



## Utilizing the Cultural Formulation Interview

### Best Practices

1. **Reassure the participant that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers.** Participants will often feel pressured to provide answers that are deemed appropriate or answers which they perceive will satisfy the interviewer due to the power dynamic within the room. Encourage participants to speak freely and openly.
2. **Use the terminology and language of the participant.** Do your best to honor their voice prior to providing psychoeducation in order to build trust and increase comfort with the provider and institution.
3. **Discourage censorship.** Ask participants how they would describe challenges to their friends or family in order to help them voice their concerns in their own words and in a way that is natural and comfortable to them.
4. **Take the participants’ challenges seriously.** The challenges of the participant may not be considered severe in the eyes of the provider. However, these challenges may represent severe barriers in the lives of the participant. Do your best to suspend judgment and understand how the participant perceives their challenges.
5. **Utilize I statements to describe the participant’s identity.** When asking the participant describe the most important aspects of their identity, encourage them to complete the following statement “I am...” This exercise allows the participant to think through the multiple roles and identities that they hold and how that impacts them.
6. **Organizing information is the responsibility of the provider.** The provider should do all that they can not to impede the process. Allow participants to explore their thoughts and while asking clarifying questions can be helpful, it is detrimental to the relationship to consistently interrupt the participant in the midst of your time together.
7. **Discuss expectations.** Ask the participant directly what they expect from you as a provider, your participant-provider relationship, the agency, and the work that you will do together. What is their ideal outcome?