Baptist Health South Florida

THE CULTURE TOOL

Characteristics of these groups are generalizations only; individual variables must be taken into account to avoid stereotyping. Provide culturally sensitive care by expecting, accepting and respecting the uniqueness of others.

Cultural Group and Language

AFRICAN-AMERICANS

English

Spiritual Beliefs

Strong religious affiliation, predominantly Protestant. Lay spiritual leaders common. Prayer used to treat illness.

Visible grieving behaviors such as crying and wailing expected and accepted by culture as a sign of respect, importance and love of the deceased.

Dietary Preferences

May favor Southern type foods as well as the typical American fare.

Communication Style

Reserved.

Shake hands.

Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations.

Address others with title and formal name.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Some African-Americans believe in a direct connection between their health and God's plan. Illnesses can be treated not only with medical intervention but also with spiritual approaches such as prayer and supportive visits from church ministers and members.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive.

May deny pain even if severe. Addiction fears common.

Cultural Group and Language

ANGLO-AMERICANS

(northern European descent)

English with many regional variations

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Christian.

Some Christians believe in miracles. Consequently, they may delay seeking treatment while waiting for a miraculous healing. This belief may also affect the decision to discontinue life support once it is started.

Grieving usually private.

Dietary Preferences

Eclectic mix of home-cooked, fast foods, health foods and ethnic foods. Meat, potatoes and rice considered staples for many. Increasing popularity of vegetarian and vegan diets. Coffee, tea, water, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages.

Communication Style

Reserved.

Shake hands firmly.

Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Focus is on Western medicine but use over-the-counter treatments, home remedies, food, complementary therapies and prayer. Prescription medicines valued. Expect high-quality care. Value preventive medicine/lifestyles.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive.

The poor and elderly may be less expressive.

Accepting of efforts to relieve pain.

May believe that injections are more powerful than pills. Addiction fears common.

May deny pain even if severe.

Cultural Group and Language

ARAB

English

Arabic

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Islam. Followers of Islam are called Muslims.

Lebanese tend to be Christians.

Strong family ties.

May prefer to have poor prognosis discussed with family, not patient.

Before death, confession of sins with family present. After death, only relatives or priest may touch the body. The body is bathed and clothed in white and buried within 24 hours.

Dietary Preferences

Consumption of pork and alcoholic beverages is prohibited. Muslims are required to consume meat that is ritually slaughtered (halal). Preferred foods include lamb, rice, bread, chickpeas, lentils, fava beans, ground sesame seed oil, olive oil, olives, feta cheese, dates and figs.

Communication Style

Reserved.

Shake hands.

Public display of emotion not acceptable.

Little kissing and touching in formal situations, and only within the same gender.

Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Women may avoid eye contact when communicating with men.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Women tend to be expressive, while males tend to be stoic.

Pain may be viewed as punishment; suffering may be perceived as atonement.

Cultural Group and Language

ARGENTINE

Castilian Spanish

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Catholicism.

Strong family ties.

Family involved in care-giving.

Dietary Preferences

Emphasis on meat, especially beef with pastas, empanadas, paellas, pastries, local wines, tea, espresso. Mate (tea) is a national beverage that is a stimulant.

Communication Style

Kiss when greeting.

Touching common during talking.

Close personal space accepted.

Animated speech.

Public display of emotion acceptable.

Direct and to the point.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Modern medicine coexists with traditional (folk) medical beliefs. In some regions of Argentina, beliefs in cold and hot principles, which are very common in Latin America, guide the understandings of health. Self-medication is quite common. Use home remedies (aloe, herbs, oils, poultices) as well as Western medicine.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive.

Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.

Cultural Group and Language

BRAZILIAN

Portuguese

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Catholicism with some followers of spirits.

Strong family ties.

Family involved in care-giving.

Dietary Preferences

Brazilian cuisine varies by region. Some staples include: beans and rice along with tropical fruits. Churrasco style beef, pork, seafood, yams, peanuts, mango, papaya, guava, pineapple.

