

# Cross cultural communication

# Learning Goals

1. Increase understanding of how culture impacts pharmacy interactions
2. Develop strategies that build cultural engagement with patients
3. Increase knowledge of the culture and language support resources that are available to providers and members

# What is Culture?

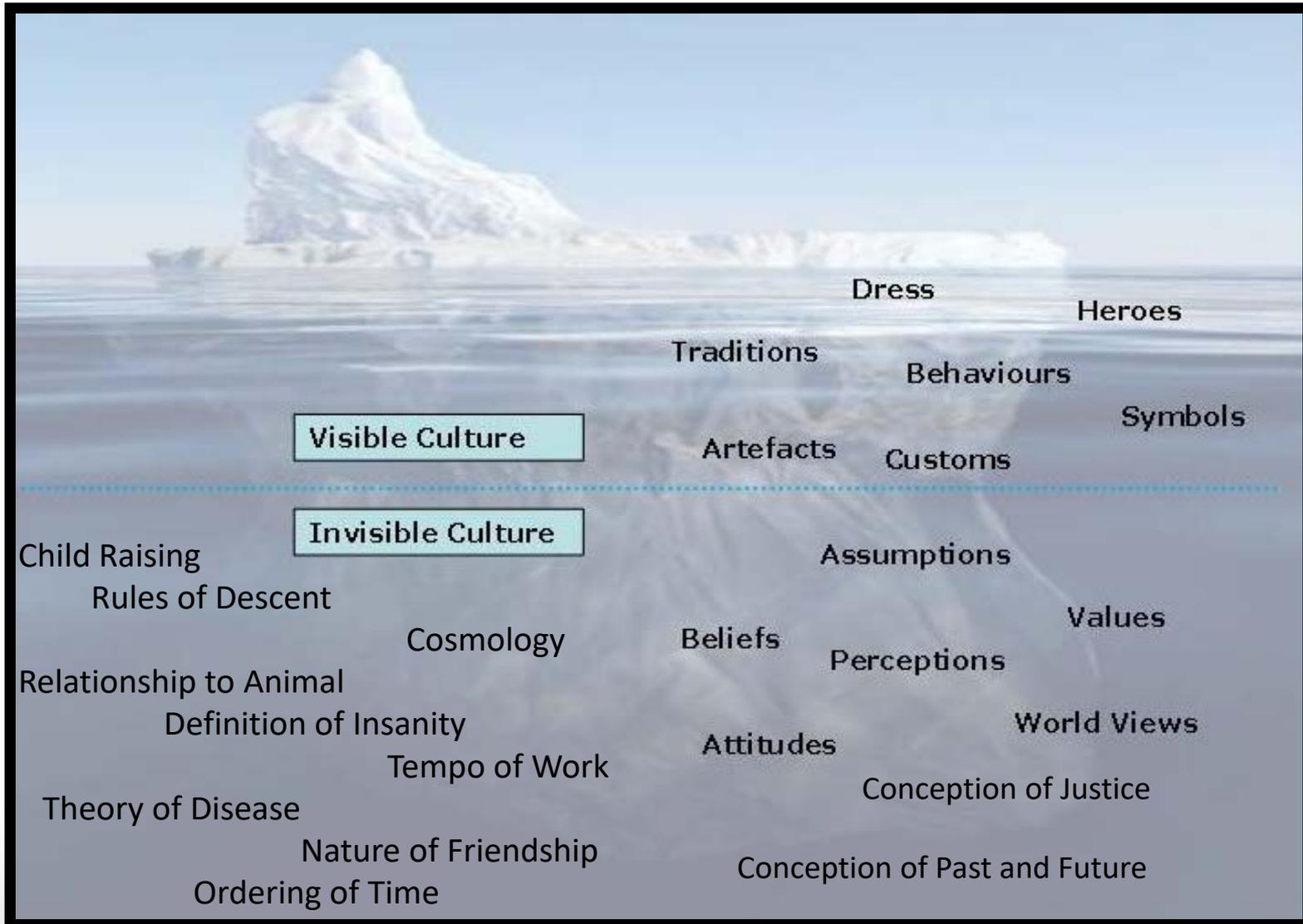
**Culture** refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions that unite a group of people.<sup>1</sup>

