

CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ACTION

Culture, Communication, and Interpretation s

Below are behaviors that are frequently encountered in a variety of healthcare settings. In the middle Column (A) write down what the behavior means to you. After reflecting on your knowledge of other cultures write down what the same behavior might mean to someone of different culture or background.

BEHAVIOUR	COLUMN “A” WHAT IT MEANS TO ME	COLUMN B: WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN TO ANOTHER PERSON
1. Not making eye contact		
2. Saying “yes” or nodding when he or she doesn’t understand		
3. Giving a soft handshake		
4. Standing very close when talking		
5. Spending time on small talk instead of getting to the reason for coming		
6. Arriving late for an appointment		
7. Bringing family members to an appointment		
8. Addressing you as Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms./Nurse rather than your first name		
9. Giving inaccurate or vague information		
10. Not making a decision without consulting other family members who are not present		

At the end of this exercise, discuss your answers with a colleague or in a small group. Did you have similar interpretations? Did you discover interpretations that you had not considered before? From Diversity level II: Clinical Cultural Competence Education, Workshop” 2005 presented by Center for Addiction and Mental Health, March 23, 2004