

Vulnerable Populations

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Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is not a term that can be easily defined. For each person, the concept holds a slightly different meaning. In a vague, overarching definition, cultural competence is one's ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with those of differing backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, and values. Cultural competence is a key skill to possess in today's diverse world and is even more important for those who partake in careers associated with public contact or caretaking.

Cultural Competence in Nursing Care

Cultural competence is a critical aspect of nursing care. Nurses who do not possess the ability to interact with and respect patients of differing backgrounds often cannot provide holistic and patient-centered care. Cultural competency helps ensure that patients receive care that aligns with their spiritual, religious, or personal belief systems. According to an article included in *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, there is a significant association between care from culturally competent nurses and overall patient satisfaction and trust (Tang et al., 2019).

Black Women in Reproductive Healthcare

Health disparities amongst black individuals are ever present even in today's climate. A specific subgrouping that faces vulnerability within the healthcare system is black women during the labor and delivery process. The Center for Disease Control claims that black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy related complications than their white counterparts (CDC, 2024). The mortality rate amongst black mothers during the birthing process can have many underlying factors including implicit biases, socioeconomical disparities, structural racism, and lack of accessible healthcare. Based on the article published by the Center for Disease

Control there are several aspects that can be addressed personally or institutionally to lower the risk that these women face. This includes identifying personal biases, implementing standardized care amongst all patients, and providing essential race-based trainings to staff (CDC, 2024).

Personal Biases Reflection

Reflecting on one's own personal biases is not an easy task. It is difficult to think that you could hold a subconscious belief about a certain group that could interfere with your personal perspectives and judgements. After examining my potentially biases I have come to realize that I hold an implicit bias against the older adult population. I am often quick to assume that older adults will treat me poorly or hold preconceived judgments about me for my age and gender. However, during my clinical I have been able to be in direct contact with older adults frequently and have attempted to reassess my subconscious bias and reevaluate my thought process when it comes to them.

What are the roles of nurses and the nursing profession in the promotion of social justice?

It has always been my perspective that nurses are prime candidates for the promotion of social justice. This idea is what persuaded me to pursue a career in the nursing field. Circling back to cultural competency, nurses possess skills that make them able to empathize and understand those that differ from them. Empathy and understanding are key components in advocacy for social justice. Nursing and social justice go hand in hand and everyone that pursues a career in the nursing profession should understand that they have key role in advocating for patients and reporting social injustices.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *Working together to reduce Black Maternal Mortality*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/womens-health/features/maternal-mortality.html#:~:text=Black%20women%20are%20three%20times,structural%20racism%2C%20and%20implicit%20bias>
- Tang C, Tian B, Zhang X, et al. (2019). The influence of cultural competence of nurses on patient satisfaction and the mediating effect of patient trust. *J Adv Nurs*. 2019; 75: 749–759. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13854>