Communication Style

Kiss when greeting.
Touching common during talking.
Close personal space accepted.
Animated speech.
Public display of emotion acceptable.
Good eye contact.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Trust and respect the healthcare team.
Use home remedies (herbs, teas, balsams) and Western medicine.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive.
Use home remedies and analgesics.

Cultural Group and Language

CANADIAN

English
French

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Christian.
Family and community are important.

Dietary Preferences

Comparable to U.S. diet; French influence in Montreal and Quebec particularly.

Communication Style

Reserved.
Shake hands.
Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Trust and respect the healthcare team.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive.
The poor and elderly may be less expressive.
May believe that injections are more powerful than pills. Addiction fears common.

Cultural Group and Language

CAYMANIAN

English

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Protestant — Baptist or Church of God primarily.
Voodoo and psychics are outlawed.

Dietary Preferences

Fish, turtle, goat, conch, rice, beans, plantains and U.S. influences.

Communication Style

Friendly, like to be acknowledged. Reserved.

Shake hands.

Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Prefer information directly from the physician.

Use prayer and complementary therapies along with Western medicine.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Primarily stoic.

Home remedies are used first to treat pain.

Stoic if British lineage, expressive if Caribbean lineage.

Cultural Group and Language

CHINESE

English

Chinese

Spiritual Beliefs

Buddhism, Taoism (or Daoism), Confucianism, Christianity.

Self-expression and individualism discouraged.

Hierarchical structure for interpersonal and family decision making and communications.

Dietary Preferences

Balance and contrast between yin (cold) and yang (hot) foods by choosing the proper combination of cooking methods and food choices.

May avoid cold foods after surgery.

May be lactose intolerant.

Chinese food is quite diverse and selections depend on the region in which it originated. Typical foods include: rice, tofu, fish, beef, pork, fowl, vegetables, soups and a large variety of seasonings.

Communication Style

Avoidance of eye contact may signify respect. Shyness and passivity are the norm.

Shake hands.

Public display of emotion not acceptable. Nonconfrontational.

Privacy and modesty important.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Reluctant to talk to an outsider about health and psychosocial problems. May not ask questions. Silence does not mean agreement.

Foods used to treat body imbalances.

May use traditional Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture and acupressure to treat pain and

other illnesses.

May use faith healers, prayer and ritualistic acts (chanting, use of charms).

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic. May not report pain. The poor and elders may complain less but this does not mean pain is less severe.

May avoid asking for pain relief.

Influence of the evil eye on the cause of pain or other illnesses.

Opioids acceptable but may fear dependence.

Cultural Group and Language

CUBAN

English

Spanish

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Catholicism.

Strong family ties.

Family involved in care-giving.

May prefer to have poor prognosis discussed with family, not patient.

"Do not resuscitate" orders and acceptance of terminal status may represent giving up and abandonment of the patient.

Hospitalized patients are likely to be attended by family around the clock.

Dietary Preferences

Pork, beef, chicken, rice, black beans, yucca, Cuban bread, avocados, tomatoes, mangos, plantains, guava, flan, Cuban espresso.

A good appetite is associated with good health.

Communication Style

Kiss when greeting.

A firm, slightly longer handshake than is customary among Anglos. Touching common during talking. Close personal space accepted.

Animated speech.

Public display of emotion acceptable.

Silence may indicate lack of understanding or disagreement.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Western approach to illness prevails along with other theories of illness causality (spiritual, supernatural).

People may be simultaneously using prayer, folk and/or herbal medicine, plus prescription medicines. Sharing of prescription medicines is common.

View healthcare providers as authority. Believe strongly that nourishment is essential in the healing process.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Express pain openly, though may tolerate painful procedures without complaint.

May believe that injections are more powerful than pills. Addiction fears common.

Cultural Group and Language

ECUADORIAN

Spanish

Quechua-Indian

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominantly Catholic.

Typically large families. Parents often live with grown children.

Dietary Preferences

Wide variety depending on region: beef, poultry, pork, fish, rice, corn, yucca, potatoes, peanuts, bananas, plantains, beer.

Communication Style

Polite, reserved, respectful.

May feel intimidated by physicians/healthcare team. Should be encouraged to ask questions.

Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Pamper ill family members. Hospitalized patients are likely to be attended by family around the clock.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive.

Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.

Cultural Group and Language

FILIPINO

Filipino or Tagalog, Cebuano and other regional dialects

English

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Catholic.

Strong family ties.

Some believe in evil spirits and supernatural powers of others (evil eye).

Visible grieving behaviors such as crying and wailing expected and accepted by culture as a sign of respect, importance and love of the deceased.

Dietary Preferences

Rice, chicken, pork, beef, fish, coconut, tomatoes, bananas. Mixed cuisine due to Malayo-Polynesian, Hispanic, American and Asian influences.

Communication Style

Value and respect elders.

May feel intimidated by physicians/healthcare team. Should be encouraged to ask questions.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

May view illness as something outside their own control (natural forces or spiritual); therefore, preventive medicine may not be valued and may not adhere to the treatment plan.

Use home remedies such as teas, herbal medicines, body manipulation, massage, sleep.

May use faith healers as well as Western medicine.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Quiet, reserved, stoic.

Often use home remedies for treating pain.

Cultural Group and Language

GUATEMALAN

Spanish

Mayan ancestral languages

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Catholic.

Strong family ties. Value elders.

Dietary Preferences

The basis of the Guatemalan diet is the tortilla. It is served with every meal and is usually accompanied by black beans, plantains, rice, tamales.

Communication Style

Quiet, reserved, respectful.

May feel intimidated by physicians/healthcare team. Should be encouraged to ask questions.

Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Mainly use Western medicine in combination with home remedies, traditional healers, and/or over-the-counter drugs.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Quiet, reserved, stoic.

Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.

Cultural Group and Language

HAITIAN

Haitian Creole

French

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Catholic.

Many Haitians are also adherents of voodoo.

Elders are highly respected. Nursing homes rarely used.

Many Haitians believe in life after death, for which the body should be intact; therefore, organ donation is usually opposed. Many Haitians believe that if a donated organ is received, the donor's personality will affect that of the recipient.

Traditionally, Haitians prefer to die at home, but in the U.S., most die in the hospital. Spiritual leaders may come to pray with the dying and to give support to the family. If the death is anticipated, the patient may have many visitors. Visitors may openly express their grief and sadness. Autopsies are usually resisted unless legally required .

Dietary Preferences

Rice and beans are the national dish. Preferred foods include: pork, beef, chicken, goat, plantains, cassava, yams, corn, rice, coconut, avocados, mangos, papayas and passion fruit. Foods are classified on a scale from mild to hot. Foods are often used to treat illness. Foods with the opposite properties from the illness are consumed.

The following are not eaten: yogurt, cottage cheese, runny egg yolks.

A moderate amount of body fat is considered healthy.

Communication Style

Most Haitians greet new and formal acquaintances with a handshake.

They are typically addressed by their title (Monsieur, Madame, Doctor, etc.) and last name.

Nodding is often a sign of agreement; however, some may nod even if they do not understand what is being conveyed. Prolonged eye contact is considered rude.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

May view illness as something outside their control (God's will, supernatural causation).

Some Haitians believe that certain illnesses result from taboo violation or being disrespectful to elders.

May appear quiet, apprehensive or reserved when communicating with healthcare providers. May not trust provider. Some Haitians, especially those who visit traditional healers, expect the practitioner to diagnose their problem without asking for information.

Use Western medicine primarily for treatment, not prevention. Some may seek herbalists, clergy and voodoo priests. Sharing of prescription medicines is common.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Expressive or stoic.

Some may prefer to take herbal home remedies. Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.

Cultural Group and Language

INDIANS (INDIA)

English

Hindi

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion (way of life) is Hinduism, which is a conglomeration of religious, philosophical and cultural ideas and practices that originated in India, characterized by the belief in reincarnation.

A clear mind is important at time of death.

After death, the body is immediately bathed, sometimes by women in the family.

Dietary Preferences

Aromatic spices are a vital part of food preparation. Many are vegetarians. Beef is not permitted (cows are sacred). Typical foods are rice, lamb, chicken, fish, goat, vegetables, coconut, unleavened bread, milk puddings and tea.

Communication Style

Reserved.

Shake hands.

Little kissing and touching in formal situations.

