

knowledge in their practice. It is also essential that nurses practice with an openness to learning about cultures and co-cultures different from their own and have a few open-ended questions that they can use to ask families about what shapes their lives, what they find meaningful, and how they carry that out in their lives. These questions should be simple and open-ended, such as “What is important to you in caring for your child?” “Please tell me a little bit about your family,” and “What is important to you as a family?”

Observing the various influences on the child's and the family's lives can help us understand how these factors affect their health and how they make decisions about their own health.

Health Beliefs and Practices

For many families, traditional practices and beliefs are an integral part of their daily lives. Health care workers should be aware that other people might live by different rules and priorities that decisively influence their health-related behaviors. Guidelines for exploring a family's culture are provided in [Box 2-8](#).

Box 2-8

Exploring a Family's Culture, Illness, and Care

- What do you think caused your child's health problem?
- Why do you think it started when it did?
- How severe is your child's sickness? Will it have a short or long course?
- How do you think your child's sickness affects your family?
- What are the chief problems your child's sickness has caused?
- What kind of treatment do you think your child should receive?