



The Importance of Self-Awareness

Foundational Role of Self-Awareness

- > Self-awareness is the starting point of cultural competence— BHSS must know themselves before they can truly understand others.
- > It involves critically reflecting on one's own identities, cultural values, biases, and social positions of privilege and marginalization.

Connection to Cultural Competence

- > Self-awareness enables BHSS to see how their own worldview shapes perceptions of patients and influences interactions.
- > Without this reflection, cultural competence risks being superficial, reducing to cultural “facts” rather than authentic engagement.

Preventing Bias and Harm

- > Unexamined biases can unintentionally lead to assumptions, stereotyping, and inappropriate interventions.
- > By recognizing their own positionality, BHSS can avoid imposing personal beliefs and reduce the risk of irreparable harm in patient care.



Promoting Cultural Humility

- Self-awareness fosters humility, reminding BHSS that they are not “experts” in a patient’s lived experience.
- This humility opens space for curiosity, respect, and collaboration with patients.

Dynamic and Ongoing Process

- Self-awareness is a process of “being-in-becoming.”
- Self-awareness is not a one-time reflection—it is a continuous practice that evolves with new patient encounters and professional growth.
- It requires willingness to question assumptions, challenge personal comfort zones, and adapt one’s approach in diverse contexts.

Practical Application

- Use self-reflective tools such as journaling, supervision, or cultural genograms to uncover biases.
- In practice, BHSS should pause and ask: *“How might my perspective, privilege, or bias be shaping this interaction?”*