

Intercultural Communication Skills in Healthcare

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- Communication with culturally diverse patient populations should be both patient-centered and culturally competent. To achieve cultural competence, healthcare professionals have to be trained in core communication skills, situational and self-awareness, adaptability, and knowledge about core cultural issues.¹
- Cultural competence training should be systematically integrated in health curricula and be taught in all clinical specialties in a longitudinal and scaffolded manner.²
- To achieve effective healthcare communication with patients who do not fluently speak their clinician's language, the recommendations for healthcare communication across language barriers should be followed.³ In addition, the use of technology can assist in bridging language barriers (e.g. Google Translate, Skype Translator) and cultural divides (e.g. online audiovisual question Prompt lists, animations, and patient narratives) in healthcare.⁴
- Clinicians need to adopt a diversity-sensitive communication approach in which both culture-specific needs and individual differences within cultural groups are acknowledged, enabling them to tailor both content and form of their communication to the individual patient's needs.⁵
- Many health concepts do not have a direct translation into another language and/or are not expressed and understood in the same manner across cultures (e.g. pain, depression).⁶ Hence, clinicians should always strive to explore patients' explanatory models of illness and health.⁷

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