



# Cultural Values and Power Dynamics

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# Cultural Values Shape Health Beliefs and Behavior

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- > Patients' cultural values shape how they define health, illness, suffering, healing, and help-seeking.
- > Exploring each patient's cultural lens rather than applying generalizations or stereotypes is key.

# Power Dynamics Affect Trust and Participation

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- > The provider-patient relationship is inherently unequal, and unexamined power dynamics can lead to mistrust or disengagement.
- > Providers must be mindful of how their professional authority, language use, and behavior either empower or silence patients.

# Intersectionality Deepens Understanding of Patient Experience

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- > Patients hold multiple identities (race, gender, class, disability, etc.) that intersect and influence how they experience care.
- > One-size-fits-all approaches miss the complexity of patients' lived realities—especially those facing systemic barriers.

# The Helping Relationship is Co-Created

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- The relationship is shaped by both the BHSS provider's inner world and the patient's lived experience.
- A strong helping relationship requires mutual respect, open communication, and cultural sensitivity.

# Bias-Even when Unconscious-Impacts Patient Care

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- Implicit bias can shape provider decisions, language, and assumptions.
- Use reflective tools to uncover and interrupt their own biases.

# Provider's Identity Influences the Relationship

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- The BHSS provider's race, gender, cultural background, and social position can impact the dynamic.
- Providers need to consider how their identities may be perceived by patients.

# Historical Trauma and Discrimination Affect Patient Trust

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- Mistrust in healthcare is often rooted in lived experience, not personal resistance.
- Historical injustices (e.g., Tuskegee Study, residential schools, forced sterilization) that still impact marginalized communities' views of care.
- Foster empathy and trauma-informed approaches.

# Cultural Humility Strengthens Relationships and Outcomes

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- Cultural humility vs. cultural competence: humility emphasizes lifelong learning, listening, and openness.
- Approach each patient as the expert in their own life and context.
- Humility improves engagement, safety, and care quality.

# Engagement and Trust Are Built, Not Assumed

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- Trust must be earned through consistency, respect, and transparency.
- Culturally responsive communication—tone, body language, and word choice all matter.
- Ask open-ended questions and invite patient input at every step.

# Equity Requires Systemic Awareness and Advocacy

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- Understand that improving outcomes isn't just about what happens in the room—it's also about the systems patients navigate.
- Consider social determinants of health (e.g., housing, income, access) and advocate for more inclusive policies.
- Remember, the provider's role in advancing both clinical and structural equity.

# Provider Identity Matters in the Relationship

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- BHSSs must reflect on how their own race, gender, class, or privilege might impact interactions.
- Be proactive in preparing for situations where patients perceive or respond to you differently based on these factors.
- Be open and humble when identity differences influence the therapeutic dynamic.

# Reflect, Reflect, Reflect!!!

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- Practice consistent reflection (via journaling, supervision, or group discussion) as a tool to increase self-awareness and accountability.
- Becoming a culturally responsive provider is an ongoing process—not a final destination.