



## **Culturally Competent Care Provision**

### **Utilise Kleinman's Explanatory Model of Questioning:**

1. What do you think caused the problem?
2. Why do you think it happened when it did?
3. What do you think your sickness does to you? How does it work?
4. How severe is your sickness? Will it have a short course?
5. What kind of treatment do you think you should receive?
6. What are the most important results you hope to receive from this treatment?
7. What are the chief problems your sickness has caused for you?
8. What do you fear most about your sickness?

Source: Kleinman, A., Eisenberg, L., & Good, B. (1978). Culture, illness, and care: Clinical lessons from anthropologic and cross-cultural research. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 88(2), 251-258.

### **Aim to elicit patient information and be prepared to negotiate**

#### ***Exploring the meaning of the illness - Explanatory model***

- What do you think has caused your problem? What do you call it?
- Why do you think it started when it did?
- How does it affect your life?
- How severe is it? What worries you the most?
- What kind of treatment do you think would work?

#### ***The patient's agenda***

- How can I be most helpful to you?
- What is most important for you?
- Illness behaviour
- Have you seen anyone else about this problem besides a physician?
- Have you used nonmedical remedies or treatments for your problem?
- Who advises you about your health?

### ***Social context “review of systems” - Control over environment***

- Is money a big problem in your life? Are you ever short of food or clothing?
- How do you keep track of appointments? Are you more concerned about how your health affects you right now or how it might affect you in the future?

### ***Change in environment***

- Where are you from?
- What made you decide to come to this country (city, town)? When did you come?
- How have you found life here compared to life in your country (city, town)? What was medical care like there compared with here?

### ***Social stressors and support network***

- What is causing the most difficulty or stress in your life? How do you deal with this?
- Do you have friends or relatives that you can call on for help? Who are they? Do they live close to you?
- Are you very involved in a religious or social group? Do you feel that God (or a higher power) provides a strong source of support in your life?

### ***Literacy and language***

- Do you have trouble reading your medication bottles or appointment slips?
- What language do you speak at home? Do you ever feel that you have difficulty communicating everything you want to say to the doctor or staff?

### ***Negotiation - Negotiating explanatory models***

- Explore patient’s explanatory model
- Determine how the explanatory model differs from the biomedical model and how strongly the patient adheres to it
- Describe that biomedical explanatory model in understandable terms, using as much of the patient’s terminology and conceptualization as necessary
- Determine the patient’s degree of understanding and acceptance of the biomedical model as it is described
- If conflict remains, re-evaluate core cultural issues and social context (for example, bring in family members or maximize interpretation)

### ***Negotiating for management options***

- Describe specific management options (tests, treatments, or procedures) in understandable terms
- Prioritize management options
- Determine the patient’s priorities
- Present a reasonable management plan
- Determine the patient’s level of acceptance of this plan (do not assume acceptance— inquire directly)
- If conflict remains, focus negotiation on higher priorities

## **The LEARN Communication Model**

A communication framework called the LEARN model can be used to help health care providers overcome communication and cultural barriers to successful patient education. There are five steps to the model.

Source: Berlin EA. & Fowkes WC. (1983). A teaching framework for cross cultural health care: Application in family practice. *West J. Med.* 12(139), 93-98.)

### **1) Listen**

Listen with empathy and understanding to your patient's perception of the problem. Encourage your patient to discuss his understanding of the causes and effects of his illness and to describe the treatment and resources he feels will contribute to recovery. "What do you feel may be causing your problem? What do you feel might help or hinder your recovery?" are examples of questions that elicit patient feedback.

### **2) Explain**

Explain your patient's illness, the recommended plan of care and subsequent management of self-care. Even without a diagnosis, it is essential that you explain what you have in mind in terms the patient can understand. Take into account literacy level, cultural beliefs, and past experiences which may affect understanding and acceptance of any suggestions you give. Try to link your explanation to something the patient already knows. Do not ask for feedback by asking "Do you understand or have any questions?" but rather, discuss a particular point or pose a problem to which the new information can be applied.

### **3) Acknowledge**

Acknowledge your patient's feedback and understanding of his/her illness and plan of care. Discussing the differences and similarities with your observations will help promote patient involvement. Areas you agree upon should be recognized and differences resolved. Whenever possible, integrate your patient's suggestions into any care approach. This will give him/her a sense of control and commitment. If his/her suggestions would have a negative effect, explain the consequences and try to make the appropriate plan of care more desirable.

### **4) Recommend**

Recommend a plan of care that fits within the patient's parameters. This can be accomplished after completing the 3 previous steps. The more involved your patient is in the development of his/her plan of care, the more interested he/she will be in its outcome. It is important to listen to concerns your patient may have and agree on solutions that will enhance commitment.

## **5) Negotiate**

Negotiate agreement with your patient on a course of action. This requires a keen understanding of your patient's perspective and the ability to integrate the information you gained in the previous 4 steps. Successful completion of this final and key step can lead to a variety of patient-specific approaches that will increase the change of a successful recovery and healthier life.