Public display of emotion not acceptable.

Avoiding eye contact indicates respect.

Silence usually indicates approval.

Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

May believe that illness results from bad actions. Use prayer and ritualistic acts to relieve suffering. Ayurvedic medicine may be used instead of or in addition to Western medicine. This is the use of herbal and dietary practices aimed at restoring balance to the mind-body system.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic, especially older people.

For some, pain must be endured in order to purge sin.

Home remedies are used first to treat pain.

Open to complementary approaches to treatment.

Cultural Group and Language

JAMAICAN

Jamaican Patois

Spiritual Beliefs

Christianity (Anglicanism, Protestantism and Roman Catholicism); Rastafarianism.

Elderly are respected.

Dietary Preferences

Foods that are rich in spices. Ackee with saltfish is a popular Jamaican snack or breakfast dish. Other popular foods include curry chicken, goat meat, jerked meats, peas, rice, jams, breadfruit, plantains, pumpkin, mangoes, pineapple, papayas and bananas.

Communication Style

Reserved, avoid hugging and showing affection in public. Curious and tend to ask a lot of questions.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Many tend to self-medicate and exhaust every possible home remedy before seeking medical assistance. Disability and illness are believed by some to be the result of evil spirits or past sins.

Women are more inclined to seek healthcare than are men.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

May be reluctant to admit pain. Expressive or stoic.

Often use home remedies for treating pain.

Cultural Group and Language

JAPANESE

English

Japanese

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religions are Mahayana Buddhism, Buddhism, Shinto and Christianity.

Believe that the body is as holy as the mind. Tradition views the mind and body as one; therefore, may be reluctant to accept the term “brain dead.”

Agreeing to donate one’s organs could cause concern that the oneness of body and soul might be destroyed. Accepting the organs of a dead person could be seen as disrespectful by some.

Dietary Preferences

Focus on small portions. Fish, brown rice, fresh fruits, vegetables, soy products and green tea. Minimal use of bread and dairy.

Considered one of the world’s healthiest diets.

Communication Style

May strive to avoid conflict and be reluctant to ask a question or add a comment since individual assertion is highly discouraged. Silence should not be interpreted as agreement initially. Intense or long-term eye contact is viewed as discourteous.

Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Likely to view an illness as something outside their control (natural forces or spiritual); therefore, preventive medicine may not be valued. View health professionals as authority figures, thus are uncomfortable with physical touching.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Reluctant to admit pain. Self-control and self-discipline valued. Older people may delay seeking help and have concerns about becoming dependent on pain medicines.

May prefer oral medicines to injections.

Cultural Group and Language

JEWISH

English

Hebrew

Yiddish

Spiritual Beliefs

Three branches — Orthodox (most strict), Conservative and Reform (least strict).

Sabbath is from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. Donor transplants are not acceptable to Orthodox Jews. Cremation is discouraged. Autopsy is permitted in less strict groups. Orthodox Jews believe that all parts of the body must be buried together (e.g., amputated limbs and items soaked with blood). Do not cross the hands after death.

Dietary Preferences

Orthodox and some Conservative Jews maintain a Kosher diet. Kosher food is prepared under strict rabbinical supervision and includes no touching/mixing of meat and dairy. Eating of unclean animals such as “pigs” is forbidden. Blood and some animal fats are taboo (blood is synonymous with life).

Communication Style

Reserved.

Shake hands.

Little kissing and touching in formal situations.

Orthodox men do not touch women except for their wives.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Value education and expect competent care. Use over-the-counter and prescription analgesics.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive.

Accepting of efforts to relieve pain.

Cultural Group and Language

KOREAN

English

Korean

Spiritual Beliefs

Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism.

The family is the most important part of Korean life. Family welfare is much more important than the needs of the individual.

Discussing terminal status and prolonging life in the face of futility may be viewed as unacceptable. Organ donation and transplantation are seen as a disturbance in the integrity of the body.

Dietary Preferences

Popular foods include; kimchi (a fermented dish made from cabbage or other vegetables), fish, marinated meats, rice, soups, stews.

May be lactose intolerant.

Speak little during meals.

