

## Cultural Formulation

Elements of this checklist, which is complementary to the previous one, are further discussed in the Models of Health and Illness, Family and Community, and Staff-Patient Relationships sections of the *Guidelines to Practice*.

### What is the individual's cultural identity? These may be determined by

- the individual's ethnic or cultural reference groups.
- for immigrant and ethnic minorities, the degree of involvement with both the culture of origin and host culture.
- the individual's language abilities, use and preference.

### What are the cultural explanations of the individual's illness? The following may be identified:

- The symptoms through which distress or the need for social support are communicated.
- The meaning and perceived severity of the individual's symptoms in relation to the norms of the cultural reference group.
- Any local illness category used by the individual's family and community to identify the condition.

- The perceived causes or explanatory models that the individual and the cultural reference group use to explain the illness.
- Current preference for and past experiences with professional and popular sources of care.

### What are the cultural factors related to psychosocial environment and levels of functioning?

- This would include stresses in the local social environment, the role of religion and kin networks in providing emotional, instrumental and informational support.
- What are the cultural elements of the relationship between the individual and clinician? eg differences in the culture and social status between the individual and the clinician, difficulty in communicating in the individual's first language, eliciting symptoms and their cultural significance.
- How do cultural considerations specifically influence diagnosis and care?

*Adapted from Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-IV, 1994*

