

Vulnerable Populations

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“I have neither given nor receive, nor will I tolerate others’ use of unauthorized aid”.

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Growing up, I never knew I wanted to be a nurse. I wanted to be the exact opposite quite frankly. I did not want to take on the responsibility of tending for another person at their worst. The role of a nurse takes many forms. One role of a nurse is to deliver culturally competent care. Cultural competence also comes along with vulnerable populations and biases.

What is cultural competence? It is continuously increasing your own knowledge and skill in the area of cultural awareness (Hood, 2018, p. 281). As a nurse, this includes many steps that should be taken to deliver culturally competent care. To understand, interact, and be sensitive to different cultures it is important to examine your own personal beliefs, values, and biases. If you know your own weaknesses, you will be more prone to build cultural awareness and learn different culturally specific communication strategies. To do this, we should be interaction with people from different cultures to see how their culture is. Finally, we need to be able to identify and take action of our mistakes. Cultural competence is a key aspect of nursing because we should never want our patients to feel that they do not belong or that they are not receiving the best care from their healthcare workers.

In order to provide culturally competent care, you need to be aware of the vulnerable populations. This includes people who are minority groups. Such as immigrants, the LGBTQ community, and prisoners (Waisel, 2013). When caring for prisoners, it is important to know their individual needs. Prisoners are still people and deserve to have healthcare available to them when they need it.

Tending to the needs of prisoners can be quite difficult. Many biases may arise in this situation. For example, if you have ever had anything stolen from you and have to provide care for a thief, bias will arise. Personally, if I were to ever take care of a rapist, I would have biases

against him/her. For me to provide adequate care to my patients, I think it would be best to not know the crime of my patient that I have been assigned to. It is best to not get attached to your patients and I think this is one of those situations. Knowing the crime of my patient would give entry for biases to occur. Since I have recognized that I have bias towards rapists or anyone that has committed a sexual assault, I will be able to provide better care towards those patients. Acknowledgment of the bias is the first step to providing these patients with proper care. Being able to resolve my bias is the next step.

Nursing comes along with many different challenges. It is important to recognize if you are culturally competent or not so you can freshen up on your knowledge to provide the best care for those patients. The same applies to tending to a vulnerable population. A touch up on your knowledge will give you the tools you need to not offend them. Lastly, recognizing your biases gives you opportunity to grow as a nurse and to not cast judgement.

References

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