2.9: Cultural Health

Assessing cultural health involves gathering data on factors related to a person's cultural background that may influence their health and illness status.

An open-ended question allows the client to share what they believe to be most important. For example, you may ask, “I am interested in your cultural background as it relates to your health. Can you share with me what is important about your cultural background that will help me care for you?”

It is best to let clients spontaneously answer this question. Give them time to think. You should explore further any factors that they choose to share (e.g., “Tell me more.” “How does that affect your health and illnesses?” “Is there anything else you want to share about how these factors act as resources in your life?”)

Assessing cultural health once meant having a checklist about different cultural groups. This approach is antiquated because it assumes culture is static and measurable. It is important to encourage each client to speak about what is important to them. You may find that clients speak about information related to how they grew up and their way of life, their values and beliefs, traditions related to food, their spirituality or religion, among many other things.

Points of Consideration

It is important to let the client tell you their cultural health information without interruption or assumption.