

TERMINOLOGY

What is cultural “competency”?

Cultural Competency, as used in health care, is a lifelong learning process of increasing awareness, knowledge, and skills. Although one can never achieve competence in all cultures, a better illustration of the idea can be termed as “cultural humility” and involves:

- Valuing diversity
- Learning about your own culture and other cultures
- Avoiding stereotypes
- Gaining cultural experiences
- Engaging with your local communities

Think about it: Are you meeting your patients where they need you to be?

What is linguistic competency?

Linguistic Competency is the ability to communicate effectively with patients at every point of contact. Effective communication includes providing verbal and written information in a way that individuals from culturally diverse groups can easily understand

Linguistic competency is important when working with:

- Patients who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
 - LEP is a level of English that is insufficient to ensure equal access to services without language assistance
- Those who have low or no literacy skills
- Those with disabilities
- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing



What are health disparities?

A *health disparity* is a health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Also referred to as health inequities or health inequalities. Health disparities are focused on Access, Availability, and Utilization.

Social determinants of health also contribute to health disparities, and influence how people access and navigate the health care system. Social

determinants of health are conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age.

What is the cultural competency scale?

Low: Refusal to understand or recognize the value of cultures outside of their own

- “Those people never follow the doctor’s orders.”



Moderate: Tolerating, but not always liking culturally diverse individual’s presence



- “We are all just people with the same needs. We don’t need to provide any specialized services to our minority patients.”

High: Advocating for the causes of different cultural groups

- “We can learn a lot from interacting with different cultural groups.”

Effective health communication is providing positive health-related information that can influence your patient’s health behaviors and attitudes, and increase his or her knowledge related to prevention and maintenance of good health. It requires a two-way process of expressing and receiving messages to achieve understanding.

Barriers to Communication

- Patient Mistrust
- Low Health Literacy
- Communication Style
- Language (especially with LEP patients)