

Chat task 2: Core cultural issues

It would be impossible to study every culture and know what attitudes and beliefs people from that culture are likely to hold. Besides, this could easily lead to undesirable stereotyping. A more realistic strategy is to be aware of the issues on which cultures tend to differ the most and to have strategies for identifying and dealing with them as they arise.

Aim

To raise awareness of the issues that most often cause barriers to cross-cultural communication.

Preparation

Here is a definition of core cultural issues:

“Core cultural issues are situations, interactions, and behaviors that have potential for cross-cultural misunderstanding.”¹

1. One example of a core cultural issue is attitudes to the roles of men and women. Can you think of more?
2. What are your own attitudes to these issues? What other attitudes are you aware of?
3. How can you avoid misunderstandings about issues such as these?

Chat session tasks

Task 1: Come up with a list of core cultural issues.

Task 2: Give examples of how the attitudes of different cultures to these core issues can differ. Suggest ways of avoiding misunderstandings about these issues.

¹ Carrillo, J. Emilio, Green, A.R., Betancourt, J.R. (1999) *Cross-Cultural Primary Care: A Patient-Based Approach*, *Annals of Internal Medicine* 130(10)