

Vulnerable Populations

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

In a world full of many cultures and beliefs, maintaining health can be the one aspect of likeness amongst them all. Some cultures may believe in a more holistic or spiritual approach to health and wellness and others may believe in the evolution of science and medications for wellness and health, there are even those cultures who believe in the holistic, spiritual, and science approach combined to achieve wellness and good health. Cultural competency is the process of building continuous knowledge and skill of cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, and interaction with other cultures other than one's own culture (Hood, 2018). The concept of cultural competency is very important when working in healthcare for several reasons, including, the variety of patients one would encounter working as a healthcare professional and the different cultures and beliefs of those patients one may treat during their healthcare career. A culturally competent nurse can provide unbiased care as it is crucial to know and understand the best individual approach to provide quality care for each and every patient regardless of cultures, economic statuses, mental health disorders, and other vulnerabilities that may arise during one's career as a professional nurse.

As a young black woman born and raised in a west side low income neighborhood of Chicago, I can identify some biases when it comes to young black women like myself born into poverty and not having access to quality focused healthcare. My biases aroused from all the years that women that I've known in my life who felt as if they are unheard, unseen, and under treated when it comes to care by health professionals. One of my several reasons for wanting to become a professional nurse is to offset the negative stigma of low income patients as well as African American patients who feel under treated and avoid going to the doctor on a routine basis because of the discomfort they feel when visiting a healthcare office. Stereotypes of African American women being drug seeking often interfere with the individualized care of these patients. In a health care study of African American women and their perception of healthcare

the women commonly expressed the sentiment that healthcare providers were not always responsive to their individual patient needs they also reported that providers did not consider the symptoms with which they presented to be as severe as they experienced and often times minimizing symptoms reported by patients (Okoro, et al.,2020). The under treatment this leads to chronic pain and life threatening illnesses later on. African American women of low income economic statues typically carry health insurance though the state health insurance program and experience unethical bias for having this type of health insurance. If you have Medicaid or any other state issued health insurance the health care process treat you differently (Okoro, et al., 2020).

Other factors that makes this group a vulnerable population is the lack of diversity amongst health care professionals. The lack of representation of African American Nurses and Physicians can be directly correlated to the lack of advocacy for the vulnerability of the African American women population. As a professional nurse with the nursing profession, it is imperative to advocate and speak up for all vulnerable populations by promoting social justice within the healthcare field. Promoting social justice would include acknowledging a patients feelings and perspectives on their own health status while creating a comfortable atmosphere open to conversation and questions from patients(Okoro, et al.,2020). Social justice would also include recognizing social inequality of treatment from providers as well as other health care professionals (ie nurses) and calling them out and educating them on their biases. Showing empathy and creating nurse- client relationships is also a way to fight social injustices in the healthcare setting. taking a few extra minutes into a client assessment to just engage in conversation and asking questions to learn cultural context would make a world of difference in the perspective of nurses and providers to vulnerable populations feelings of receiving quality care.(Okoro, et al.,2020) Implementation of mandatory training for health care professionals that

addresses the lack of health care quality of low-income AA women amongst other vulnerable populations that addresses stereotypes and cultural competency will be the right step in moving to a more socially acceptable plan of care for all vulnerable populations (Okoro, et al., 2020).

Reference Page

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