

Cultural and Linguistic Barriers to Health Literacy



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Five Level of Active Listening

Level 1– Basic Acknowledgements

These verbal and nonverbal responses let the speaker know you are listening:

Verbal responses: “yes” “oh really?” “no kidding!” and so on.

Nonverbal responses: head-nodding, leaning forward or backward, folding or unfolding arms, making eye contact or looking away, and so on.

Level 2 – Silence

Some people are conditioned to speak rather than listen, but when we are able to discipline ourselves to be silent, we usually find out more information from the speaker.

Level 3 – Questions

Asking questions not only tells the speaker you’re interested in what is being said, it also tells the speaker you want to know more. Asking questions helps to gain a better understanding of the other person’s point of view.

Level 4 – Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing (restating a person’s words using your own words) is used to verify the listener’s understanding. It focuses on content, involves interpreting what you think the speaker said, and getting verification that you are correct.

“It sounds like you...”

“You’re wondering if...”

Level 5 – Reflection of Feeling

The listener emphasizes emotional aspects of communication through feeling statements. This is the deepest form of listening.

“So you feel...”

Definitions / Features of Culture

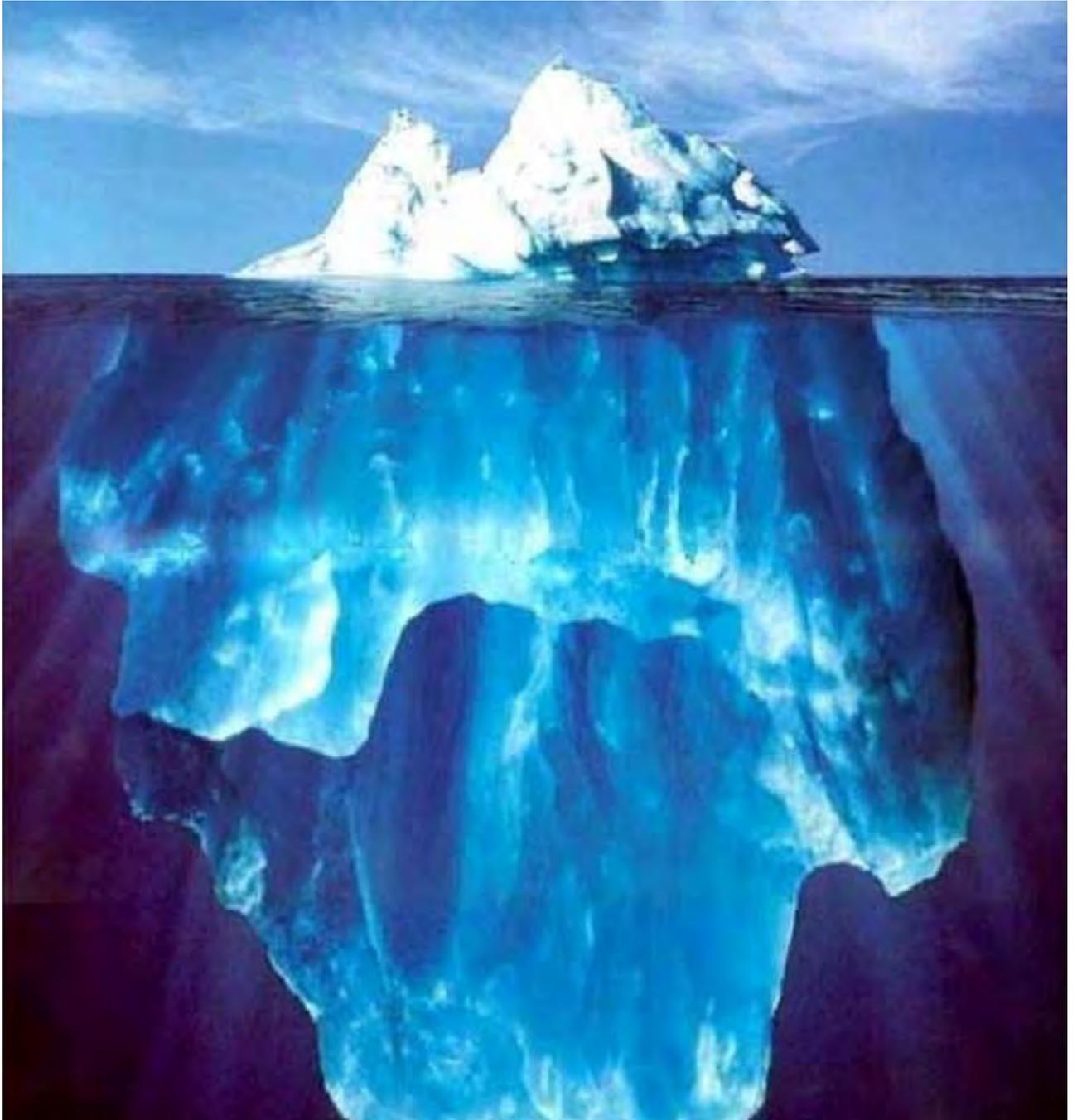
Definitions of Culture:

