



IENE 6



Contemporary large migration waves into Europe: Enabling health workers to provide psychological support to migrants and refugees and develop strategies for dealing with their own emotional needs

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Intellectual Output 8

Bitesized Learning Tool No6: Intercultural Communication and Psychological Support

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Learning Objectives

- The first objective of this bitesized learning tool is to explore the meaning of intercultural communication.
- The second objective is to apply the learning to the work of health workers and volunteers with the current refugees in Europe.
- Lastly, participants are asked to do a crossword puzzle which is a fun way to learn how to say hello and goodbye in many different languages.

What is intercultural communication

Intercultural communication is communication across cultures and social groups. It involves the understanding of different cultures, languages and customs of people from different cultures https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_communication

According to Ivliyeva (2013) the skills of communication in general are what we use in intercultural communication. In addition, intercultural communication includes non-judgemental and active listening, clarification and summarising as well as respecting others.

As discussed in **bitesized learning tools No1 & 2** the issue of culture is a complex matter, which has an impact on the delivery of care, and also how healthcare teams work together. Health care workers need to be able to communicate with knowledge of culturally appropriate language, and for this, an awareness of the impact of culture on values and behaviours is needed (Bach and Grant, 2011).

The way in which practitioners communicate with individuals from different cultures takes skill. According to Sully and Dallas (2010), practitioners need to have awareness of the differences in communication styles of the people they work with, who may be from a diverse range of cultures and must avoid stereotyping.

Language, tone of voice, speed and pronunciation are all key elements of effective communication, which also should be considered when working across cultures (Sully and Dallas, 2010). The use of touch, personal space, hand gestures or eye contact can vary greatly between cultures, something which practitioners need to be aware of as well.

Sully and Dallas (2010) also identified some key areas:

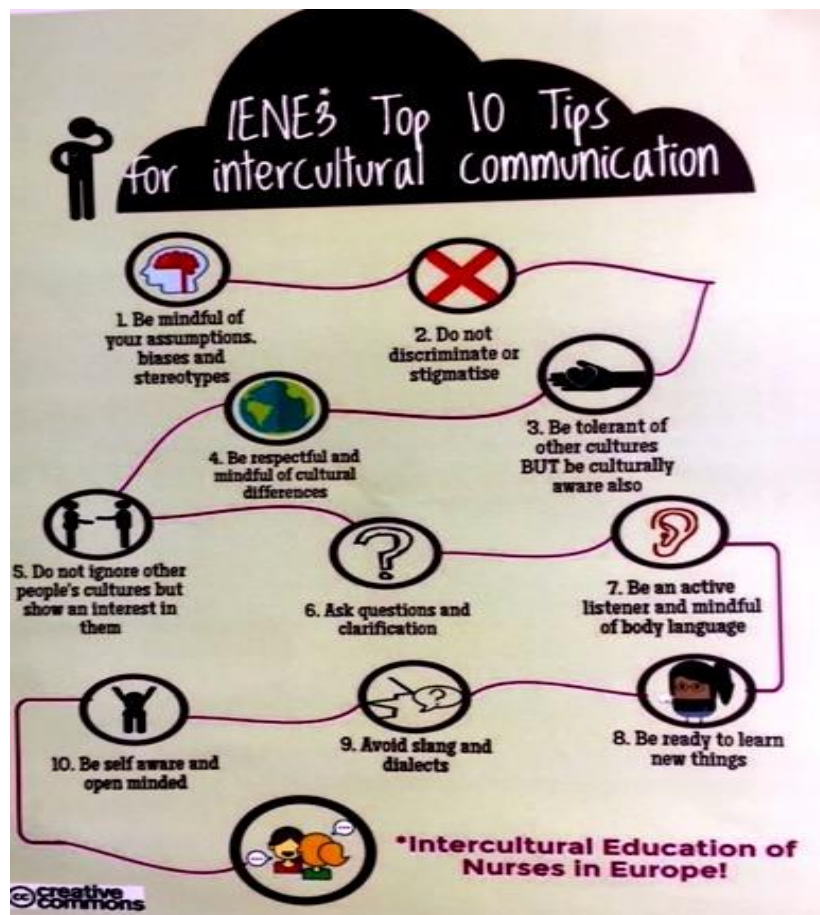
- **Self-disclosure:** This may vary between different groups, and the relevance they place on it. The practitioner must emphasise the importance of sharing specific information to ensure vital information is gained.



