

SUMMARY: Person-Centered Culturally Responsive Assessment

These assessment guidelines are for initial and ongoing assessment of symptom experience as it exists within a client's culture and context. Each step includes special consideration for anxiety and OCD treatment.

Initial Contact

- Share brief information about yourself to help the client/family feel more comfortable.
- Ask caregiver(s) and client how they would like to be addressed and their preferred pronouns.
- Validate your client for taking the first step to get support, normalize difficulties, and provide hope.

Intake Overview

- Describe what to expect from the assessment process (including confidentiality) and ask if they have any questions to build trust, model transparent communication, and ensure understanding of the assessment process.

Person-Centered Cultural Assessment

- Cultural Understanding of the Problem: Assess family's perception of current mental health difficulties (*in their own words*).
- Cultural Perceptions of Cause: Assess family's perception of the cause of their difficulties.
- Cultural Perceptions of Mental Health: Assess how the family understands and discusses mental health in their family and community.
- Family Beliefs about Mental Health and Values: Assess parenting values and family norms.
- Social Identity and Values: Invite clients to describe intersecting identities that are important to them, instead of relying on stereotyped presumptions.
- Stressors: Assess stressors related to social determinants of health.
- Supports: Assess personal and collective supports and strengths (e.g., religious or community groups, client interests and talents).
- Previous Experiences: Assess previous experiences seeking support for mental health difficulties (e.g., traditional and non-traditional) and potential barriers.
- Treatment Expectations: Assess client/caregiver's treatment priorities and expectations.
- Ongoing and In-Depth Cultural Assessment: Engage in ongoing and more in-depth cultural assessment when indicated (e.g., values identification, acculturation, racism and discrimination).

Screening for Anxiety and OCD

- Key definitions: Maladaptive/adaptive avoidance, realistic or helpful fears
- Process tips: Understand the motivation of behaviors, communicate with transparency, develop a common language, recognize variability of symptom expression, and elicit hope.
- Screening for Anxiety Disorders: Incorporate culturally-responsive probes (e.g., is worry realistic given family context, are fears influenced by negative experience or lack of skills, are behaviors consistent with cultural norms (e.g., co-sleeping)).
- Screening for OCD: Incorporate culturally responsive probes for OCD (e.g., are behaviors/obsessions consistent with family or religious norms, are compulsions normative given client context, what are family values/beliefs related to client's identity related obsessions).

Initial Assessment Wrap-Up

- Ask about client/family's experience with the assessment, clearly describe next steps in assessment or treatment process, provide a brief summary of assessment, give clear description of treatment offered, and provide the client/family with information or a coping skill to take home.