

**Vulnerable Population N314**

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**Vulnerable Populations**

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

The world has many different cultures and traditions that are unique to their own beliefs. Many people base their life solely on their culture. Acknowledging the wide range of cultures and learning their tradition can be difficult, “Attainment of cultural competence is a lifelong journey that requires the elimination of ethnocentrism and an unconditional acceptance of cultural diversity unless the practice places another person’s way” (Hood,2018, p.280). It is important to have an open mind and be welcoming of other people’s traditions and customs. In nursing, one cannot be biased and belittle people over their culture. With nursing comes great responsibility, “A developmental process that builds continuous increase in knowledge and skill developmental process in the area of cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, interaction, and skills” (Hood, 2018, p. 281). As a nurse and professional health care worker it is important that throughout the scope of practice and knowledge gained from experience cultural differences are learned and one is careful to respect them. The more one is on the field the better it will be to communicate with a variety of patients from different cultures. Along the path, there may be difficulties and mistakes made trying to understand and comprehend others’ cultures. Discovering that for some cultures like Native Americans and in China, direct eye contact is deemed as disrespectful but in America, it is disrespectful to not use direct eye contact when having a conversation with someone. Something so common in America we must remember that not everyone has the same cultural beliefs. In this field of practice, being open-minded will be a key factor throughout one’s career. As nurses get more interaction with multiple traditions and cultures it will become easier to understand the patients and be more appreciative of the diversity.

In nursing, one will see a variety of people coming from different backgrounds in life. The vulnerable population has an indefinite group of people affected, “The vulnerable populations refer to but not limited to children, minors, pregnant women, fetuses, human in vitro fertilization, prisoners, employees, military persons and students in hierarchical organizations,

terminally ill, comatose, physically and intellectually challenged individuals, institutionalized, ...economically and educationally disabled and healthy volunteers” (Shivayogi, 2013). I specifically want to focus on the mental health drug abuse population. What makes them vulnerable can go in many different directions. A wide range of people who suffer from mental illness end up getting prescribed medications. A significant amount of people ends up becoming addicted to the drugs they are prescribed to the point their own life is at risk. Some end up losing their family’s trust, having economic issues due to only wanting constant drugs and impaired mental status. Now when push comes to shove addicts are most likely going to do anything and everything to get a hold of their daily high. So, unfortunately, some end up on the streets losing their houses due to losing their jobs from the addiction and not having an income. This leads to poverty and with no support from anyone else but themselves they will lack receiving medical attention. On top of having mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, etc. They will have to deal with their daily life struggles, “The vulnerable individuals’ freedom and capability to protect one-self from intended or inherent risks is variably abbreviated, from decreased freewill to inability to make informed choices” (Shivayogi, 2013). Addicts no longer have the same cognitive thinking consciousness and alertness as before. People with drug addictions barely take care of themselves which puts them at risk for health issues and destroying their bodies with drugs does not better. They no longer have scheduled doctor appointments, they are malnourished, and have no support from family members. These people will lack resources health-wise due to being in poverty. They will not have the adequate necessities for regular checkups and society finds it easier to bash people for their situations instead of helping one another out.

Vulnerable populations like those who are abusing the use of drugs are often sent to jail. Some commit robberies to get money to buy more drugs. Others will be caught with illegal drugs sending them to be imprisoned. When taking care of patients, it will come to a point where one

will be put in uncommon uncomfortable situations like patients who are criminals. If I was given a patient and that is imprisoned or had previously been in jail, I would most definitely want to know the crime they committed. It would not change my feelings towards the patient at all, but it would just be for my safety. This patient could have been put in jail for murder, rape, kidnapping, etc. I would solely want to be informed of their crime to know how to protect myself against this person. If I will need an extra staff member in the room to ensure my safety if something was to happen. Patient cares wise I would treat them the same as any other patient without judging. This person is seeking medical attention because they need it. The relationship between nurse and client would be always kept professional.

In my personal experience, I have dealt with patients who were in fact murders, committed arson, and sex offenders. The way I approached them was not any different than I would approach any of my other clients. Of course, I would get nervous thinking of the possibilities of my life being in danger, but I had to push that aside and remind myself I was in a health care facility to keep it professional. I still treated them with respect and kindness not letting their past actions and crimes affect the way I cared for them. The only difference was I was not allowed to enter the room alone for my safety. Honestly being put into situations where I take care of patients who have committed crimes before it becomes has become easier to adjust and calm my nerves down. It helps me gain experience and knowledge on how to handle these situations.

Overall, being able to define cultural competence and learn how to become educated and knowledgeable on other cultures seems interesting. I think it is an advantage to be capable experience the diversity healthcare will bring with different cultures. It is vital that we know in these circumstances more than ever these days to know where your patient is coming from culturally and their beliefs and customs. It will help to not be judgmental and be understanding of them. Being part of a vulnerable population is not uncommon, but it is sad to see the reality of

it. How not everyone can receive the adequate care they need. As for taking care of patients with criminal pasts as a professional worker, it should be common sense to treat everyone the same without being biased or criticizing. Nurses need to keep an open mind and always be open to learning new things every day.

### **References**

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