

The DSM-5 Cultural Formulation Interview (CFI): Overview and Recent Development



The DSM-5 CFI, is considered a systematic cultural assessment method. It contains a list of particular topics that would be included in a cultural assessment to improve diagnostic accuracy and client engagement in treatment planning.¹

Providers can use the instrument during the intake session or in the middle of treatment. Administering the CFI could take from 20 to 50 minutes, depending on the clinician's experience with the CFI.¹ This instrument is useful and essential to explore Hispanic and Latino populations' mental health issues and cultural implications.

“Everybody has culture”

Culture is a way in which a person gives meaning to experiences of illness and health and includes:

- values, orientation, knowledge and practices that individuals use to understand experiences;
- aspects of a person's background, experience and social context that may affect their perspective; and
- the influence of family and friends and other community members on the person's experiences.

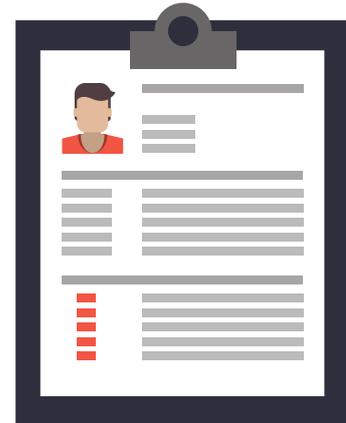
Attention to culture may help clinicians to:

- determine whether an experience is an “illness”;
- communicate during a clinical encounter/service;
- support individuals;
- structure our work settings; and
- develop a respectful stance toward care.



Goals of the CFI ²

- Account for the influence of culture.
- Enhance clinician-patient communication in all clinical encounters.
- Improve outcomes.



CFI Domains: ²

- Cultural Definition of the Problem;
- Cultural Perceptions of Cause, Context, and Support;
- Cultural Factors Affecting Self-Coping and Past Help Seeking; and
- Cultural Factors Affecting Current Help Seeking.

CFI is specially useful in cases of:

- cultural differences that complicate diagnostic assessment;
- uncertainty of fit between symptoms and ICD or DSM diagnosis;
- explore severity of mental health conditions; and
- difficulties with engagement.

Resources for Providers ³

- Online training is available for providers at:
<https://nyculturalcompetence.org/cfionlinemodule/>
- Access the DSM-5 CFI at: <https://nyculturalcompetence.org/research-initiatives/initiative-diagnosis-engagement/cultural-formulation-interview-project/>

REFERENCES

1. Lewis-Fernández, R., Aggarwal, N.K., Lam, P., Galfalvy, H., Weiss, M.G., Kirmayer, L.J., Paralikar, V., ... & Vega-Dienstmaier, J. (2017). Feasibility, acceptability, and clinical utility of the Cultural Formulation Interview: Mixed-methods results from the DSM-5 international field trial. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 210, 290-297.
2. Lewis-Fernández, R., Aggarwal, N. K., Hinton, L., Hinton, D. E., & Kirmayer, L. J. (Eds.). (2016). *DSM-5® Handbook on the Cultural Formulation Interview*. Arlington, VA, US: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.
3. Aggarwal, N. K., Lam, P., Jiménez-Solomon, O., Desilva, R., Margolies, P. J., Cleary, K., ... & Lewis-Fernández, R. (2018). An online training module on the Cultural Formulation Interview: The case of New York State. *Psychiatric Services*, 69(11), 1135-1137.