Connecting with Another Culture
LEARNING ACTIVITY

Description
To experience an enlightening connection and develop a first-hand understanding of a different culture, one needs to spend focused time interacting cross culturally. Students independently seek out cultural opportunities of interest at an individual, group, or community level. By self-initiating connections to get involved at any level, whether it is a one-on-one interview to participation in a cultural event, much can be learned to enhance awareness of a culture’s practices with regard to health, religion, life style, etc.

Competencies
C1. Health Equity and Cultural Competency
- **C1.2 Diversity, Culture, and Linguistic Knowledge**
  - Recognize diverse religious and cultural beliefs and practices and how they affect health and health behavior.
  - Describe diverse worldviews in the context of oral health education and communication (e.g. personal experience, culture, religion, health beliefs, time, space, and social organization).
  - Relate own cultural background and biases (e.g. sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia).
  - Explain how sex, gender identity, age, race/ethnicity, culture, religion, language, disability, socioeconomic status, and other factors may affect communication and oral health service delivery.
  - Describe best practices in verbal and written communications that incorporates diverse patient cultural and religious beliefs and practices and preferred language.
- **C1.3 Cross-Cultural Clinical Practice Skills**
  - Express attitude that respects and values patient healing traditions and cultural beliefs.
  - Exhibit comfort when acknowledging and discussing cultural issues.
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Learning Outcomes

- Obtain first-hand insight into an unfamiliar culture.
- Enhance ability to connect with the unfamiliar through networking initiatives.
- Value experiential cross-cultural engagement as an effective means to understanding another’s culture.

Activity

Prior to the actual cross-cultural experience, the student is to research the culture of interest preparing a list of inquisitive questions pertinent to creating a deeper understanding of that culture’s beliefs, preferences, practices, etc. Based on research findings and community cultural connections, a plan is prepared with action steps for follow through from initiation to participation. A written student reflection of the learning activity process, actual cultural engagement and a summary of new discoveries will provide insight into the value of the experience.

Student Assessment

A reflection paper can express the depth of the cross-cultural connection experienced by the student to include a new understanding and perception of a culture previously unfamiliar. As the activity facilitator, be prepared to focus on newly acquired consciousness, changes in attitude and actions, personal responses and the anticipated impact the experience will have when engaged professionally with patients of this culture. Clearly identify reflection paper criteria to guide the students’ writing.

Resources

Providers Guide to Quality and Culture
http://www.diversityrx.org/resources/providers-guide-quality-and-culture


Stratis Health Culture Care Connection
http://www.culturecareconnection.org/
Suggested Placement within Curriculum

This experiential learning activity fits well in the health professional students’ first or second academic semester. Early awareness to the value of seeking out cross-cultural experiences will encourage personal and professional engagement and better prepare the clinician to provide culturally competent patient-centered care. This activity also encourages the development of research skills, inquiry, project planning, and self-reflective writing skills.