

Apply cultural competence and respect local norms and preferences (Module 3: Teleconsultation Skills)

DigHealth –
Micro-credentials in digital health for Ethiopia and Somalia

Proj. Ref. Num. 101179425

Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education

Learning outcomes

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Define cultural competence in healthcare.
- Recognize cultural and social factors that influence teleconsultations.
- Apply strategies to respect local norms and preferences.
- Adapt communication and care plans to diverse patient needs.

Foundations of Cultural Competence

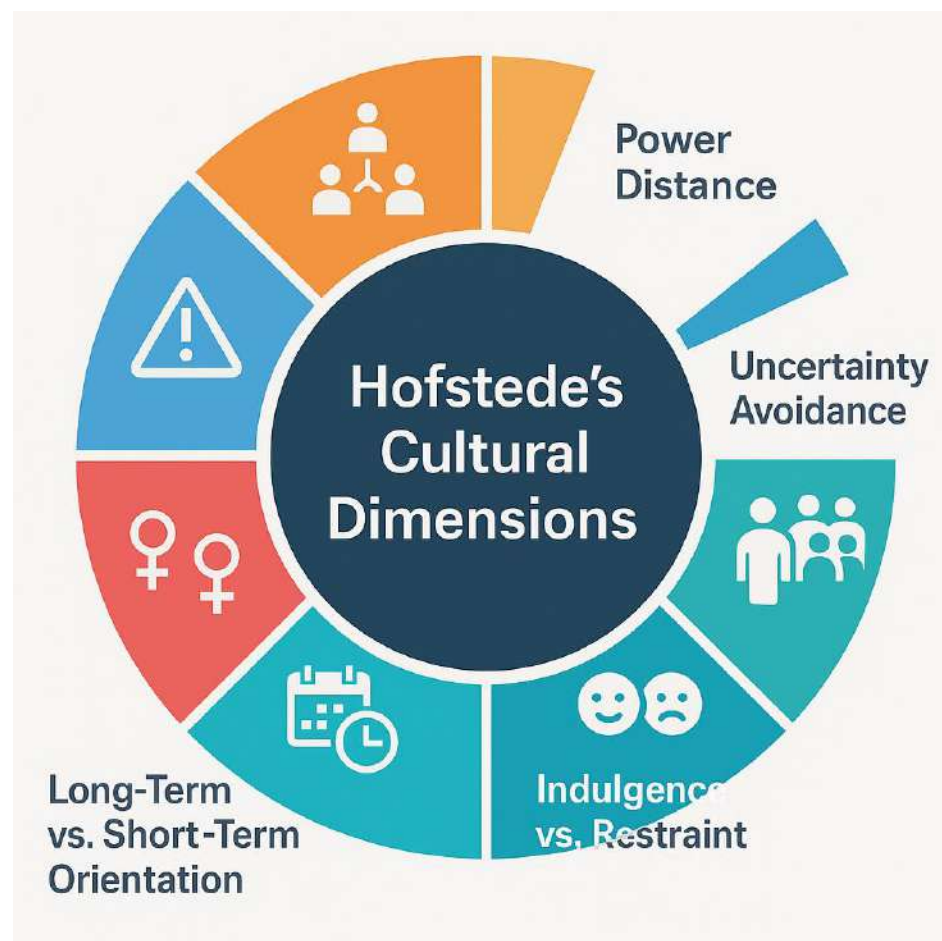
What is Cultural Competence?



- Ability to provide effective, respectful healthcare that meets cultural & linguistic needs.
- Continuous process of learning, reflection, adaptation.
- Goes beyond awareness → requires action in practice.

