

N314 Vulnerable Populations

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March 3, 2023

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Providing Proper Care Homeless Veterans

In January 2022 19,565 United States Veterans were considered to be a part of the sheltered homeless population and 13,564 Veterans were considered to be a part of the unsheltered homeless population. Veterans that chose to utilize shelter in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and other supportive settings were considered to be the “sheltered homeless” population while the unsheltered homeless live their lives on the streets and find shelter in places like tents under bridges, alleys, on city streets, or in abandoned buildings or homes. (VA 2023) Veteran affairs and the United States government are working towards an obtainable goal of lowering the homeless population in the United States of America specifically the population of men and women who have served and protected our country.

The definition of cultural competence is creating a process that will increase knowledge and skill development in areas of cultural awareness, knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, interaction, and skills. Nurses utilize cultural competence within their profession daily by interacting with patients in the healthcare setting which includes some of those patients worst days. Nurses who are able to provide patients with honest care and compassion make a difference each day while providing education and trusting relationships that assist the client in feeling comfortable and confident in their care inside the healthcare setting but also provide needed confidence for when the client returns home. A nurse that is well rounded and educated in cultural competence creates a sense of a safe space for clients, their families, and their own coworkers.

Obtaining the goal of cultural competence on such a large scale by assisting the Veteran homeless population in finding stable living arrangements would be a huge start to the process of assisting our veterans with their needs after all that they have sacrificed for our country. Just by

providing a roof over their heads is huge but it is just the tip of the ice burg. We would need to look at the whole picture to provide this population with proper healthcare, psychiatric care, integrate those who are able back into a workplace that they could utilize their skills, and assist with any of the multiple needs they may need personally or their families as well. This vulnerability that our United States Veterans face is not just affecting a handful of individuals it is affecting thousands of Veterans and thousands of their family members. According to the US department of housing there has been a drop in the veteran homeless population of 11% since 2020 and numbers continue to decline. "All Veterans deserve to have what they need to lead healthy, safe, and successful lives and that starts with a place to call home and the data shows we are closer than ever in ensuring that every Veteran in America has a home" States HD secretary Marcia L. Fudge. (Hud 2022)

I personally have a bias for assisting our Veteran population because a large amount of family military presence and I have grown up with a couple of family members that have chosen to live in the homeless population off and on throughout their lives because of mental health issues that are not able to be completely resolved unless they make the choice to do so. I feel like delivering care for our homeless population is a definite must if you just look around your home or your community it will be very apparent that there is no reason anyone in the United States should be living on the streets and going without their basic human needs. I suggest creating grants to assist communities in purchasing, transforming, and running safe shelters for the homeless in buildings that were once store fronts or businesses that have closed. As human beings we should take pride in being compassionate towards our fellow human beings and take the time to look out for each other especially when it involves a vulnerable population such as our homeless Veterans. And as nurses we take an oath to provide compassionate care for our patients and for other human

beings, it is instilled in us to care for others and even though we may become exhausted and lost in the day to day shuffle we are built to provide our clients with compassionate care and cultural competence. I cant wait to experience the day that we are able to say that there are zero homeless Veterans in the United States of America.

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References: center →

← Hud Public Affairs (2022, November 3). *Hud Public Affairs Press Release: No 22*

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← VA Department of Veteran Affairs (2022 January) *Department of Veteran Affairs*

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