

# **BODY AND SPIRIT: Healing Your Way**

## **LUB CEV THIAB TUS NTSUJ PLIG: Kho Mob Li Koj Siab Nyiam**

### **Learning Objectives and Model Answers to Discussion Questions**

This video provides useful, accessible information for many stakeholders. While it is primarily designed for Hmong health care consumers, it can provide helpful knowledge and tips to health care providers and others. Below are some possible discussion questions and model answers to complement the video and enhance learning. We invite you to submit additional questions and answers –for health care providers, patients, administrators, social workers, Hmong Mutual Assistance Association workers, and others– which have been fruitful in your discussions. We will consider all submissions for future drafts. *Send submissions to [cyp@law.wisc.edu](mailto:cyp@law.wisc.edu) Subject Line: Hmong Health Discussion Questions.*

#### **Learning Objectives for Health Care Providers**

- Understand that Hmong individuals may utilize traditional healing methods, with or without biomedicine
- Appreciate that, in general, health care providers and patients approach traditional and biomedicine differently
- Explore methods to talk with Hmong patients about their health care methods
- Understand the reasons Hmong individuals may avoid routine care and identify solutions
- Understand the value of health care interpreters, and the provider’s role in ensuring good interpretation

#### **Discussion Questions for Health Care Providers**

(1) According to research, medical professionals tend to view traditional, complementary, and alternative medicine (TCAM) and biomedicine systems as exclusive, while patients view these systems as interconnected and choose freely what they believe works<sup>1</sup>. Knowing this, and after watching *Body and Spirit: Healing Your Way*, how might you change your practice with Hmong patients?

Model Answers may include the following:

- Understanding, appreciating, and integrating TCAM into one’s practice is essential when serving immigrant and minority populations<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kiesser, M., McFadden, J. & Bellard J.C. *An interdisciplinary view of medical pluralism among Mexican-Americans*. Journal of Interprofessional Care. June 2006; 20(3): 223-234.

<sup>2</sup> Kiesser at 223.

- Creating a culturally competent, “open and inviting” practice<sup>3</sup> that invites patients to share their health care methods is important. (Examples include: readily accessible interpreters, presence of bi-lingual signage and health materials, asking about TCAM; culturally diverse artwork)
- Asking a Hmong patient whether they seek the services of a shaman, and if so what herbs they might take

(2) How could health care providers ask Hmong patients about TCAM usage, and whether they will actually take medications prescribed, without making assumptions about traditional healing methods?

Model Answers may include the following:

- Make sure your “brown-bag medication reviews<sup>4</sup>” include questions about herbs and TCAM
- Ask open-ended questions such as “What medications or herbs do you think help your symptoms?” or “What do you usually take when you feel like this?”
- Ask who, besides you, the patient seeks help from to treat illness or disease?
- Ask a Hmong patient directly whether they seek the services of a shaman, and if so what herbs they might take

(3) According to interviewees, what are some key reasons that Hmong individuals avoid routine care?

Model Answers may include the following:

- Fear (generalized, of an unknown system, of being sick, lack of trust in diagnosis process)
- Belief that no symptoms = no illness
- Lack of understanding and trust in the U.S. health care system
- No similar system in Laos and Thailand

What can health care providers do to increase utilization?

Model Answers may include the following:

- Create a culturally competent, “open and inviting” practice<sup>5</sup> that invites patients to share their health care methods is important. (Examples include: readily accessible interpreters, presence of bi-lingual signage and health materials, asking about TCAM; culturally diverse artwork)

<sup>3</sup> National Medical Association. *Cultural Competence Primer*. At <http://www.askme3.org/pdfs/NMAPrimer.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Weiss, B. A. *A Manual for Clinicians: Health Literacy and Patient Safety: Help Patients Understand*. AMA Foundation (2007), p. 19 at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/367/healthlitclinicians.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> See fn 3.

- Educate about the importance of preventive care and catching illnesses before symptoms are present
- Normalize and dispel fear by talking about it
- Listen to your patients, do not be dismissive, and be open to alternative treatment options<sup>6</sup>
- On the organizational level, conduct a culturally competence self assessment<sup>7</sup>

(4) Optimal communication, patient satisfaction, and health outcomes occur when Limited in English Proficiency (LEP) patients have access to trained professional interpreters or bilingual providers<sup>8</sup>. What is your facility's interpreter policy/program? Does it need modification to serve a Hmong population?

Answers will vary. Resources regarding improving interpreter services can be found at:

- U.S. DHHS. *Report on Research Project -Access through Medical Interpreter and Language Services* at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/atmil.htm>
- Diversity Rx. *Multicultural Health Best Practices Overview* at <http://www.diversityrx.org/BEST/index.html>

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<sup>6</sup> See fn 3 at pg. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Resource at [http://reflectlearn.org/SUNY\\_Self-AssessmentTool.pdf](http://reflectlearn.org/SUNY_Self-AssessmentTool.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Flores, G. *The Impact of Medical Interpreter Services on the Quality of Health Care: A Systematic Review*. Medical Care Research and Review, Vol. 62, No. 3, 255-299 (2005)

## Learning Objectives for Hmong Patients (and their Family Members)

- Understand that western/biomedicine does not need to replace traditional practice, rather it can complement it
- Learn *Health Tips* that can improve health care experiences
- Understand that illness does not always present symptoms
- Infer the value of preventive care
- Understand that herbs and prescriptions can interact in negative ways
- Comprehend that health care providers need to know all treatments (e.g. *herbal, alternative, over-the-counter, prescription*) a patient is taking
- Identify several behaviors that maintain good health

## Discussion Questions for Hmong Patients

- (1) Sometimes illness does not have symptoms. Knowing this, how might you convince a friend to see a health care provider for preventive<sup>9</sup> check-ups?

Model Answers may include the following:

- Offer to go to the doctor with the friend and call ahead to set up an interpreter
- Explain that it is best to catch an illness while it is still treatable
- Explain that a preventative check-up does not need to replace other treatment

- (2) From the video or brochure, which *Health Care Tips* do you find most helpful? Why?

Model Answers will vary. See *Health Care Tips: Improve Your Health Care Experience* for a complete list of tips

- (3) Traditional herbs can interact with other medications. Think of some ways you can educate your health care providers about traditional medicines you use.

Model Answers may include the following:

- Bring the traditional medicines/herbs to your appointment
- Provide a letter from your shaman which explains the treatments
- Work with your local Hmong Mutual Assistance Association or Hmong Health Organization to organize an educational event

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<sup>9</sup> *Preventive check-ups*—or *well-child check-ups* for children— are routine (annual for adults, more frequently for children up to age 3) health care visits where health care providers can assess health, catch illness early, and promote health behaviors.

(4) At the end of the video what do Nhia Ge Lor, Xay Thor, Song Chen, and others recommend to maintain good health?

Model Answers may include the following:

- Exercise – this can include walking or gardening
- Eat vegetables, avoid a lot of meats and fats
- Eat healthy foods, including traditional Hmong meals