Foundations of Cultural Competence

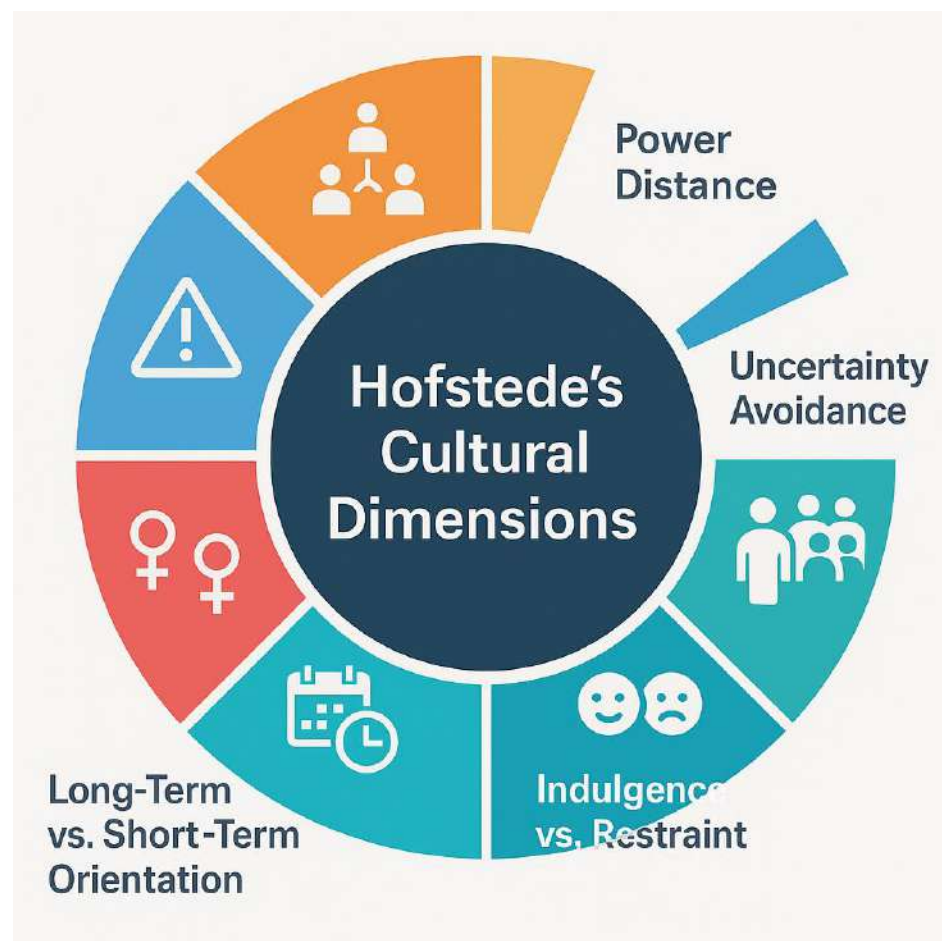
Dimensions of Culture in Healthcare



- **Language & communication styles**
- **Beliefs & values** (family, religion, health practices)
- **Social norms & etiquette**
- **Gender & generational roles**

Foundations of Cultural Competence

Cultural Barriers in Teleconsultations



- Language barriers & lack of interpreter services.
- Differences in health literacy.
- Non-verbal cues lost in video/phone.
- Patient mistrust of technology.

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Global Guidelines on Cultural Competence



- **WHO:** Cultural respect is part of patient-centered care.
- **EU health frameworks:** Promote **equitable access & non-discrimination** in digital health services.
- **AMA:** Telehealth ethics include **cultural sensitivity & patient diversity**.

Foundations of Cultural Competence

Checklist: Foundations of Cultural Competence

- ✓ Respect diversity
- ✓ Avoid stereotypes
- ✓ Adapt communication style
- ✓ Ask, don't assume
- ✓ Learn from each interaction

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Building Trust Across Cultures



- Show respect for patient's identity & background.
- Take time to explain purpose of teleconsultation.
- Validate patient concerns with empathy.

