

Assessing Your Own Cultural Heritage

Adapted from: Learning Module Cultural and Spiritual Sensitivity: A Quick Guide to Cultures and Spiritual Traditions, Teaching Notes By Sue Wintz, BCC and Earl P. Cooper, BCC This document is a companion resource to the article, "Developing Learning Modules to Address Cultural and Spiritual Sensitivity" in Chaplaincy Today, Volume 19, No. 2

The culture in which we are raised greatly influences our attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors. In order to provide sensitive and effective care to persons from cultures that are different from our own, we must:

1. Be aware of our own cultural values and beliefs and recognize how they influence our attitudes and behaviors.
 2. Develop an understanding of the cultural beliefs and values of others and how they are influenced by them.
- There is no right or wrong answers to these questions. However, it is important to answer them honestly and completely to facilitate self-awareness.

Acknowledging Your Cultural Heritage

- What cultural group do you belong to?

- How do you relate to people who are NOT of your culture?

- Have you ever been discriminated against because of your race or your spiritual and/or religious beliefs?

- What were those experiences like? How did you feel about them?

- When you were growing up, what did your family and significant others say about people who were culturally, ethnically, or religiously different than your family?

Exploring Specific Cultural Attitudes/Beliefs

	Agree	Disagree
➤ I would like to travel to different countries.	_____	_____
➤ I accept opinions different from my own.	_____	_____
➤ I respond with compassion to those who are poor.	_____	_____
➤ I tell or laugh at ethnic jokes.	_____	_____
➤ I would enjoy working with patients from a different racial or ethnic group.	_____	_____
➤ I prefer to conform rather than disagree in public	_____	_____
➤ I believe that some racial or ethnic groups are more violent than others.	_____	_____
➤ I believe that the Ku Klux Klan has its good points.	_____	_____
➤ I feel uncomfortable in low-income neighborhoods.	_____	_____
➤ I believe that almost anyone who really wants to can get a good job.	_____	_____
➤ I am concerned about the treatment of minorities.	_____	_____
➤ I invite people from different ethnic groups into my home.	_____	_____
➤ I feel that refugees should be forced to return home.	_____	_____
➤ I think interracial marriage is a good thing.	_____	_____
➤ I feel uncomfortable in a group in which I am the ethnic minority.	_____	_____
➤ I believe that the U.S. should tighten up its immigration policy.	_____	_____
➤ I take special interest in people who speak a different language and who act differently from me.	_____	_____
➤ I spend a lot of time worrying about social injustices without doing much about them.	_____	_____
➤ I have a close friend who is of another race, ethnic group or sexual orientation.	_____	_____

How Do You Relate to Various Groups of People in Society?

Described below are different levels of response you might have toward a person:

1. Greet: I feel I can greet this person warmly and welcome him/her sincerely.
2. Advocate: I feel I could honestly be an advocate for this person.
3. Accept: I feel I can honestly accept this person as he/she is and be comfortable enough to listen to his/her problems and provide support.

The following is a list of individuals. Read down the list and place a check mark by anyone you believe you would be able to “greet”. Then move to response level 2 and place a check mark by those for whom you could be an “advocate”. Then move to response level 3 and place a check mark by those you believe you could “accept”. Try to respond honestly, not as you think might be socially or professionally desirable. Your answers are for your personal use in clarifying your initial reactions to different people.

	Level of Response		
<u>Individual</u>	<u>Greet</u>	<u>Advocate</u>	<u>Accept</u>
➤ An African person	_____	_____	_____
➤ Child abuser	_____	_____	_____
➤ White Supremacist	_____	_____	_____
➤ A Caribbean person	_____	_____	_____
➤ Alcohol/Drug User	_____	_____	_____
➤ Senile, elderly person	_____	_____	_____
➤ Native American	_____	_____	_____
➤ Jehovah’s Witness	_____	_____	_____
➤ Blind person	_____	_____	_____
➤ Asian American	_____	_____	_____
➤ A person with locks	_____	_____	_____
➤ LGBTQ person	_____	_____	_____
➤ A Catholic	_____	_____	_____
➤ Person with AIDS	_____	_____	_____
➤ Rapist	_____	_____	_____
➤ Black American	_____	_____	_____
➤ Pregnant teenager	_____	_____	_____
➤ White American	_____	_____	_____
➤ Political refugee	_____	_____	_____
➤ A Muslim	_____	_____	_____
➤ A Convict	_____	_____	_____

