Background of the Cultural Formulation Interview (CFI)

- Decades of work by cultural psychiatrists and medical anthropologists
- Domains of assessment to clarify contribution of culture to clinical encounter
- DSM IV: 1994
  - Outline for Cultural Formulation (OCF)
  - Widely taught cultural assessment tool in mental health
- DSM 5: 2013
  - Implementable
  - Free of charge
  - Evaluated in > 300 patients, 75 clinicians in 6 countries
Background of the CFI

- All clinical encounters with all patients and clinicians
- Account for the influence of culture.
- Enhance clinician-patient communication in all clinical encounters
- Improve outcomes

Components of the CFI

1. Core Interview: with the Patient
2. Second Informant: Caregiver, significant other, etc.
3. Twelve Supplementary Modules: expand on domains covered in 1 & 2
Domains of the CFI

1. Cultural Definition of the Problem
2. Cultural Perceptions of the Cause, Context, and Support
3. Cultural Factors that Affect Self-Coping and Past Help Seeking
4. Cultural Factors that Affect Current Help Seeking

Introduction: Individual

• "The following questions aim to clarify key aspects of the presenting clinical problem from the point of view of the individual and other members of the individual’s social network (i.e., family, friends, or others involved in current problem). This includes the problem’s meaning, potential sources of help, and expectations for services.” DSM-5 CFI

• Introduction For The Individual:
"I would like to understand the problems that bring you here so that I can help you more effectively. I want to know about your experience and ideas. I will ask some questions about what is going on and how you are dealing with it. Please remember there are no right or wrong answers.”
Introduction: Informant

- **Introduction For The Informant:**
  - "I would like to understand the problems that bring your family member/friend here so that I can help you and him/her more effectively. I want to know about your experience and ideas. I will ask some questions about what is going on and how you and your family member/friend are dealing with it. There are no right or wrong answers."
  - How would you describe your relationship to [individual or to family]?
    - **Probe if not clear:** How often do you see [individual]?

Domain 1: Cultural Definition of the Problem

- Elicit the individual's view of core problems and key concerns.
- Focus on the individual’s own way of understanding the problem.
- **1. What brings you here today? (What brings your family member/friend here today?)**
  - **Probe:** "People often understand their problems in their own way, which may be similar to or different from how doctors describe the problem. How would you describe your problem?"
Domain 1: Cultural Definition of the Problem

• Ask how individual frames the problem for members of the social network.
• 2. Sometimes people have different ways of describing their problem to their family, friends, or others in their community. How would you describe your problem to them?

• Focus on the aspects of the problem that matter most to the individual.
• 3. What troubles you most about your problem?

Domain 2: Cultural Perceptions of Cause, Context, and Support

• Causes
• This question indicates the meaning of the condition for the individual, which may be relevant for clinical care.
• 4. Why do you think this is happening to you? What do you think are the causes of your [problem]?

• Focus on the views of members of the individual's social network. These may be diverse and vary from the individual's.
• 5. What do others in your family, your friends, or others in your community think is causing your [problem]?
Domain 2: Cultural Perceptions of Cause, Context, and Support

• Stressors & Supports
  Elicit information on the individual’s life context, focusing on resources, social supports, and resilience. May also probe other supports
  6. Are there any kinds of support that make your [problem] better, such as support from family, friends, or others?
  7. Are there any kinds of stresses that make your [problem] worse, such as difficulties with money, or family problems?

Role Of Cultural Identity

• Sometimes, aspects of people’s background or identity can make their [problem] better or worse. By background or identity, I mean, for example, the communities you belong to, the languages you speak, where you or your family are from, your race or ethnic background, your gender or sexual orientation, or your faith or religion.
  8. For you, what are the most important aspects of your background or identity?
  9. Are there any aspects of your background or identity that make a difference to your [problem]?
  10. Are there any aspects of your background or identity that are causing other concerns or difficulties for you?
Domain 3: Cultural Factors Affecting Self-Coping and Past Help Seeking

**Self-coping**

- Clarify self-coping for the problem.
- 11. Sometimes people have various ways of dealing with problems like [problem]. What have you done on your own to cope with your [problem]?

**Past Help Seeking**

- Elicit various sources of help
- Probe as needed (e.g., "What other sources of help have you used?").
- 12. Often, people look for help from many different sources, including different kinds of doctors, helpers, or healers. In the past, what kinds of treatment, help, advice, or healing have you sought for your [problem]?
  **Probe if does not describe usefulness of help received:** What types of help or treatment were most useful? Not useful?
Domain 3: Cultural Factors Affecting Self-Coping and Past Help Seeking

**Barriers**

- Clarify the role of social barriers to help seeking, access to care, and problems engaging in previous treatment. Probe details as needed (e.g., “What got in the way?”).

- 13. Has anything prevented you from getting the help you need? Probe as needed:
  - Money
  - Work or family commitments
  - Stigma or discrimination
  - Lack of services that understand your language or background

Domain 4: Cultural Factors Affecting Current Help Seeking

**Preferences**

- Clarify individual’s current perceived needs and expectations of help, broadly defined.

- If individual lists only one source of help (e.g., "What other kinds of help would be useful to you at this time?"). Now let’s talk some more about the help you need.

- 14. What kinds of help do you think would be most useful to you at this time for your [problem]?

- Focus on the views of the social network regarding help seeking.

- 15. Are there other kinds of help that your family, friends, or other people have suggested would be helpful for you now?
Domain 4: Cultural Factors Affecting Current Help Seeking

Clinician Patient Relationship

• Elicit possible concerns about the clinic or the clinician-patient relationship
• Probe details as needed (e.g., "In what way?").
• Address possible barriers to care or concerns
• 16. Have you been concerned about this and is there anything that we can do to provide you with the care you need?

References


Resources:

- Online training is available for providers at: https://nyculturalcompetence.org

- Access the DSM-5 CFI interview:

- Access the DSM-5 CFI supplementary modules at: