

Help Your Patients Understand Their Health and Healthcare

Why Courtesy and Cultural Competency Matter

Cultural competency helps members feel understood and treated with courtesy and respect, which builds trust and encourages engagement in care. Courtesy supports clear communication and makes members more comfortable asking questions.

When paired with health literacy best practices, it helps members understand health information, make informed decisions, and experience better care.

Every Interaction Counts

Members evaluate their experience based on courtesy, respect, and communication. Consider adding these helpful steps to your practice.



Language Access & Accessibility

- Provide professional interpreter services when needed.
- Document preferred spoken and written language.
- Record interpreter use or refusal.



Communication

- Use plain, jargon-free language.
- Provide written, visual or translated materials as needed.
- Confirm understanding using teach-back method.



Courtesy

- Make eye contact at 15 feet and greet patients at 10 feet (10/15 rule).
- Offer clear, courteous greetings.
- Provide guidance for follow-up tests and treatments.



Cultural Competency

- Deliver care with courtesy and respect.
- Consider members' beliefs and lived experiences.
- Provide inclusive care by honoring names, pronouns and identities.

Learn more about health equity and cultural thinking with **Iowa Total Care's Provider Health Equity Toolkit**. It offers practical guidance on culturally responsive care, including communication, health literacy, language access and interpreter use. Visit [iowatotalcare.com/providertoolkits](https://www.iowatotalcare.com/providertoolkits)