

# Cultural Competence in an Autism Evaluation: A Case Study

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# Case Study

## Background

- 13 year old bilingual Cantonese-English girl → “Lisa”
- Language disorder, social challenges and academic delays
- Family and socioeconomic status

## Reason for Referral

- Increasing emotional outbursts at school
- Psychotherapist’s concerns
- Preoccupations
- Autism evaluation

# Purpose of Sharing Case Study

- A) Draw attention to the issue of misdiagnoses (or lack of diagnoses) due to inappropriate assessment.
- B) Help professionals identify components of a culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment.
- C) Address ways to conduct culturally and linguistically sensitive family conferences.
- D) Support professionals in helping families overcome cultural and linguistic barriers.

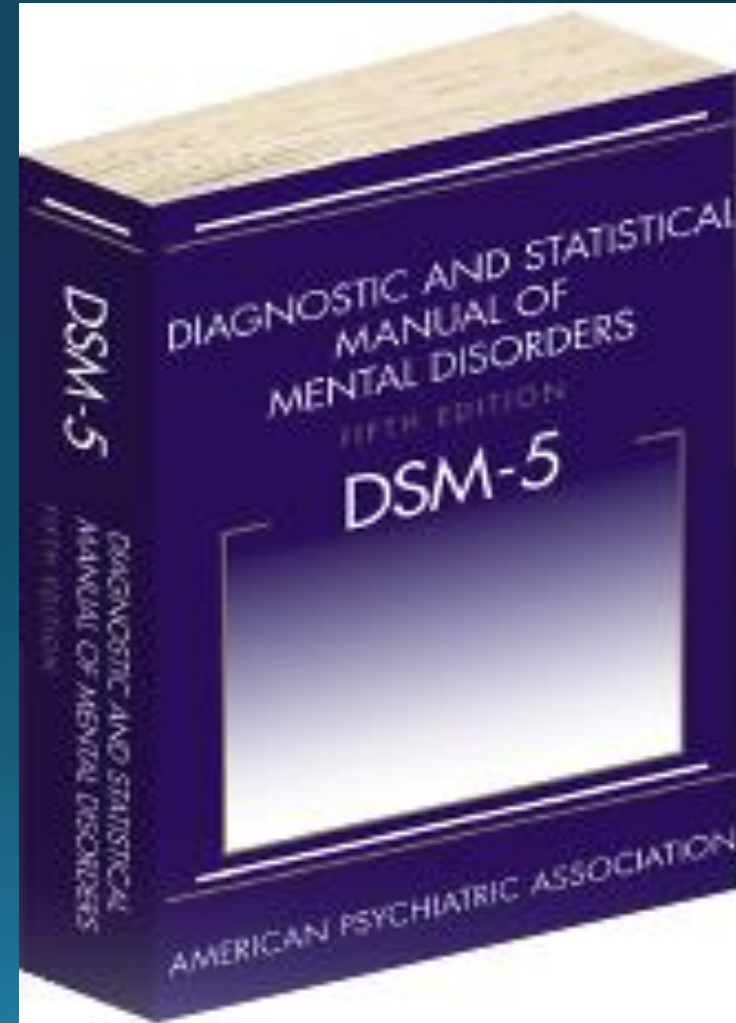
# Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2) Evaluation

- ADOS-2: “The Gold Standard”
- Test limitations
- Understanding family and cultural influences
- Distinguishing DIFFERENCE vs. DISORDER



# Putting It All Together: ASD Diagnosis

- Parent interviews
- Teacher questionnaires
- Developmental history
- DSM-V Criteria



# Culturally and Linguistically Sensitive Family Conference

- Culturally competent interpreter
- Translator & written documents
- Sensitive word choice
- Inviting questions
- Validating concerns
- Empowerment





# Beyond the Evaluation: Overcoming Barriers

## Cultural:

- Self-advocacy
- Values and respect
- Limited understanding of the system

## Linguistic:

- No interpreter
- Written documents were computer translated



# What can you do?

- Recognize cultural patterns, but also understand individual variations
- Follow evidence-based protocol, integrate clinical expertise, and involve input from multiple sources
- Collaborate with interpreters and translators
- Encourage a safe and open communication space
- Anticipate barriers to navigating and accessing special education and healthcare services



The process of achieving cultural competence is lifelong, informed by evidence, and involves self-reflection and humility in recognizing what one does not know, followed by the drive to seek cultural knowledge and experience to fill those gaps.