- **Demonstrating respect:** In a number of cultures, making eye contact with a person in authority -for example- can be seen as disrespectful. Health workers need to have an awareness of matters such as this, to avoid conflict through misunderstanding.
- **Values and beliefs:** how we relate to others is deeply influenced by our cultural heritage, values and beliefs.

The IENE3 Top 10 Tips for Intercultural Communication

During the IENE3 project (www.ieneproject.eu/) we asked some mental health nurses at Middlesex University to list their 10 top tips for effective intercultural communication. Here is the infographic we created to represent what their suggestions:



Slides from a lecture given to healthcare workers by I. Papadopoulos in 2005



- **Intercultural communication** is the generic ability to recognize the challenges of communication across cultural boundaries. It invites us to stay in touch with our own sense of authenticity, to recognize our anxiety about ambiguity in the situation, to recognize the potential and real challenges to our own values and expectations, and to remain committed to making the interaction effective.

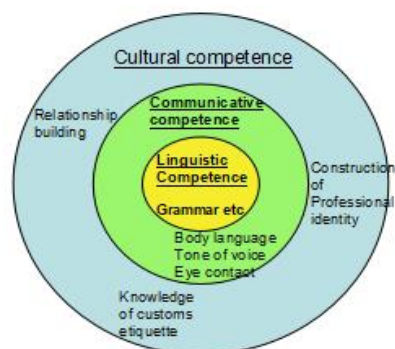


Transcultural communication is...

- not only about language (grammar / vocabulary), it is also about,
- paralinguistics/sociolinguistics such as accents, tone of voice, volume, pauses, body language, eye contact etc.
- Having a body of knowledge about the culture in which we live and work such as customs, traditions, etiquette of the health service and the hospital.
- Learning how to behave like one of the 'locals' and in the case of OS nurses, the new professional community they are joining.



Levels of intercultural communication (Arakelian C & Magnall A, 2002)





Communication barriers

- Language difficulties
- Interpretation needs/problems
- Lack of accessible information in community languages
- Non-verbal communication
- Culturally competent communication



Language difficulties and the need for interpreters

- Even if people have some English, when they are very ill or near death they are likely to revert to mother tongue
- Need professional interpreters, avoid family members



Non-verbal communication (barriers)

- Expressions of physical and emotional pain
- Expressions of anxiety
- Use of silence
- Use of gestures
- Personal space
- Eye contact
- Tone of voice
- Responding to bad news



Culturally incompetent communication

- Wrong information
- No information
- Misunderstandings (offensive, stressful, dangerous)
- Barrier to effective patient-carer relationship
- Ineffective treatment, unnecessary suffering



To conclude...

- Patients'/clients' helplessness, uncertainty, stress and feeling of losing control are often caused by their limited English language skills, their limited understanding of the host culture, and the sub-culture of the health system.
- Culturally incompetent communication is stressful to the nurse
- Transcultural communication is an essential competence for nurses and all healthcare workers and a necessary component of achieving cultural competence.
- Therefore transcultural communication is an imperative of the 21st century.

Activity

1) The above slides were developed in 2005 with a focus on migrants in the UK and not the refugees, health workers and volunteers whom the IENE6 project is aiming to help with the bitesized learning tools. However, do you think they provide usable cultural knowledge and principles which can be used in the current crises? If you were given the chance to refresh them what would you change and why?

2) Why not try this fun way to learn how to say hello and goodbye in many different languages? Go to

<http://multicultincare.eu/assets/countries-saying-hello-and-goodbye--crossword.pdf> and complete the 'hello and goodbye' crossword puzzle.

Self Assesment

Underline the correct answer (see answers at the end of the tool)

1. Does 'dorood' mean hello in: Greek, Arabic, Farsi?
2. Does gule gule mean goodbye in: Urdu (Pakistan), Turkish, French?
3. Does 'namaste' mean hello in: Italian, Hindi (Indian), Arabic?

Reflections: Use this space to write down your reflections about this topic and the above activities

References and Useful Resources

Bach, S. and Grant, A (2009) *Communication & Interpersonal Skills for Nurses*. Exeter: Learning Matters.

Ivliyeva, I. (2013) *Intercultural Dimensions*.
<http://sccen.mst.edu/gta/practicalteachingtips/effectivecommunicationinterculturaldimensions/> (last access 24th February 2015)

Sully, P. and Dallas, J. (2010) *Essential communication skills for Nursing and midwifery*. 2nd edition. Edinburgh: Mosby Elsevier

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_communication

www.ieneproject.eu/

Self Assessment answers: 1=Farsi, 2= Turkish, 3= Hindi.

