

General Cultural Competency Standards

To work successfully with clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds the health and disability workforce needs to demonstrate appropriate attitudes, awareness, knowledge and skills including (Medical Council of New Zealand, 2006):

Attitudes

1. A willingness to understand your own cultural values and the influence these have on your interactions with clients.
2. A commitment to the ongoing development of your own cultural awareness and practices and those of your colleagues and staff.
3. A preparedness not to impose your own values on clients.
4. A willingness to appropriately challenge the cultural bias of individual colleagues or systemic bias within health care services where this will have a negative impact on clients.
5. Awareness and knowledge
6. An awareness of the limitations of your knowledge and openness to ongoing learning and development in partnership with clients.
7. An awareness that general cultural information may not apply to specific clients and that individual clients should not be thought of as stereotypes.
8. An awareness that cultural factors influence health and illness, including disease prevalence and response to treatment.
9. A respect for your clients and an understanding of their cultural beliefs, values and practices.
10. An understanding that clients' cultural beliefs, values and practices influence their perceptions of health, illness and disease; their health care practices; their interactions with medical professionals and the health care system; and treatment preferences.
11. An understanding that the concept of culture extends beyond ethnicity and that clients may identify with several cultural groupings.
12. An awareness of the general beliefs, values, behaviours and health practices of particular cultural groups most often encountered by the practitioner, and knowledge of how this can be applied in the clinical situation.

Skills

1. The ability to establish a rapport with clients of other cultures.
2. The ability to elicit a client's cultural issues which might impact on the doctor-client relationship.
3. The ability to recognise when your actions might not be acceptable or might be offensive to clients.
4. The ability to use cultural information when making a diagnosis.
5. The ability to work with the client's cultural beliefs, values and practices in developing a relevant management plan.
6. The ability to include the client's family in their health care when appropriate.
7. The ability to work cooperatively with others in a client's culture (both professionals and other community resource people) where this is desired by the client and does not conflict with other clinical or ethical requirements.
 - a. The ability to communicate effectively cross culturally
8. Recognise that the verbal and nonverbal communication styles of clients may differ from your own and adapt as required.
9. Work effectively with interpreters when required.
10. Seek assistance when necessary to better understand the client's cultural needs.