have a strong preference to work with female interpreters and health care providers
Family Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriages are often arranged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family is the foundation of Chinese society Father is typically spokesperson and decision maker in public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men have higher status than women Two to four generations may live in one home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marriages may be arranged Can have up to 4 wives Living with extended families is the norm

Adapted from: Cultural Competence in Health Care: A Practice Guide; Ethnomed.org (University of Washington)