

## Cultural Competence

*The ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures*



### The Red String Principle

If you name something,

- You will see it
- You can understand it
- You can engage it

### A Framework for Cultural Competency



### Learn About Culture starting with your own

- Our culture is the foods we like, what we wear, the holidays we celebrate *and* our values, decision-making processes and world perspective

*“While living in Europe, I was struck by the differences between US and European medicine. Why did the French talk about their livers all the time? Why did the Germans blame their hearts for their fatigue? Why did the British operate so much less than the Americans? Why did my French friends become upset when I said I had a virus?”*

Payer, Lynn. *Medicine and Culture: Varieties of Treatment in the United States, England, West Germany, and France*. Henry Holt and Company, 1996.

- Identify the Golden Rule: What is the key value being expressed in this situation?



### Invest in language

- Learn to speak it or use a trained interpreter
- The Saphir-Wolfe hypothesis: the language one speaks influences the way one perceives reality; language affects its speakers' worldview/cognition



### Ask questions with an attitude of learning

- Being interested in someone else's viewpoint in a non-judgmental way builds bridges in a non-threatening way
- Assumptions - which are often culturally-based - can waste time, resources and precious good will



### Involve them in their own solutions

- Mutuality rather than servanthood
- Forfeit your own ownership in order to gain success

### Case Studies

- Different worldview: *Sopheak and a good death*
- Different ethical bases: *Ned and the use of resources*
- Different norm: *The residents and learning styles*