

Component 2: The Culture of Health Care

Unit 1: Introduction to the Culture of Health Care Lecture 1

This material was developed by Oregon Health & Science University, funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, under Award Number U54OC000015.

Defining Terms: Health

- Health, Illness, Disease
- Health as Artifact – something produced through culture [Bateson]
- Acute Illness: temporary interruption of health
 - Goal: restore complete health
 - examples: common cold, simple fracture
- Chronic illness: stable disability or symptoms
 - Goals: minimize symptoms, maximize function
 - examples: diabetes, asthma, back pain

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

2

Defining Terms: Health Care

- Health a product of broad social and environmental factors, not just health care
 - Food, sanitation, housing
- Health care: actions principally and explicitly directed at maintaining or restoring health
 - Actions by patient, family, etc. (70-90%)
 - Actions by health care system
- Health Care "System" – collection of structures and actions directed delivering health care

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

3

Defining Terms: Culture

"A collective expression for all behavior patterns acquired and socially transmitted through symbols. Culture includes customs, traditions, and language."

(National Library of Medicine MeSH)

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

7

Definitions: Culture of Health Care

- Patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of the health care system.
- Behavior patterns in the health care system acquired and socially transmitted, including customs, traditions, and language.

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

8

The language, behaviors, traditions, customs we observe in the health care system



Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

9

Culture and Health Care Main Themes in Current Literature

1. Patient diversity: caring for people from diverse backgrounds: national, ethnic, racial, religious
2. Workplace diversity: working with people from diverse backgrounds: national, ethnic, religious
3. Organizations and culture: safety culture, organizational culture, measuring culture
4. Health professional culture: nurses and physicians, medical and surgical, traditional and alternative

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

10

Culture of Patients

- Impact of patient's culture: inequities in care
- Language, Concepts, Models of Illness
- Cultural Competence, culturally sensitive care
- Specific cultures and our health care system
 - Geographic: SE Asian, African-American
 - Religious: Hmong, Islam
 - Language: Spanish, Telugu,
 - Ethnic: Romany
 - Special Groups: deaf culture, street culture, adolescent culture

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

11

Cultural Competence

- Awareness and respect for cultural differences
- Issue specific not culture specific avoid stereotypes
- Approach every person as an individual
- Examples
 - Traditional beliefs re: transfusion, vaccines
 - Modesty issues in physical examination
- Application to HIT workforce
 - Assumptions built into HIT
 - Stereotypes about HIT interest or proficiency of health professionals.

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

12

Culture of Healthcare Workforce

- Cultural diversity in workgroups, e.g. within a nursing unit
- Physician gender, race, ethnicity
- International Medical Graduates
- Impact or role of health professional culture on patient care
- "Just Culture"

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

13

Just Culture

Blame Culture

- organizational rigidity
- emphasis on compliance with existing practices
- Unintentionally evolves from
 - rigid, rule oriented
 - focus on individual blame for system failure
- Fear of punishment
- Risk avoidance
- Distrust
- Silence the predominant response to error, near misses

Just Culture

- organizational learning culture
- members believe they can question existing practices, etc.
- management openness to worker input
- overall commitment to quality
- uninhibited reporting of problems
- extensive information sharing about problems
- organizational response to f/u e.g. staff training, etc.

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

14

Organizational Culture

- Desirable properties in organizations
 - Culture of Innovation
 - Culture of health (employee wellness)
 - Culture of privacy
 - Culture of cost effective care
- Safety Culture
 - organizational correlates of safety
- Measurement of Culture
- Culture change

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

15

Features of Safety Culture

- Safety culture is a concept defined at the group level or higher, which refers to the shared values among all the group or organization members.
- Safety culture is concerned with formal safety issues in an organization, and closely related to, but not restricted to, the management and supervisory systems.
- Safety culture emphasizes the contribution from everyone at every level of an organization.
- The safety culture of an organization has an impact on its members' behavior at work.
- Safety culture is usually reflected in the contingency between reward systems and safety performance.
- Safety culture is reflected in an organization's willingness to develop and learn from errors, incidents, and accidents.
- Safety culture is relatively enduring, stable and resistant to change.

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

16

What Works? A Climate of Safety

A system. Many elements, working together:

1. Management Commitment
2. Safety Practices and Behaviors
3. Safety Knowledge and Training
4. Safety Communication
5. Safety Equipment and Supplies

Survey of 2500 healthcare workers, in 17 hospitals

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

17

Health Professional Culture

- Western biomedicine compared to alternatives
 - Allopathic Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine
 - Complementary and alternative medicine
 - Chinese medicine and acupuncture traditions
 - Naturopathic and homeopathic
- Nursing culture, physician culture
 - nursing as a holistic, caring profession
 - physicians as disease focused, benign paternalism, autonomy,
- Surgery, Medicine, ICU, OR, ER cultures

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

18

Other Professional Cultures in Health Care Settings

- Management, business culture
 - Customers
- IT culture
 - Users
- Librarian
 - Patrons
- Counselors
 - Clients
- Doctors
 - Patients

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

19

Observations

- Most literature is about 'other' cultures
 - the culture you don't notice is your own
- Many resources about culture, cultures on web
- What is acculturation?
 - US person in another country; immigrant in US
 - IT professional in health system; health professional in IT

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

20

Practical Take Home Points

- 'Culture' has many meanings that are relevant to health care and health IT
- Health care takes place in a complex mix of cultures: professional, organizational, etc.
- Culture is not apparent from within – taken for granted
- We work more effectively when we are aware of the differences – cultural competence applied to health/IT/ as well as to management/patients
- One job of informatics professionals is to bridge these cultures and translate across boundaries

Component 2/Unit 1-1

Health IT Workforce Curriculum
Version 2.0/Spring 2011

21
