Culture and Diversity in Assessment Quick Guide

KEY TERMS

Culture
- Ideas and themes passed on from one generation to next
- Includes knowledge, beliefs, values, language, customs
- Societally/regionally related
- Provides guidelines for actions in a particular society
- All people share a culture with others in their society
- Cultures evolve and adapt over time
- Culture builds on itself
- Culture is transmitted from one generation to next

Cultural Competency
- Social workers must have knowledge, skills, abilities, and openness to look at everything necessary to understand clients of all cultures
- “The process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and practices, and preserves the dignity of each” (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2015, p.13).

CULTURAL CONCEPTS OF DISTRESS
- It is important to consider and identify clients’ cultural values in all assessment and diagnosing
- This helps us to:
  o avoid misdiagnosis
  o obtain useful clinical information
  o improve rapport and engagement with the client
  o consider the effects of stigma, cultural values and comfort with clinical services

Cultural Formulation Interview (CFI)
- A guide for assessment of cultural issues (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)
- Includes the following:
  1. Cultural definition of the problem – how does the client define the problem, as conceptualized by family, culture, values, beliefs
  2. Perceptions of cause, context, and support – what do other key people in the client’s life say about problem?
  3. Cultural factors affecting self-coping and past help-seeking behaviors of client – what other forms of healing or help has client sought in the past? What has past coping looked like?
  4. Role of cultural identity – how much does the client identify with his/her culture?
  5. Stressors and support – what kind of support and stressors does the client experience from his/her family, culture, and society?
  6. Cultural factors associated with current help-seeking behaviors – what does the client’s culture say about seeking help? Are there any specific barriers?
  7. Relationship with patient – addressing any concerns the client might have about the therapeutic relationship

REVIEW QUESTION
Give an example of a scenario in which you might first assume a client has a particular issue or diagnosis, but then reconsider based on information received about the client’s cultural identity.

Sources:


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