

NURTURING CULTURAL COMPETENCE:
EXPLORE A PROMISING PRACTICES FRAMEWORK



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Connecting People & Ideas

Observing Cultural Moments: A Reflective Process

Reflective observation¹ is a way to enter the world of another person. It can be used as a tool to help “diagnose” and navigate cultural differences during interactions in the healthcare setting.

This process shows promise as a practice to promote cultural competence in these ways:

- * interrupts “unthinking” discrimination by building awareness;
- * provides dynamic, personal, and motivating learning experiences;
- * creates a multitude of opportunities to practice alternative responses to intercultural interactions; and
- * promotes small-step actions towards consciously competent responsiveness, moment by moment.

Key elements of the process:

- * **Recognizing** - noticing the moment of cultural convergence
- * **Interpreting** - accurately identifying and contextualizing the cultural dimensions of the interaction (e.g., direct/indirect; circular/linear; low context/high context)
- * **Responding** - creating an adaptive response to the moment

Qualities of the process:

- * sensitivity to nuances in interaction
- * insight into feelings, thoughts, and perspectives of others
- * enhanced empathy and responsiveness to the needs of others
- * improved capacity for problem-solving

Focus of the observation:

Promote cultural competencies/proficiencies using observation that explores:

- a. what is happening during an interaction (description), noticing especially
 - specific details of communication behavior (full range of verbal and non-verbal)
 - emotional tone
 - mutuality (or lack thereof)
- b. why it is happening (consider potential cultural dynamics),
- c. the ways people are feeling and thinking about the interaction (empathy), and
- d. possible ways to strengthen rapport between the people in the interaction (create opportunity for cultural bridging).

¹ Reflective observation is both a concept and a strategy for developing effective clinical interventions. It is used in several practice fields, including public health, social work, and early education. See Kelly, et al (2003) Promoting First Relationships: A curriculum for infant-toddler caregivers.

Walking in Beauty:

Exploring the Cultural Moments Framework Using a Healthcare Case Study

Characters:

Grandfather, Mr. Begay	Granddaughter, Ruby
Surgeon, Dr. York	Nurse, Carmen
Anesthesiologist, Dr. Estes	Nurse, Anna

Pay particular attention to one of the characters as you watch the video segment.

Consider these questions to guide your observation of the interactions:

- a. What do you imagine the person was thinking and feeling at that moment?
- b. What do you imagine the person might want or need at that moment?
- c. What do you imagine is the most important thing to them in this situation?

Questions for Discussion

After watching the video segment, *Walking in Beauty*, consider these questions as conversational starting points with others in your table group. Challenge yourself to be as specific as possible about what you saw and heard. Use your discussion to explore the reflective process of the Cultural Moments Framework.

1. Did you notice some Cultural Moments? If so, what helped you recognize them?
2. In what way did you interpret what you observed? What were some of the cultural dynamics you identified?
3. Describe responses you noticed that you saw as adaptive and culturally competent. What made them seem so?
4. In what ways might these interactions reflect, create, or result in health disparities? Explain your thinking.
5. Brainstorm some possible strategies that you might have adopted to provide a more appropriate cultural response between the various people in this situation.

What feedback do you have about the usefulness of the Framework?

RESOURCES

Training Materials

- Bridging the Great Divide (overview of health disparities)
- Cultural Jeopardy (game format promotes cultural knowledge)
- Diversity in Health video series (addresses health-related perspectives of various cultural groups)
- Multicultural Health Series (includes Walking in Beauty segment)

All the above were produced in association with Kaiser Permanente.

Selected References

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