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## Things You Can Do to Eliminate Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Mental Health

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**Know yourself** and challenge your biases.

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**Know your community** including its demographics (who's there?), the social and environmental conditions, and the epidemiologic vulnerabilities.

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**Be observant** and notify authorities when you notice racial and ethnic differences in health care delivery or quality.

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**Listen to your patients** and make a concerted effort to understand their cultural context and beliefs

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**Encourage patients to ask questions** about their illness, to bring an advocate along with them, to be an active participant in the health care encounter.

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**Educate your patients** about what their illness is, what to do to manage it, and why it is important (health literacy).

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**Provide your patients with guidance** on preventive strategies.

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**Collect data** by race and ethnicity (or urge your organization to) in order to uncover disparities in care and outcomes, including level of functioning, mortality, satisfaction with care, and others.

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**Establish an advisory group** with community involvement to develop a strategic plan for eliminating disparities.

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**Practice the golden rule and the platinum rule**—treat your patients as you want yourself or your family member to be treated; and treat people the way they want to be treated accounting for their customs, beliefs, and values. Look for the commonalities and the similarities that arise from sheer humanity. Showing your patients that you care will help to create a trusting relationship, no matter what your differences in race, culture, or ethnicity. Trust is the key to establishing an effective patient–health care professional partnership.