

# Cultural Inquiry

Seek to understand, acknowledge and tend to an individual's multiple memberships. Identify their connections to others, e.g. individuals, family members, and community resources. Above all, avoid making inaccurate generalizations on the basis of appearance, language, abilities, or family name. The goals are to understand the cultural influences impacting this person or family, recognize the inherent strengths as resources, and to utilize those strengths in engagement and planning.

## Priorities

What is this person's language of comfort?

Has the person been notified verbally and in writing of their right to an interpreter?

Is an interpreter needed? If so, how will this happen?

Are consent forms in the person's language?

Is the person literate? How will you ensure understanding?

## Sample Modes of Inquiry

- How do you describe yourself?
- What language do you speak at home, at work, or with friends?
- Is spirituality or religion important in your life?
- Tell me about your concerns.
- When did the challenges begin?
- What has worked/not worked?
- What do you think would be helpful?
- Who or where do you go to for comfort?

## **Be Curious About Culture and History**

- Ask what it was like to grow up in their county, community or family.
- Ask what they learned from their parents about how to discipline children. Also, what does the parent know about the expectations of the dominant culture related to parenting.
- Find out what the person thinks their family's or community's values and beliefs are about seeking help for psychological or emotional concerns.
- If the person is from another country, find out when and why they immigrated.
- Find out what the person believes is causing the concern.
- Ask about healers who practice in the community and whether they know anyone that has been helped by them. How?
- Ask about the person's religious or spiritual beliefs and how their faith or beliefs have been helpful to them in the past.
- Ask about expectations about roles between men and women are different in their family and community.
- Find out what the person's feelings and beliefs are about taking prescription medication.
- Ask about past challenges and how they coped or survived them.
- Ask about their experiences with violence and trauma and the impact of those experiences on healing and relationships.

**REMEMBER, THIS IS A GENTLE INQUIRY NOT AN  
INQUISITION.**

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