Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility

Cultural Safety

Cultural safety is a framework for healthcare services to create a space that is free from racism and discrimination while recognizing power imbalances and historical and contemporary contexts. The framework goes beyond the mainstream concepts of cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, or cultural competency. Cultural sensitivity and awareness acknowledge the need to respect other cultures. Cultural competency uses both these concepts and organizational policy to meet the needs of diverse patients.

Cultural safety embraces the strengths of culture, recognizes how Indigenous social determinants affect patients' lives, and uses cultural humility to understand how personal biases affect how one treats others. Further, it is a commitment of the health system and health care providers to improve patient care experiences and outcomes. This is done by decolonizing medical treatment experiences.

Curtis et al. recommend the following as the definition to be adopted by healthcare systems,

> *"Cultural safety requires healthcare professionals and their associated healthcare organizations to examine themselves and the potential impact of their own culture on clinical interactions and healthcare service delivery. This requires individual healthcare professionals and healthcare organizations to acknowledge and address their own biases, attitudes, assumptions, stereotypes, prejudices, structures, and characteristics that may affect the quality of care provided. In doing so, cultural safety encompasses a critical consciousness where healthcare professionals and healthcare organizations engage in ongoing self-reflection and self-awareness and hold themselves accountable for providing culturally safe care, as defined by the patient and their communities, and as measured through progress towards achieving health equity. Cultural safety requires healthcare professionals and their associated healthcare organizations to influence healthcare to reduce bias and achieve equity within the workforce and working environment."*

Healthcare systems decolonize treatment through language and culture incorporation, understanding power imbalances that arose because of colonization, and acknowledging sovereignty. This framework is widely used among Indigenous People and in health systems in Aotearoa (New Zealand), Canada, and Australia. It is starting to enter the literature among Indigenous Peoples in the United States (Darroch et al., 2017).

Cultural Humility

The First Nations Health Authority (n.d.) defines cultural humility as "a process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience." Cultural humility is one of the core elements needed to provide cultural safety.