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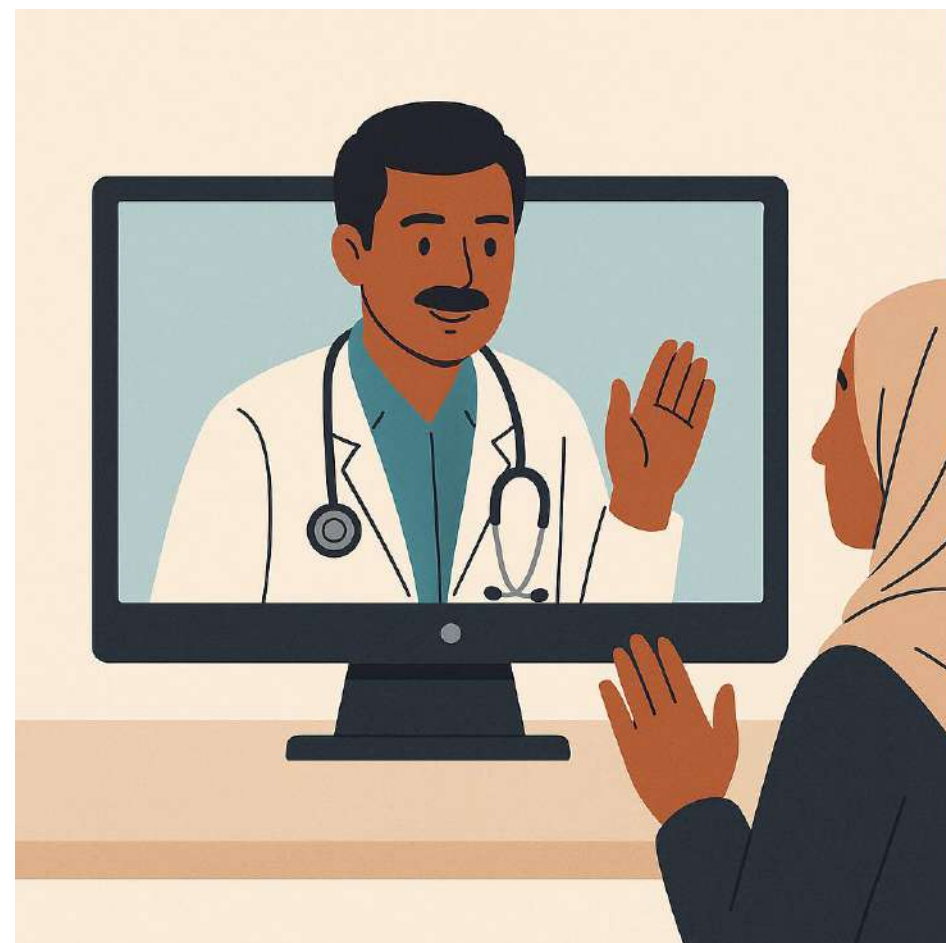
Language & Communication Styles



- Speak slowly & clearly.
- Avoid jargon, idioms, slang.
- Use professional interpreters if needed.
- Confirm understanding by summarizing.

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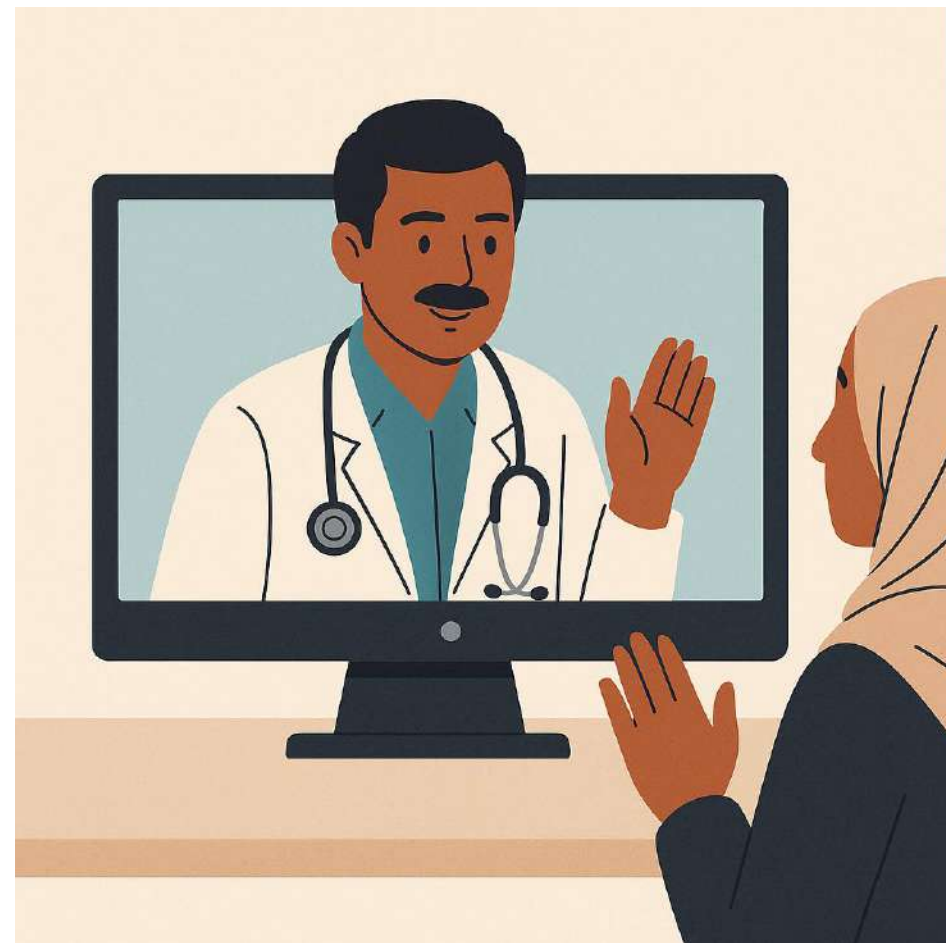
Respecting Religious Norms



- Acknowledge religious beliefs in care plans.
- Respect fasting, dietary rules, modesty.
- Offer treatment alternatives when possible.

