

# My culture and my ethnic

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The author states that although they moved away from Haiti and his extended family, his four brothers and two sisters along with his mother settled into a community with Haitian roots. Many of his current friends have a similar background. His culture is very rich. He loves introducing his family to Manje Kreyòl, or Caribbean food.

My traditions and beliefs have remained strongly rooted in my birthplace. My large family is unique in American culture. Coming from a large family has helped me understand sacrifice, love, and tradition. I will admit that I have become Americanized to a degree, but I will always be Haitian. That is the good thing about America. I can live here but still retain my own culture. The first way my ethnic, cultural, and religious heritage will be useful is by knowing the Haitian people. For example, many Haitian children are not vaccinated. When I encounter a parent or child from Haiti that would be one of the first questions I ask. Another question would be if the patient from Haiti had a TB test. Haiti has a higher rate of TB than in other countries. Other healthcare providers might not know these facts. Informing my colleges and fellow Haitians would help patients better understand each other. Sometimes Haitians that have newly arrived do not trust the government, medical staff, or others due to immigration status. If it is revealed that the child or adult does not have immunizations or a TB scan, the patient might feel that INES might be called. This can be very dangerous to the patient and everybody in contact with the patient. I would be able to explain that medical staff does not care about immigration status, only the welfare of the patient. These questions would be useful in my healthcare career.

Although I am a Baptist, most Haitians are Roman Catholic. Sometimes

elements of voodoo are mixed with Catholic rites. This voodoo is not malicious. Healing traditions are common. While modern healthcare professionals might not believe in these traditions, many Haitians and Creoles do. When treating a patient these traditions are important. I can better understand other cultures' traditions. For example, my Native American friend explained that killing cricket indoors is bad luck. Knowing and respecting these different traditions can promote healing in a patient by giving them a positive attitude. While I do not necessarily believe in these traditions, I know that they are important to some patients.

I believe the most important area in which my ethnic, cultural, and religious heritage will be useful is in languages. I speak Spanish, French, Creole, and English. Not only can I translate from Haitian patients, but Spanish, French, and Creole as well. In the healthcare industry, this is very important. The earthquake in Haiti, hurricanes in Louisiana, and other tragedies in areas predominately Spanish, French, and Creole need volunteers to help other healthcare professionals understand the population. Many times family members talk to each other in a native language, while speaking English to the healthcare professional. Sometimes a patient cannot explain properly the problem in English. Knowing different languages will help me understand patients better. This will help patients receive better care. I have always thought being multilingual is an advantage.