**Culture** is knowledge we gain as we grow up.

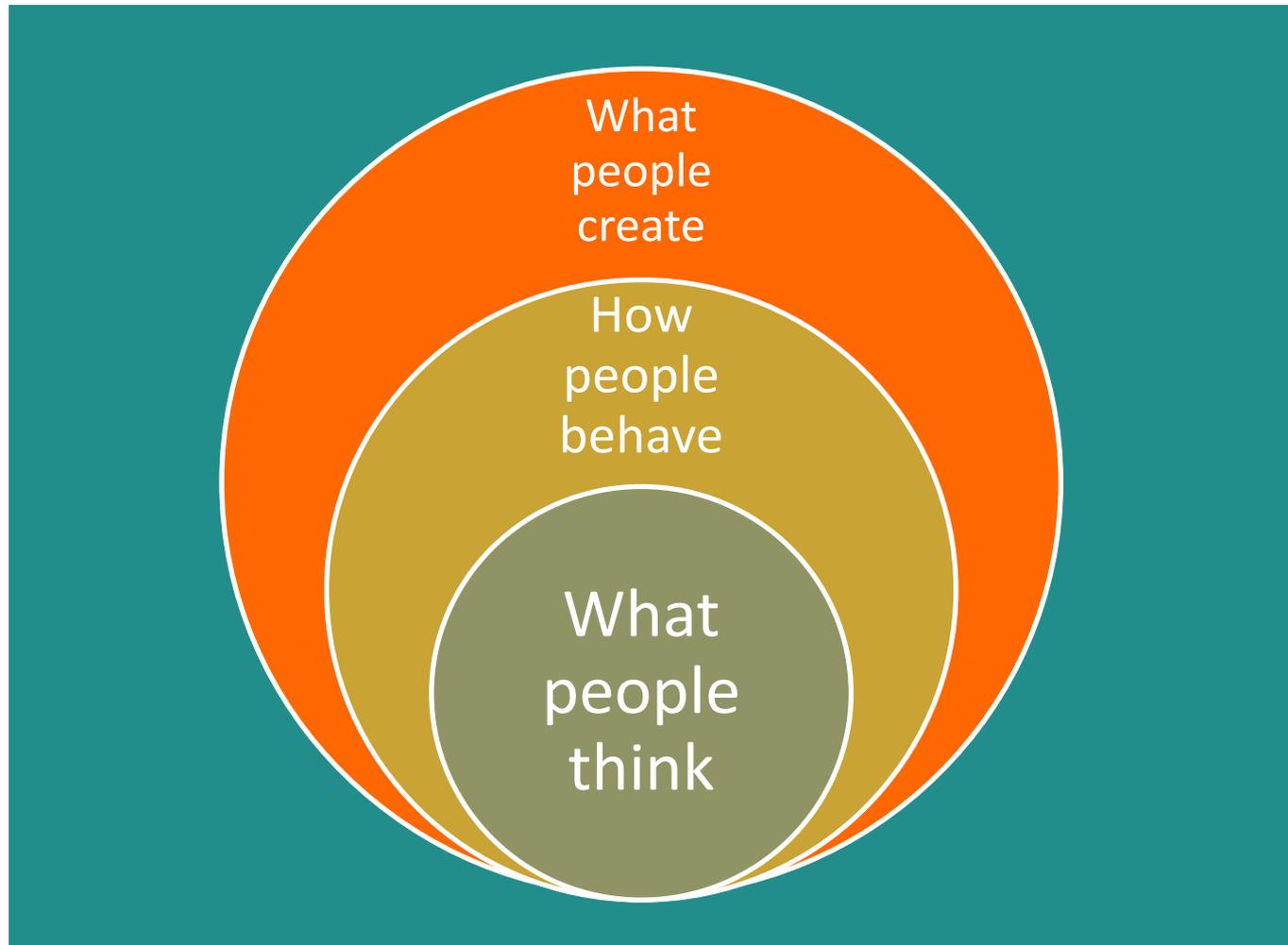
- We use it to create standards for how we act and behave socially.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov> and The Cross Cultural Health Care Program

# General Elements of Culture



# Culture Has 3 Main Areas



# Culture Impacts Every Health Care Encounter

- What is preferred as a treatment or what is preferred for symptom relief
- Our understanding of the role of medication for our health
- Expectations for how to get medications
- When we decide to use medications



# Culture and Health Care Differences

Health Area	<u>What is Typical in the U.S.</u>	<u>What Could be Typical in other Cultures</u>
When well	Follow a doctor's advice. Take medications as directed	<p>Good health is the result of living in balance with nature and spiritual elements.</p> <p>Medication is a last resort.</p>
When ill	Get advice from a doctor. Manage chronic conditions	<p>May get and use advice from alternative healers.</p> <p>Goal is symptom management</p>
When memory declines	Take medical steps to stop memory loss, including prominent use of medication	Memory loss is a natural part of aging. No medication is needed
Medications	Will follow doctor's advice, may ask questions about side effects.	May prefer to try botanicals or treatments that are perceived to have no side effects or will not cause an imbalance



Every individual is a unique combination of the variation within their culture.

CULTURE *IS*  
LEARNED *AND*  
SHARED.

*IT IS* ADAPTIVE *AND*  
CONSTANTLY  
CHANGING.

