Examining ‘Cultural Safety’: Indigenous health values and principles as interpreted through the CanMEDS framework

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‘Mapping’ Indigenous Health Values as Interpreted Through the CanMEDS Framework

Dr. Alika Lafontaine for his insights in Indigenous health values and principles and patients’ perspectives.

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PRINCIPLES FOR CULTURALLY SAFE INTERVENTIONS

Medical Expert
Communicator
Collaborator
Manager
Health Advocate
Scholar
Professional

The culturally competent physician embraces Indigenous knowledge.
The Indigenous patient-physician relationship is sacrosanct and without hierarchy or dominance.
Physicians are equipped with the tools, knowledge, training & experience to improve Indigenous health.
Indigenous identity promotes holistic health & encourages active participation of Indigenous people as agents of change for health.
Indigenous health is an integral component of medical research, education, training and practice.
Physicians are committed to the wellbeing of Indigenous patients, their families, communities & cultures.

BACKGROUND

- 1 of every 25 Canadians are identified as Indigenous;
- 1 of every 20 Indigenous people are former residential school students touching most Indigenous families/communities;
- Indigenous people are three times more likely than non-Indigenous people to experience violence;
- Disparities in health exist on the basis of race; Indigenous people suffer the worst of any population, in large measure due to racism;
- Culturally safe practices are critical to breaking down personal, societal and institutional boundaries.

CULTURAL SAFETY

- Helps to understand limitations of cultural competence (cultural competence is limited to skills, knowledge and attitudes);
- Predicated on understanding power differentials inherent in health services delivery;
- Redresses inequities through educational processes;
- Can be viewed as an ‘outcome’; enacts a feeling/experience clients experience after a helpful exchange;
- Rests with the practitioner; no further therapeutic benefits can accrue without cultural safety being established first.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand Indigenous health values and how to apply principles that can help shape cultural safety in medical education and practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Culturally safe physicians

- Foster an understanding of Indigenous health values and model these behaviors (e.g. oppose racism) as part of their clinical behavior;
- Practise critical thinking and self-reflection to nourish cultural safety; a marker of a true ‘Professional’;
- Understand the unique historical legacies and intergenerational traumas affecting Indigenous Peoples’ health; they dialogue rather than interrogate Indigenous ways;
- Find broader implications to other at-risk populations.

NEXT STEPS

- The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada will continue to promote educational interventions intended to raise physician awareness and understanding of Indigenous health values and principles to ensure dissemination, uptake and use.

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