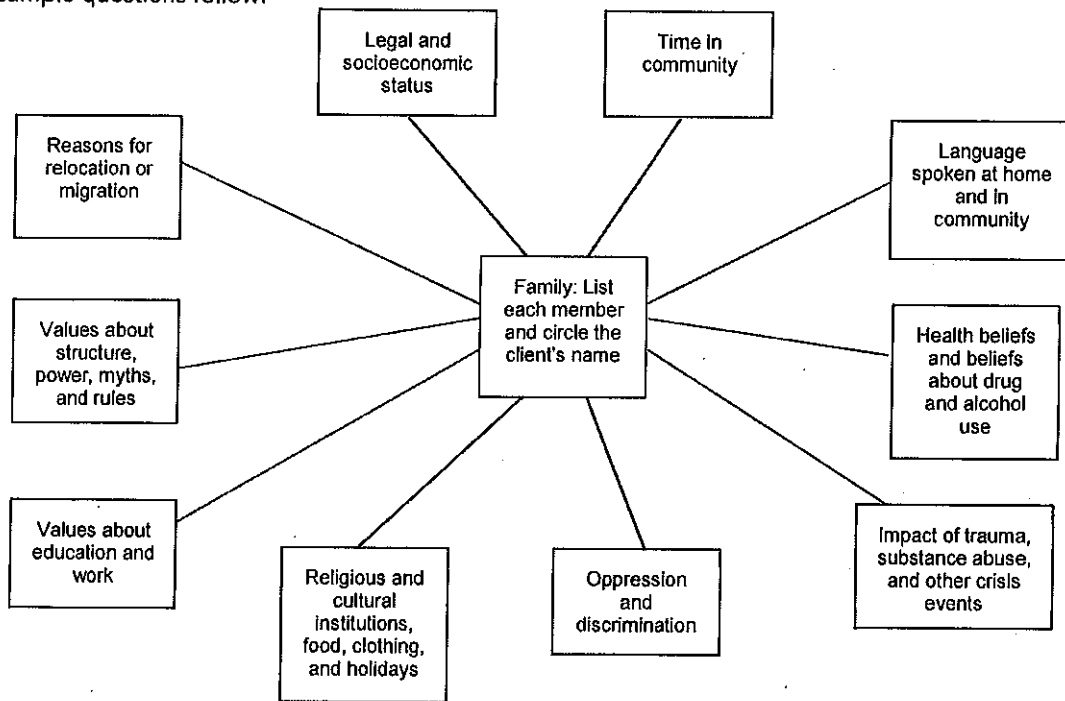


How To Use a Culturagram for Mapping the Role of Culture

The culturagram is an assessment tool that helps clinicians understand culturally diverse clients and their families (Congress 1994, 2004; Congress and Kung 2005). It examines 10 areas of inquiry, which should include not only questions specific to clients' life experiences, but also questions specific to their family histories. This diagram can guide an interview, counseling, or clinical supervision session to elicit culturally relevant multigenerational information unique to the client and the client's family. Give a copy of the diagram to the client or family for use as an interactive tool in the session. Throughout the interview, the client, family members, and/or the counselor can write brief responses in each box to highlight the unique attributes of the client's history in the family context. This diagram has been adapted for clients with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders; sample questions follow.



Values about family structure, power, myths, and rules:

- Are there specific gender roles and expectations in your family?
- Who holds the power within the family?
- Are family needs more important than, or equally as important as, individual needs?
- Whom do you consider family?

Reasons for relocation or migration:

- Are you and your family able to return home?
- What were your reasons for coming to the United States?
- How do you now view the initial reasons for relocation?
- What feelings do you have about relocation or migration?
- Do you move back and forth from one location to another?
- How often do you and your family return to your homeland?
- Are you living apart from your family?

Legal status and SES:

- Has your SES improved or worsened since coming to this country?
- Has there been a change in socioeconomic status across generations?

(Continued on the next page.)

How To Use a Culturagram for Mapping the Role of Culture (continued)

- What is the family history of documentation? (Note: Clients often need to develop trust before discussing legal status; they may come from a place where confidentiality is unfamiliar.)

Time in the community:

- How long have you and your family members been in the country? Community?
- Are you and your family actively involved in a culturally based community?

Languages spoken in and outside the home:

- What languages are spoken at home and in the community?
- What is your and your family's level of proficiency in each language?
- How dependent are parents and grandparents on their children for negotiating activities surrounding the use of English? Have children become the family interpreters?

Health beliefs and beliefs about help-seeking:

- What are the family beliefs about drug and alcohol use? Mental illness? Treatment?
- Do you and your family uphold traditional healing practices?
- How do help-seeking behaviors differ across generations and genders in your family?
- How do you and your family define illness and wellness?
- Are there any objections to the use of Western medicine?

Impact of trauma and other crisis events:

- How has trauma affected your family across generations?
- How have traumas or other crises affected you and/or your family?
- Has there been a specific family crisis?
- Did the family experience traumatic events prior to migration—war, other forms of violence, displacement including refugee camps, or similar experiences?

Oppression and discrimination:

- Is there a history of oppression and discrimination in your homeland?
- How have you and your family experienced discrimination since immigration?

Religious and cultural institutions, food, clothing, and holidays:

- Are there specific religious holidays that your family observes?
- What holidays do you celebrate?
- Are there specific foods that are important to you?
- Does clothing play a significant cultural or religious role for you?
- Do you belong to a cultural or social club or organization?

Values about education and work:

- How much importance do you place on work, family, and education?
- What are the educational expectations for children within the family?
- Has your work status changed (e.g., level of responsibility, prestige, and power) since migration?
- Do you or does anyone in your family work several jobs?

Sources: Comas-Díaz 2012; Congress 1994, 2004; Singer 2007.