



# CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS: The Role of Diabetes Care and Education Specialist

## A Minority Majority

Most recent estimates show that more than 30 million people in the United States have diabetes and another 84 million have prediabetes.

Additionally, the demographic landscape of the US is moving towards a minority population.

The Centers for Disease Control report that of US adults with diabetes, 15.1% are American Indian, 8% Asian, 12.1% Hispanic, 12.7% black, and 74% white, non-hispanic.

Differing cultures have varying styles of learning, access to medical care, medication beliefs and acceptance of chronic illnesses. These cultural norms for a group of individuals can directly impact diabetes self-management principles, including behaviors and communication styles. The increase in diversity in healthcare and increasing need for understanding other cultures in order to provide individualized, meaningful care has made this a critical skillset for the diabetes care team.

**Culture:** The knowledge, beliefs, customs and habits a group of people share.

**Attributes of Cultural Competence.** There are distinct differences between cultural competence, cultural sensitivity and cultural humility based on the orientation of care.

Term	Orientation
Cultural Sensitivity	Delivery of health information-factors unique to specific populations (ethnic/cultural, norms, values, social, beliefs, historical, environmental)
Cultural Competence	Knowledge and ability to work with culturally diverse populations with consideration of ethnic/cultural norms, values, social structure, beliefs, historical and environmental attributes.
Cultural Humility	Ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented and includes self-questioning, cultural immersion and active listen skills.

## Cross-Cultural Communication

A person's culture is intimately connected with how they communicate and interpret health information. It is important to gain the skills needed for effective cross cultural communication.

**Five cultural attributes influence cross-cultural communication:** 1) language 2) cultural norms and values 3) stereotypes (unconscious biases), 4) cultural beliefs and 5) cultural body language, eye contact and gestures.

## Ways to overcome communication barriers:

- Use similar language and gestures
- Learn about the culture and their norms
- Ask open-ended questions such as: What do you think caused your problem? What do you call your problem?

## Cultural Competence Continuum

