

# Chapter 4

## Sociocultural Issues

# Learning Objectives

- 1) Compare the concepts of culture, ethnicity, and religion.
- 2) Explain the consequences of stereotyping mental health clients.
- 3) Describe seven characteristics of culture.
- 4) Identify three ways in which culture influences health and illness behaviors.

# Learning Objectives

- 5) List the six components of cultural assessment.
- 6) Explain the importance of recognizing clients' spiritual or religious practices.
- 7) Identify four topics to be included in the assessment of a client who is a refugee.
- 8) Integrate cultural factors into a holistic plan of therapeutic care.

# The Nature of Culture (p. 30)

- Culture is a total way of life.
  - Shared system of values that provides a framework for who we are
- Race describes a group of people who share distinct physical characteristics.
  - Skin color, facial features
- Ethnicity is associated with the customs, cultural habits, and socialization patterns of a particular group.
  - Values, traditions, expectations, and customs are passed from one generation to another.

# The Nature of Culture cont'd.

## (p. 30)

- Spirituality and religion play important roles in the concept of culture.
- Spirituality refers to belief in a power greater than any human being.
- Religion relates to a defined, organized, and practiced system of worship.
- Often mental health clients have religious components to their illnesses.

# Characteristics of Culture

## (pp. 30-31)

- Culture is an abstract concept, composed of the values, beliefs, roles, and norms of a group
  - Cultural values strongly influence thinking and actions.
- A culture's belief system develops over generations.
  - Formed by feelings and convictions that are believed to be

# Characteristics of Culture cont'd. (p. 31)

- Beliefs about mental health have a strong impact on outcomes of treatment.
- Values and beliefs help to define norms, which are a culture's behavioral standards.
  - Norms are the established rules of conduct that define which behaviors are encouraged, accepted, tolerated, and forbidden within a culture.
  - A role is an expected pattern of behaviors associated with a certain position, status, or gender.

# Characteristics of Culture cont'd. (p. 31)

- Stereotype is an oversimplified mental picture of a cultural group.
  - Stereotyping may take negative, positive, or traditional forms.
  - Prejudice (extreme negative stereotyping)
    - Health care providers need to know and understand their own racial, ethnic, religious, and social stereotypes.

# Characteristics of Culture cont'd. (p. 31)

- Culture is a social phenomenon learned through life experiences and passed from generation to generation.
- Culture is shared.
- Culture reflects its members; it is dynamic, changing, and adaptive.
- An individual's behavior may or may not represent the culture.

# Influences of Culture (p. 31)

- Health and illness beliefs
  - Western medicine
  - Folk medicine
  - Traditional health beliefs
- Illness behaviors
  - Disease is a condition in which a physical dysfunction exists
  - Illness includes social, emotional, and intellectual dysfunctions.
  - Culture has no impact on disease, but illness and its attendant behaviors are strongly influenced by culture.

# Influences of Culture cont'd. (pp. 31-32)

- On mental illness
  - Clients and their care providers may have very different belief systems about mental disorders.
  - Members of a culture may define normal and abnormal behaviors differently from those outside the culture.
  - Cultural descriptions of mental dysfunction are classified as naturalistic illness or personalistic illness.

# Influences of Culture cont'd. (p. 32)

- Stress and coping
- Cultures classify members by gender and age.
- In many cultures, adolescence can be a stressful time.
- Women often are placed in stressful roles as a result of their cultures.
- Ways of coping with stress are culturally determined.

# Cultural Assessment (p. 34)

- Health care providers should practice cultural competence.
  - Transcultural nursing
- All care providers must guard against the tendency to transfer their own cultural expectations onto clients or to make generalizations based on their own cultural attitudes

# Cultural Assessment cont'd. (p. 35)

- Cultural assessments allow us to learn how clients perceive and cope within their world.
  - Communication
    - Verbal and nonverbal components
  - Environmental control
    - How the individual perceives he or she controls the environment
  - Space, territory, and time
    - Space comforts, control over space, concept of time

# Cultural Assessment

## cont'd. (p. 36)

- Cultural assessment
  - Social organization
    - Includes family and the meaning to the client of work, gender roles, friends, and religion
  - Biological factors
    - Biological or physical differences that exist among different cultural groups

# Culture and Mental Health Care

## (p. 37)

- Treating refugees
  - A refugee is a person who, because of war or persecution, flees from his or her home or country and seeks refuge elsewhere.
  - Stress-related problems are a factor.
  - Obtain immigration history and a history of arrival to the new country, time, and who or what was lost.
  - Refugees tend to have a greater incidence of depression, anxiety, and stress disorder.

# Question 1

A learned pattern of behaviors, values, beliefs, and customs shared by a group of people is known as:

- 1) Ethnicity
- 2) Religion
- 3) A culture
- 4) A society

# Question 2

Cultural assessment focuses on six areas. Which of the following is not one of the six cultural assessment areas?

- 1) Communication
- 2) Environmental control
- 3) Space and territory
- 4) Visitation

# Question 3

The nurse is caring for a Chinese client. Which of the following best describes the Chinese culture regarding medicine?

- 1) Health is to reflect a balance of positive and negative energy forces.
- 2) Health is a gift from God.
- 3) Health is defined as the ability to work.
- 4) Health is defined as a state of harmony with nature.

# Question 4

Which group does not seek medical help for illness?

- 1) Hispanics
- 2) Christian Scientists
- 3) Anglo-Saxons
- 4) Navajo Indians

# Question 5

The nurse is working with a client who is a refugee. During the routine cultural assessment, the nurse should obtain all of the following information except:

- 1) Information about the immigration history
- 2) History of the flight and arrival in the new country
- 3) Time in the new country
- 4) Any criminal history