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Building cross-cultural dialog with families

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Introduction

For a family to advocate for their child they must understand their child's condition and the possibilities offered through intervention. This poster will offer strategies to promote effective cross-cultural communications, especially in the context of encouraging the development of parents as advocates for their children.

Learning Objectives:

1. Observer will be able to describe communication behaviors to enhance cross-cultural dialogs.
2. Observer will learn strategies to manage cultural differences and adapt to diversity within the cultural contexts.

Report:

Appalachia, in the United States (USA), is a rural area characterized by poverty and low levels of literacy. This area has a distinctive culture that makes the education of parents as advocates very challenging. Assimilating diversity in cultural values requires the commitment of the clinician to a developmental process that evolves over an extended period. Both individual OT's and organizations they interface with are at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills along the cultural competence continuum. Autism Spectrum Disorders result in behavioral challenges that can cause alienation both within families and within communities. Parents of children with ASD are an especially vulnerable group that requires cultural sensitivity in service delivery. Best practice standards in OT are driven by client preferred choices, not by culturally blind or culturally free interventions. OT's can learn to be change agents in supporting self-advocacy for families.

Conclusion:

To communicate competently with families the OT must be able to identify and understand the needs and help-seeking behaviors of individuals and families. Supporting individuals through education and teaching self-advocacy the OT can have a lasting impact not only on families, but also in supporting non-discriminatory practices within organization and in service delivery.

Contribution:

Supports the design and implementation of services that are tailored to the unique needs of children and families, organizations and communities served.