Spirits, Spells, Herbs & Healers: Working with the Athlete’s Cultural Beliefs & Practices

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Objectives

- The learner will be able to identify three culture-specific values, beliefs, or practices to promote health or provide protection from illness.
- The learner will be able to identify three specific communication skills for building relationships and promoting understanding and respect between people of diverse cultures.
An Example from Popular Culture

*Major League*, a 1989 movie written and directed by David S. Ward, featuring the cultural beliefs and practices of Pedro Cerrano.

[JoBu_VooDoo_Project.mp4](#)
Culture as Life Context

- Learned way of life inclusive of the explicit and implicit patterns of life
- Worldview: Cognitive framework for making sense or meanings of our experiences
  - Guides us how to think and act
  - Shared insider’s understanding
Values are the Driving Force of Culture

- Respect
- Individualistic vs. Collective Society
- Patterns of Communication
- Harmonious Relationships
- Silence
Language Barriers: Using Translators & Interpreters

- Protection from Bad News
- Machismo
- Confidenza

- In other words, YOUR WORDS may not be the words that are conveyed to the athlete
Tips for Communication

- Greeting
- Touching
- Eye Contact
- Personal Space & Time Orientation
- Level of Education & Literacy
- Demonstrate Understanding
Sources of Conflict

- Perceived Lack of Respect
- Direct Confrontation
- Concept of Saving Face- “Yes” may not mean agreement, understanding or compliance
- Gender Roles and Taboos
- Understanding the Meaning of Food
Belief Systems about Health & Well-Being

Causes of illness:

- **Magico Religious**
  - Evil Eye, Spirits, Spells, Will of God
- **Holistic**
  - Treat Symptoms, Restore the Balance
- **Bio scientific**
  - Medical Testing & Diagnosis
Pain

- Has physical, emotional, social and spiritual components

- View the athlete in the context of family, culture, past experiences and the meaning of the event being experienced
Caring patterns

- Self-care vs. caring by others
- Meaning of presence
- Meaning of respect and attention
- Meaning of healing rituals (generic & professional health care practices)
Ask Questions

- Open-ended, non-judgmental questions that begin “Tell me about” or “I would like to learn more about”
- What caused your problem?
- Has anything like this happened to you before?
- What have you done in the past that helped you to get better?
- What would you like me to do to help you now?
Possible Remedies

- Heat or cold application
- Herbal medicines (especially tea)
- Hot or cold foods, may be unrelated to temperature or spiciness
- Protection from evil spirits – amulets, jewelry, ribbons, color of clothes
- Prayer rituals & the will of God
- Cleansing rituals
Cultural Healers

- Chinese herbalist
- Columbian Botanica
- Spiritual healers and rituals
- Latino curandero
Treating Sprains & Strains
Evil Eye amulet
Cultural knowledge of others

- Cultural competence is a continuous learning process
- Population demographics
- Develop holding knowledge
- Cultural assessment
- Co-partner with family and community
Cultural Skills: Impression Management

- Understand the behaviors of others from their own context
- Assume expected appropriate behaviors
- Foster common language and communication patterns
- Understand the meaning of silence
- Listen and observe
- Assume role of learner of clients’ culture
Discussion

Questions????

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