An agreed upon set of norms, values, and behaviors.

“One’s own culture provides
the lens through which we view the world;
the logic... by which we order it;
the grammar... by which it makes sense.”

Some Features of culture to be considered are:

1. Culture consists of ideals, values, and assumptions about life that guide specific behaviors.
2. Culture is transmitted generation to generation, with the responsibility given to parents, teachers, religious leaders, and other respected elders in a community.
3. Aspects of one’s culture are not frequently discussed by adults. Since culture is widely shared and accepted, there is little reason to discuss it frequently.
4. Culture can become clearest through misunderstandings.
5. There are emotional reactions when cultural values are violated or when a culture’s expected behaviors are ignored.
6. There can be acceptance and rejection of a culture’s values at different times in a person’s life. Common examples involve rebellious adolescents and young adults who accept a culture’s expectations after having children of their own.
7. When changes in cultural values are contemplated, the reaction that “this will be difficult and time consuming” is likely.



The Cultural Iceberg

...an illustration of the components and levels of culture

Visible Culture:

("above sea level") Because emotional loading at this level is relatively low, few misunderstandings are produced at this level.

Food,
music,
language,
architecture
(learned cognitively)

Unspoken Rules:

("partially below sea level") Because emotional loading at this level is very high, violations result in negative feelings about the violator.

Courtesies; use of time,
punctuality; conduct in
restaurants, social
occasions, shopping
(learned by trial and error)

Unconscious Rules:

("completely below sea level") Because emotional loading at this level is intense, violations are taken personally, affecting relations between people.

Touching, space, eye contact,
body contact, tone of voice,
non-verbal communication
(learned through modeling,
usually in early childhood)

Cultures in Context

High-Context Culture: One in which most people share the same background, the same values, the same history

Low-Context Culture: One in which the people don't really know or seem to share all of the same values or history as others do.

Low-Context	High-Context
Direct Communication	Indirect Communication
Report	Rapport
Individualistic- centered in the individual	Communitarian- centered in the group
Low tolerance for silence	High tolerance for silence
Interactive	Authoritarian
High tolerance for questions	Authority threatened by questioning
Adversarial (opposing opinions), blunt (to the point)	Build consensus
Low value on small talk	High value on small talk

Communicating Across Languages

Miscommunication and lack of complete understanding often occurs between people who speak the same language. When communication is attempted between two people who do not speak the same native language, frustration and miscommunication are even more likely.

The following are some strategies that may help ensure that the desired communication actually occurs:

- Speak more slowly than usual, but do not use unnatural language.
- Be conscious of the beginning and ending of sentences, speaking as distinctly as possible.
- Pause frequently to give the listener adequate time to process the language and content.
- Watch for body language which may aid the communication or indicate confusion.
- Check for understanding by active listening or paraphrasing what the speaker has said.
- Provide adequate space for the communication; do not rush the listening-and-speaking flow of conversation.
- When there is uncertainty regarding the communication, reframe the sentence, using alternate words or phrases.
- Avoid idioms, slang or jargon. Define acronyms and abbreviations.
- Demonstrate, use visuals, and reinforce with written material whenever possible.
- Assume communication can occur. Handle your fear.

