
INTRODUCING A CULTURAL COMPETENCY MODULE FOR PSYCHIATRY RESIDENTS

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Background:

Multiculturalism has become a powerful force in Canada in recent years. Approximately 25% of physicians are International Medical Graduates (IMGs). In psychiatry, cultural variations affect the symptomatic manifestations of mental illness. Psychiatric trainees need to develop cultural competence since cultural knowledge is an important determinant of treatment outcome.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada in its Framework for Mental Health Strategy included addressing issues of race, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship, gender, creed, sexual orientation, class/socioeconomic status, age and disability. The Royal College Objectives for Psychiatry state 'the resident must be able to address issues of gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, ethnicity, spirituality, and ethics in a professional manner.'

Objectives:

To teach residents components of cultural competency; to measure change in attitudes before and after the module; and to increase awareness of link of cultural competency to professionalism and communicator role .

Methods:

The Queen's University Department of Psychiatry designed an innovative Cultural Competency Module for its residents. Queen's staff from Human Rights Office, International Center and Dept. of Psychiatry provided: a) a full day workshop on cultural self-awareness; b) modules on Sexual and Gender Diversity and c) Race/Ethnicity. Each section included didactics, case vignettes, small group discussions, and role plays of culturally sensitive interviews. Gain in knowledge and attitude change was measured by pre and post questionnaires. Residents also participated in an online version of the Intercultural Developmental Inventory to find out their group score.

Results:

Residents had shift in attitudes/knowledge of cultural competency after the module.