



calgary health region  
*leaders in health - a partner in care*



## Cultural Competency Check Card

Basic communication tool to ensure cultural competency

### Key Questions to Establish a Basis of Understanding

- What do you think may be the reason you have these symptoms?
- Do you have any family or friends who also have this problem?
- What have you tried to get better? i.e. medicines, home remedies, etc (to ascertain if patient is using alternative treatments).
- Have you sought advice from family, friends and religious networks or other people for this problem?
- What kind of treatment are you seeking from me?
- What are the most important results that you hope to achieve in seeking help from me?
- Who would you like to be part of this process (i.e. family, friends, interpreters, healers, community members)?
- Do you understand why you have to come back to the hospital (if follow-up is needed)?
- Do you agree with the diagnosis and recommendations?
- How is this condition perceived in your culture or religion?

# Cross Cultural Dialogue Enhancement

A culturally competent clinician strives for impartiality, understanding, empathy, patience, respect and trust.

## Speak clearly

- Pitch of voice, rhythm, rate of speech, emphasis, and emotions are all aspects of language that vary among cultures.
- Ensure that the patient understands what you are communicating.
- Offer to write instructions down or repeat them using a trained interpreter.
- Avoid jargon, expressions and complicated medical terminology.

## Non – verbal communication

- The meaning of facial expressions and silence varies across cultures.
- Avoiding direct eye contact is a sign of respect in some cultures. Smiling may be a sign of agreement, apprehension or showing of politeness.
- Silence could be used to convey non-acceptance or disapproval, as well as agreement.

## Respect different health beliefs

- Do not hesitate to show interest in a cross-cultural exchange of information, i.e. "I am interested to know more about how you view this illness in your family" instead of avoiding the subject or completely ignoring it.

## Use all available resources, including:

Child and Women's Health Diversity Program .....	955-7742
Interpretation and Translation Services .....	944-0202
Healthy Diverse Populations .....	943-0205
Ethno-Specific Organizations .....	See binder
Immigrant Serving Agencies .....	See binder