# Cultural norms you've probably never had a conversation about

- Who is part of your family and why
- Why check out lines in a market are mostly evenly spaced with about an arms length between people
- What is an appropriate gift for a non-relative child's birthday
- What form of address to use when first meeting someone older than you
- How the legal system might be different if the value was on the group, not the individual



# When considering the impact of Culture on the health care encounter

- One's cultural heritage cannot be 'educated' out of existence
- Aspects of each individual may be flexible to change or influence as part of the normal culture change process
- Think about unintentional cultural stereotyping
- Emphasize cultural engagement
- It's not always culture
- Emphasizing respect for all

*Practice the platinum rule:  
treat others as they would like to be treated*

# What is Cultural Competency?

“Set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together” allow professionals to accept and accommodate cultures other than their own, and enable professionals to work effectively in situations where more than one culture is involved.<sup>2</sup>

*“The capability of effectively dealing with people from different cultures”.*<sup>3</sup>

## What is Cultural Competency in Health Care?

“To provide effective care to patients with diverse values, beliefs and behaviors, including tailoring treatment to meet patients social, cultural and linguistic needs”.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Sutton M. Improving Patient Care: Cultural Competence. American Academy of Family Physicians. Available at: <http://www.aafp.org/fpm/20001000/58cult.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov>

<sup>4</sup>Smith RE, Kerr RA, Nahata MC, Roche VF, Wells BG, Maine LL. AACP Engaging Communities: Academic Pharmacy Addressing Unmet Public Health Needs. Available at: [http://www.aacp.org/Docs/AACPFunctions?governance/6822\\_2005](http://www.aacp.org/Docs/AACPFunctions?governance/6822_2005)

# Achieving Cultural Competence

1. **Self-Reflection** – Personal understanding of core identity informed by cultural background
2. **Personal Competencies** – Personal behavioral skills, bicultural
3. **Interpersonal Diversity Competence** – Emic understanding, skills to obtain accurate cultural information, dialogue with diverse groups, and problem solve
4. **Effective Teamwork** – Cross-cultural skills, group relationship skills
5. **Organizational Cultural Competency** – Inclusive cultural values, skills to use in valuing and utilizing cultural diversity. Evident in policies, processes and procedures

# Tips For Successful Patient Encounters

## Speech

- Listen to the volume and speed of the patient's speech as well as the content
- Modify your own speech to more closely match of the patient

## The style of presenting information

- Some cultures need to present information in a chronologic order, some need to tell you the story that is all inclusive and others prefer direct 'get to the point' communication

## Eye Contact

- Everyone relies on non-verbal communication such as eye contact or body language to fully understand what is being said.
- If your communication is over the phone, you will construct the speakers non-verbal communication using your own cultural expectations

# Tips For Successful Patient Encounters

- **Gently Guide Patient Conversation**

English speakers use a direct communication style, however other cultures use indirect communication

- The initial greeting can set the tone for the visit
- Many older people expect to be addressed more formally
  - If the patient's preference is not clear, ask them how they would like to be addressed
- Some cultures may be less likely to ask questions
  - Ask open ended questions
  - Avoid questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no”
  - Steer the patient back to the topic by asking a question that clearly demonstrate that you are listening

You heard  
'Yes', but  
the speaker  
meant  
'maybe' or  
'I don't  
know'

# *Strategy to foster cross cultural communication*

- ***L.E.A.R.N.***

- Listen with sympathy and understanding to the patient's perception of the problem
- Explain your perceptions of the problem and your strategy for treatment
- Acknowledge and discuss the differences and similarities between these perceptions
- Recommend treatment while remembering the patient's cultural parameters
- Negotiate agreement. It is important to understand the patient's explanatory model so that medical treatment fits in their cultural framework

# *Language and Culture*

- **Culture is communicated through language**
  - Every language can communicate all ideas, some use more space than others
  - Language communicates many subtle cultural distinctions
  - Interpreters are critical to communicate linguistic nuance during a clinical encounter

• What word do you use?



• Is the word the same?



# Case Study Review and Discussion

## Communication styles

- You would like to know what the member's experience has been with a specific medication. When you ask the member, the member replies 'Everything is Ok' or 'Everything is fine'

## Points to Consider

- Does the patient have a sense that you are genuinely interested in what they have to say? In many cultures, including areas in the U.S. the patient will say what he/she thinks you want to hear.
- Patiently invite the patient to tell you about their experiences with the medication.
  - If the response is to tell you a story, take notes, your answers are most likely in the response. Ask questions based on what the patient is telling you to build a connection.
  - If they say everything was fine, ask if they could tell you what they liked or did not like about the medication.

# Case Study- Confidence when working with an interpreter

- The patient you are calling has a strong accent. You're not sure that you are understanding everything that is said.
- The patient always hands to phone to their son or daughter to act as an interpreter. You're not confident that everything you are asking is getting explained the way you said it.

