



# Cultural Factors in the Assessment and Management of Behavioral Health Disorders

Alan Hansen\*

Department of Psychological Medicine, Torrens University, Adelaide, Australia

## DESCRIPTION

Behavioral health disorders are conditions that affect a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. They include mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders such as alcoholism, drug addiction, and gambling. Behavioral health disorders can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life, functioning, and well-being.

However, behavioral health disorders are not universal phenomena that can be understood and treated in the same way across different cultures. Culture is a complex and dynamic concept that encompasses the shared values, beliefs, norms, practices, and customs of a group of people. Culture influences how people perceive and experience health and illness, how they handling stress and adversity, how they seek help and support, and how they respond to interventions and treatments. Therefore, it is essential to consider cultural factors in the assessment and treatment of behavioral health disorders.

### Effect of cultural factors in behavioral health care

**Prevalence and presentation of behavioral health disorders:** Culture can influence the rates and types of behavioral health disorders that occur in a population. For example, some cultures may have higher or lower rates of certain disorders due to genetic, environmental, or social factors. Culture can also influence how people express and communicate their symptoms and distress. For example, some cultures may emphasize somatic complaints (such as headaches or stomachaches) over emotional or cognitive ones (such as sadness or worry). Some cultures may also have specific phrases of distress (such as ataques de nervios or khyal attacks) that reflect their cultural meanings and experiences of suffering.

**Stigma and help-seeking behavior:** Culture can influence how people view and react to behavioral health disorders. Some cultures may have more negative or positive attitudes towards

mental illness and substance use. Some cultures may also have more or less stigma associated with seeking professional help for behavioral health problems. Stigma can prevent people from acknowledging their symptoms, disclosing their problems to others, or accessing available services. Help-seeking behavior can also be influenced by cultural factors such as trust, expectations, preferences, and availability of culturally appropriate services.

**Assessment and diagnosis:** Culture can influence how behavioral health professionals assess and diagnose behavioral health disorders. Assessment tools such as questionnaires, interviews, or tests may not be valid or reliable across different cultures. For example, some questions or items may not be relevant, understandable, or acceptable to people from different cultural backgrounds. Some symptoms or behaviors may be misinterpreted or overlooked due to cultural differences or biases. Diagnosis can also be influenced by cultural factors such as the use of diagnostic criteria, the application of clinical judgment, or the consideration of cultural variations.

**Treatment and intervention:** Culture can influence how behavioral health professionals provide treatment and intervention for behavioral health disorders. Treatment approaches such as psychotherapy, medication, or psychosocial support may not be effective or acceptable across different cultures. For example, some treatments may not match the cultural beliefs, values, or expectations of the clients. Some treatments may also have adverse effects or interactions with other cultural practices or remedies. Intervention can also be influenced by cultural factors such as the use of evidence-based practices, the adaptation of interventions to fit the cultural context, or the involvement of family and community.

To address these challenges, behavioral health professionals need to develop cultural competence in their practice. Cultural competence is the ability to understand, respect, and respond to the cultural diversity of clients in a culturally appropriate manner.

**Correspondence to:** Alan Hansen, Department of Psychological Medicine, Torrens University, Adelaide, Australia, E-mail: alansen@edu.au

**Received:** 04-Sep-2023, Manuscript No. JOP-23-23205; **Editor assigned:** 07-Sep-2023, PreQC No. JOP-23-23205 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 21-Sep-2023, QC No JOP-23-23205; **Revised:** 28-Sep-2023, Manuscript No. JOP-23-23205 (R); **Published:** 05-Oct-2023. DOI: 10.35248/2378-5756.23.26.629

**Citation:** Hansen A (2023) Cultural Factors in the Assessment and Management of Behavioral Health Disorders. J Psychiatry. 26:629.

**Copyright:** © 2023 Hansen A. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

## Cultural competence

**Cultural awareness:** This is the recognition and appreciation of one's own culture and the culture of others. It involves being aware of one's own cultural assumptions, biases, and stereotypes that may affect one's perception and interaction with clients from different cultures.

**Cultural knowledge:** This is the acquisition and application of relevant information about the culture of the clients. It involves learning about the cultural history, values, beliefs, norms, practices, customs, and idioms of distress, help-seeking patterns, and treatment preferences of the clients.

**Cultural skills:** This is the development and use of appropriate techniques and strategies to assess, diagnose, treat, and intervene with clients from different cultures. It involves using

culturally sensitive communication skills, selecting and adapting assessment tools and treatment approaches to fit the cultural context, collaborating with clients to set goals and plan interventions, and evaluating outcomes and feedback.

**Cultural humility:** This is the attitude of openness and curiosity towards learning from the culture of the clients. It involves acknowledging one's limitations and gaps in cultural knowledge and skills, seeking consultation and supervision from experts or peers when needed, and respecting the diversity and complexity of each client's cultural identity.

By applying these components of cultural competence in their practice, behavioral health professionals can enhance their ability to provide effective and respectful care for clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.