

YOU ENCOUNTER STEREOTYPES AT YOUR WORKPLACE.

We all have certain values and beliefs that are strongly influenced by our socio-cultural background. Taking our own prejudices and biases into account is a crucial step in intercultural communication. Cultural sensitivity, the willingness to learn about other cultures and critical thinking are some of the basic factors that professionals must consider in order to provide culturally appropriate services. Stereotypes and prejudices naturally affect both sides - the professional's perceptions of the patient/client and the patient/client's perceptions of the professional, as well.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Anna works in a family counselling centre in Germany. One day, she has a new client- Ayse, a woman of Turkish origin who is the mother of 5-year-old Evin. After a little small talk, Ayse tells Anna that she wants to send Evin to a special primary school for children with learning disabilities. She wanted advice on which school to choose and what formal steps to take. Anna is concerned about this request. She assumes that Ayse is not very well informed about the German school system. She also, fears that the cultural background of Ayse includes a tradition in which education for women is not seen as equally important as for men. At first, she is angry about Ayse's decision.

SOLUTION

After a longer conversation, Anna realised that Ayse has good reasons for her decision and has thought about it well. Finally, Anna can help her find the best possible solution and deal with the bureaucratic procedures for registration.

OPTION
01

Avoid assumptions. Usually they are based on stereotypes and you may offend your patient/client. Ask questions, instead. Discuss also, with your colleagues and the interpreters.

OPTION
02

Think critically and practice self-reflection on your thoughts and actions in order to be more open in other views and perspectives. Be aware that everyone (including yourself) sees the world through their own cultural lenses.

OPTION
03

Treat each person uniquely and remember that each one is different. Do not assume that an individual necessarily, has to behave in a particular way because she/he belongs to a particular social group.

OPTION
04

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