

Video
Transcript

TRANSCRIPT

Vignette 4

Immigrant Health Care

Narrator: Both physicians and patients have cultural attitudes and expectations which consciously or subconsciously drive interpersonal and professional interactions. When people from different cultural backgrounds interact, they must understand and negotiate two different sets of cultural assumptions in order to communicate successfully.

This scene begins in the examining room of an inner-city indigent care clinic. The patient is a Vietnamese female in her early thirties who came to the clinic because she was feeling weak with vomiting and some diarrhea. She is visibly timid and frightened.

Dr. Roberts: Good morning, I am Doctor Roberts and I am afraid I don't know how to pronounce your name...Miss Nguyen?

Ms. Nguyen: Wen, Doctor.

Dr. Roberts: Thank you, Miss Nguyen—so how can I help you today?

Resource: Excerpt from Quality Care for Diverse Populations, 4—Immigrant Health Care video provided by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Video Transcript

Narrator: Physicians have culturally driven responses as they care for culturally diverse populations. Dr. Roberts is working in this inner-city free clinic as part of his ongoing effort to pay off his school loans. He recognizes that he is functioning outside of his professional comfort zone with people about whom he knows little. He recognizes that cultural issues can inhibit communication and he intends to use every available tool to help him provide care that's appropriate to his patients' needs. So, he begins by seeking to understand the patient's background to elicit the psycho-social context in which her treatment can take place.

Ms. Nguyen: Well, I don't know. I feel weak all the time. And anything that I eat just comes right up again. And when I go to the bathroom, it is too many times and it is not right. And I don't know the word...

Dr. Roberts: Do you mean diarrhea, when your stool is loose like water?

Ms. Nguyen: Yes, doctor, like water. And it has been happening for several weeks, but not everyday.

Dr. Roberts: Well, I need to know a little bit more in order to help you. Are you staying with your friends or family?

Ms. Nguyen: Yes, I am staying in an apartment with my cousin, his parents, and his children.

Dr. Roberts: So, what do you think may be the reason for these symptoms?

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Ms.

Nguyen: I have not been sleeping well. Um, it's been difficult since I came to this country, and everything costs so much, it is hard to save money.

Dr.

Roberts: So, you think these stresses may be affecting your health?

Ms.

Nguyen: Well, my life is not good right now. It is difficult to work when I do not feel well.

Narrator:

This vignette shows how a mixture of two different approaches may be most appropriate. For example, using elements of BATHE (see below) and ETHNIC:

ETHNIC**Explanation****Treatment****Healers****Negotiate****Intervention****Collaboration**

Dr.

Roberts: Have you sought any advice from traditional healers, friends, or anybody that can help you with this problem?

Ms.

Nguyen: Yes, a special healer from my country gave me some tea to drink, but I still feel bad. I eat more ginger and put this on my stomach [pointing to a medication she brought with her], but I feel no good.



Video Transcript

Dr.
Roberts: [Looks at the medication Ms. Nguyen brought] So, what do you think I can do for you today?

Ms.
Nguyen: May be you can find out what is wrong with me or give me some good pills to take.

Dr.
Roberts: Well, you mentioned that you have not been sleeping well and feeling bad; perhaps we need to find out why this is happening. Sometimes, when you worry a lot, it affects the way your body feels.

Ms.
Nguyen: I worry...no job, no money. My family in Vietnam needs my help. May be if you could help me sleep and eat better, I will be able to find a job and things will be okay.

Dr.
Roberts: Well, I'll try to help you perhaps learn a bit about the meds that you've been using. I'd like to learn more about this specialty of using the Tiger Balm. I'd also like to examine you and run some tests today.

Ms.
Nguyen: That's good, Doctor.

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Narrator: Dr. Roberts knows that to properly care for Ms. Nguyen he needs to develop a rapport and a relationship of trust with her, so he's been using the BATHE interviewing structure to elicit her psychosocial context. He started by asking about the background that led to her visit, and how the situation affects her. Next, he'll ask what troubles her about the situation and how she is handling it, and he'll show empathy to legitimize the patient's feelings and provide psychological support. He recognizes the importance of explaining his questions in simple language and avoiding vernacular.

BATHE**Background****Affect****Trouble****Handling****Empathy**

Narrator: Please note that by using BATHE and other multicultural tools, the physician can communicate with his patient despite the multiple cultural barriers between them. The key is to become familiar with the other person's culture and to adapt your interactions to achieve the best result. The physician should assess what cultural elements have the greatest influence on the encounter. For example, many Vietnamese people are Buddhists; their beliefs have a strong influence on how they interpret illness, whether they think their karma has been disturbed, and how they seek relief.