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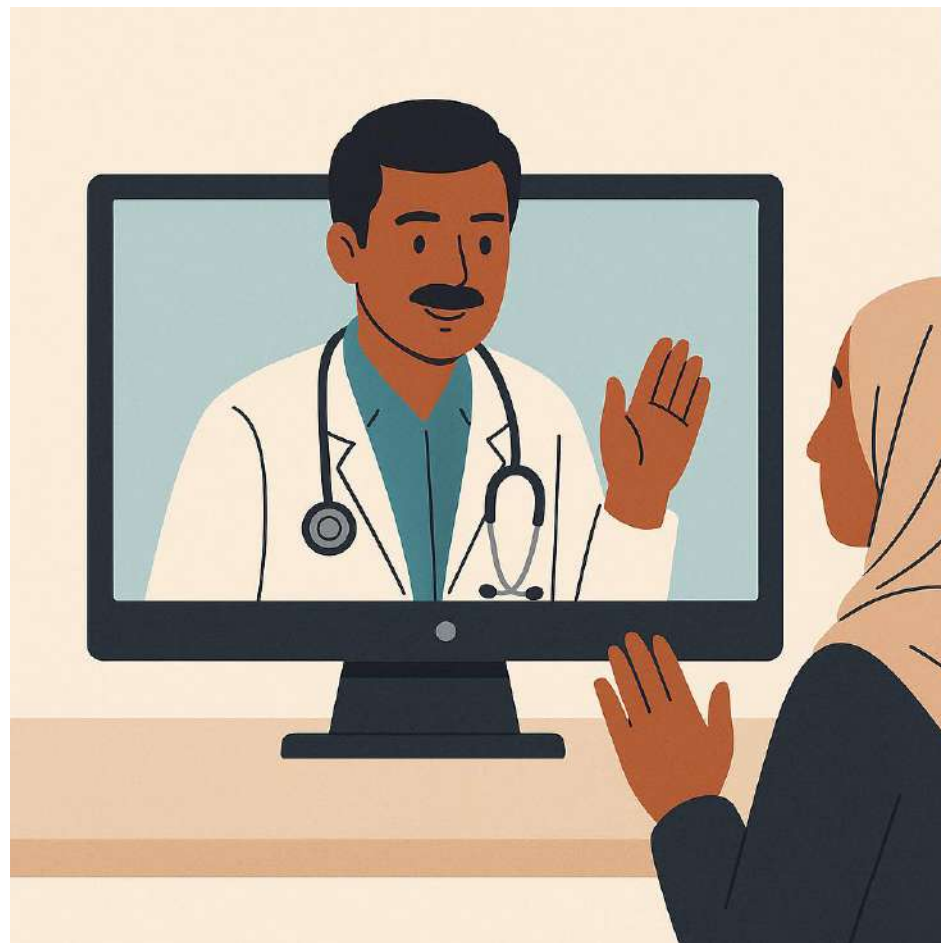
Gender Sensitivity



- Some cultures prefer same-gender providers.
- Privacy & modesty must be respected.
- Acknowledge power dynamics in gender roles.

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Adapting to Local Contexts



- Respect local greeting customs.
- Adjust formality (titles, honorifics).
- Adapt consultation length & style.

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Tools for Cultural Mediation



- Use trained interpreters.
- Multilingual apps & patient materials.
- Cultural liaisons / community health workers.
- Translation features in telehealth platforms.

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Checklist: Cultural Adaptation

- ✓ Respect language preferences
- ✓ Adapt to religious & gender norms
- ✓ Adjust communication style
- ✓ Provide inclusive patient support

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Case Study 1: Language Barrier

- **Scenario:** Patient speaks limited local language → misinterprets dosage instructions.
- **Problem:** misunderstanding, risk of harm.
- **Solution:** interpreter, simplified language, written summary.

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Case Study 2: Gender & Privacy

- **Scenario:** Female patient in conservative culture declines video.
- **Problem:** provider insists on video, trust lost.
- **Solution:** respect preference, offer voice consultation.



Thank you!