Communication Style

Public displays of emotion are embarrassing to Koreans. Reserved with strangers. Will use eye contact with familiar people. Etiquette is important. First names only for family members.

Modesty is highly valued, especially in women. Father and then eldest son are decision makers.

Children should not be used as interpreters.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Illness is sometimes attributed to fate or a disharmony in the natural forces (yin and yang). Treatment of illnesses is through the use of the opposite force to achieve balance.

Use herbs, acupuncture, cupping, moxibustion and Western medicine.

Physician is seen as powerful and trustworthy.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

May not be expressive regarding pain.

Prayer and ritualistic acts (chanting and use of charms) may be used to treat pain.

Cultural Group and Language

MEXICAN

English

Spanish

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religion is Catholicism.

Dietary Preferences

Corn, beans, rice, pork, goat, spices, chocolate, tomatillos, avocado, guava, papaya, sapote, mamey, pineapple, soursop, jicama, squash, sweet potato, peanuts.

Communication Style

Communication tends to be indirect and subtle. Prolonged eye contact can be considered aggressive. Shake hands firmly. Prefer closeness.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Western approach to illness prevails, along with other theories of illness causality (spiritual, supernatural).

People may simultaneously use prayer, folk and/or herbal medicine, plus prescription medicines.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive. Tolerating pain may be valued.

Cultural Group and Language

NATIVE AMERICANS (AMERICAN INDIAN) — MICCOSUKEE TRIBE

English

Mikasuki

Spiritual Beliefs

Clan system passed down from mother. Clan leader is primary decision maker when individual is incapacitated. Receiving cartilage is not acceptable, but receiving an organ is acceptable to some.

Head of bed is not to face west while living; however, after death, one's head is to be turned to the west. Organ donation is an individual decision. Burial, not cremation, is the rule.

Dietary Preferences

Beef, pork and chicken, excluding bones and internal organs. Freshwater fish, rice, beans, fruits and vegetables. The following foods are banned: mushrooms, turkey (causes dizziness and weakness), anything from the ocean (considered unclean) and fruits and vegetables grown outside North American.

Communication Style

Reserved.

Nonverbal communication is important; silence is respected.

Appreciative and courteous.

Public display of emotion discouraged.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

Certain animals cannot be used as medicines (e.g., snake venom, oyster shells, shark cartilage).

Western medicine is used in conjunction with Indian medicine.

Use herbal remedies, prayer, ceremony, spiritual healers and rituals.

Patient might have water at the bedside that has been blessed by a spiritual healer. Non-Indians are not permitted to touch the water or the container.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic, may describe pain in vague terms.

Not demanding when it comes to requesting relief for pain, but accepting of efforts to relieve pain.

Cultural Group and Language

VIETNAMESE

Vietnamese

Spiritual Beliefs

Predominant religions are Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Some Christianity and Islam.

May believe that hospitalization is the last resort.

May believe that blood or tissue loss will exacerbate their illness and that their body cannot replace what was lost. May perceive that organ donation causes suffering in the next life. Surgery is particularly feared for this reason.

Dietary Preferences

Rice with green vegetables. Fish sauce for flavor. Meat used sparingly and cut into small pieces. Tea is main beverage.

Some are vegetarians. Often lactose and alcohol intolerant.

Communication Style

Formal and polite. Address others with their formal name and title. Limited use of touch in social interactions.

Personal distance is greater than in other cultures.

May appear to accept or agree with something rather than create discord by disagreeing.

Flowers are for the dead.

Health Beliefs and Treatment of Illness

May believe illness can come from spiritual causes, imbalance of yin and yang, plus belief in Western concepts of disease.

Traditional healing methods include coining, cupping, pinching, steaming, balms, herbs, acupuncture and acupressure. Skeptical of prescription medicines, which they may perceive as too strong.

Pain Beliefs and Treatment

Stoic or expressive. May fear invasive procedures to treat pain.

Cupping, coining and pinching release evil spirits or toxins causing pain or illness.

Something you need to know about cultural diversity that's not covered here? Please contact Mikki Thompson at *MikkiT@BaptistHealth.net* or Angela Montaque at *AngelaM@BaptistHealth.net* for assistance.

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