## Points to consider:

- You can schedule a medically trained interpreter to be on the call with you. Tips to working with an interpreter are on the next slide.
- You could suggest to the patient that you need some help you understand, ask if you could please connect to a professional interpreter to help you. Continue to offer in subsequent calls. Comment back to the member that you appreciated the use of the interpreter.
- 711 offers speech to speech assistance in English
- If the patient still prefers to use their family, brief the family member as you would a professional interpreter. Thank them for being willing to act as an interpreter and let them know that you have an interpreter available any time that they would prefer to use one.

# *How to Effectively Work with an Interpreter*

## Tips for Working with a Telephone Interpreter

### ***Beginning the call***

- Describe the type of information you are planning to convey
- Brief the interpreter about -
  - Who is on the call
  - Let them know your expectations
    - ❖ This will improve the interpreter's ability to facilitate the conversation
    - ❖ If building empathy with the caller is important during your call let the interpreter know
    - ❖ You will be asking open ended questions and want to know all the responses including any nuances



### ***During the Call***

- Enunciate your words and avoid contractions
  - They can be easily misunderstood – use words like cannot, do not, etc.
- Speak in short sentences, expressing one idea at a time
- Speak slightly slower than your normal speed of talking
- Pause after a few sentences to let the interpreter speak
- Avoid the use of double negatives

# *How to Effectively Work with an Interpreter*

## Tips for Working with a Telephone Interpreter

### ***During the Call cont....***

- Carry on your conversation speaking directly to the member
  - Do not say “he” or “she” said in reference to the interpreter on the line
- If you point to something – describe what you are pointing to as you do it
- Avoid using jargon and acronyms
  - For example:
    - 1) Hemoglobin – instead use iron level***
    - 2) PCP – instead use doctor***
  - If you must use jargon or acronyms
    - Explain their meaning and explain medical terms

#### ***Remember:***

- ***Word for word interpretation is often not possible due to linguistic and cultural differences***
- ***The interpreter will need more time to say what you have said to make sure that the conversation is linguistically and culturally appropriate***

# *How to Effectively Work with an Interpreter*

## Tips for Working with a Telephone Interpreter

### ***For Long Telephone Conversations***

- Pause occasionally and ask the interpreter
  - Does he or she understand the information that you are providing
  - Do you need to slow down or speed up in your speed of talking
    - If the interpreter is confused – so is the patient
  
- Ask the interpreter if, in his or her opinion, the patient seems to have grasped the information that you are conveying
  - You may have to repeat or clarify certain information by saying it in a different way



# *How to Effectively Work with an Interpreter*

## Tips for Working with a Telephone Interpreter

### ***Ending the Call***

- Thank the interpreter for performing a difficult and valuable service
- Tell the interpreter to wait for you to initiate the closing of the call
- The interpreter will be the last to disconnect from the call



Reference:

“Better Communication, Better Care: Provider Tools to Care for Diverse Populations.” Industry Collaboration Effort.

# Other Things to Consider that Impact Every Health Care Encounter

- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**
  - Provide a qualified / certified interpreter as needed
  - Be cautious of the use of words with different meaning.  
Examples: She did not object to the object.
- **Health literacy of members**
  - Use simple, direct words and phrases when speaking or writing
  - Avoid jargon and acronyms
  - The action you want the patient to take should be in the first few sentences
  - Verbal and print instructions should be used
  - Materials should balance use of images and words
  - Provide sketches or doodles that can help stimulate recall of what was said



# Descriptions of Health Literacy

Health Literacy Level	Task Examples	Percentage
Proficient	Using a table, calculate an employee's share of health insurance costs for a year.	12%
Intermediate	Read instructions on a prescription label, and determine what time a person can take the medication.	53%
Basic	Read a pamphlet, and give two reasons a person with no symptoms should be tested for a disease.	21%
Below Basic	Read a set of short instructions, and identify what is permissible to drink before a medical test.	14%

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

# Tips to Improve Health Literacy

- ① Organize key messages
  - Keep it simple
  - Most important messages first
- ② Choose your words wisely
  - Short words, sentences and paragraphs
  - Simple terms - no acronyms or jargon
- ③ Test your message
  - Teach back method to verify patient understands the message you intend

## Questions to Consider:

- What would you like to accomplish with your message?
- How do you want to use your message?
- What is the best outcome for your patient?



REMEMBER:

*WITHIN ANY CULTURE GROUP,  
BEHAVIORS CAN VARY BY  
AGE, RELIGION, RACE, CLASS,  
ETHNICITY OR GENDER*

Practice the Platinum Rule:  
Treat others as they would like to be treated.



Gracias

Thank you!

Grazie

Vielen Dank

Ευχαριστώ

Obrigado!

תודה

شكراً

Send inquiries to:

[cultural.and.linguistic.services@healthnet.com](mailto:cultural.and.linguistic.services@healthnet.com)