

Cultural Competence and Ethical Practice

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1. Introduction

- **Cultural competence:** the ability to understand, respect, and respond effectively to patients of diverse cultural backgrounds.
- It is an ethical duty linked to fairness, respect, and equitable care.

2. Key Concepts

- **Cultural awareness:** recognising one's own assumptions and biases.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** acknowledging differences without judgement.
- **Cultural humility:** a lifelong, self-reflective commitment to learning from patients.

3. Links to Ethics

- Respecting cultural values supports patient autonomy and informed consent.
- Equitable, unbiased treatment upholds the principle of justice.
- Ignoring culture can cause harm, mistrust, and poorer health outcomes.

4. Strategies in Practice

- Use trained interpreters rather than relying on family members.
- Ask open questions about beliefs, dietary needs, and care preferences.
- Adapt communication and care plans while maintaining clinical standards.

5. Benefits and Challenges

- Improves trust, adherence, satisfaction, and safety.
- Challenges include language barriers, stereotyping, and limited resources.
- Ongoing training and organisational support are essential for success.