



A culturally sensitive consultation model*

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Abstract

Cultural sensitivity is not only about those patients who come from a different country to that of the practitioner, but also includes those with other differences such as family background, education, religion, belief system or socio-political outlook. If the patient feels their beliefs, values and practices are understood and respected by the practitioner, there is an increased likelihood a good relationship will be established and the patient will trust the doctor and the clinical procedures. To be more culturally sensitive in consultations, three additional variables – ethnocentrism, health literacy and transcultural perceptions of illness – need to be taken into account. It is near impossible for doctors to undertake education for themselves on the ever-growing variety of cultural factors that can influence the interaction with patients. Some practical ways of communicating are outlined in the use of the *Cultural Awareness Tool* and Narrative Therapy.

Keywords

cultural sensitivity, ethnocentrism, health literacy, narrative therapy, Aboriginal health, refugee health, multicultural mental health

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