

**Vulnerable Populations Paper**

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## **Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence is being able to communicate effectively with people of different cultures and backgrounds. Cultural competence includes being aware of one's own view of the world, educating oneself on different cultural beliefs and practices, and having a positive attitude about peoples' cultural differences (Jain, 2023). In nursing, cultural competence is important because patients of all different backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, and beliefs are treated. Nurses are required to treat all patients with the same respect and dignity. However, nurses need to know that not all patients will be treated the same because of their cultural backgrounds, religion, ethnicity, and beliefs. So, they need to know how to communicate with patients of different backgrounds and cultural practices.

## **Vulnerable Population and Unique Individual Needs**

### **Mental Health**

Mental health has been an issue for many centuries. While it is talked about more now than it was about twenty years ago, it is a growing issue. People who suffer from mental health issues are considered to be one of the most vulnerable populations. Those struggling might lack pertinent information about how to receive and ask for help and may be lacking medical care. The reason for this is that they are at a higher risk of being forgotten, abandoned, and being exposed to more trauma, affecting their mental health even more (Mezzina et al., 2022). When people struggling with mental health feel that they do not have a support system or do not know who to turn to in their dark times, they start to spiral further down into the darkness of their illness. Those struggling need to feel like they have a support system, whether that means their

family helps them through their struggles, being educated on what to do when feelings of hopelessness arise, or even having proper access to medical care.

## **Biases**

### **Personal Bias**

Generally speaking, people who struggle with mental illness have a stigma surrounding them. This stigma might include being called lazy, unmotivated, or even my favorite, getting told that others have it worse than you. Growing up, I was always taught that life is not fair or easy and that I have to work for what I want. On the other side of that, I was also told that I was going to amount to nothing because of my lack of motivation and laziness. Little did we realize at the time, but I was struggling with my own mental illnesses. Once my family realized how bad it was and that I needed medication and professional help, was when their statement turned around. What I mean by this is that instead of saying I was going to amount to nothing, they instead started saying that I could not let my depression control me. What did they mean by this, you may ask? Well, they meant that I could not live in my room and rot. This just meant I was going to have to work harder than a normal person who does not struggle with mental illness would. The way we are raised from infants into adults shapes the way we think and act. The way I was raised, I was taught to work hard and not let my mental health control me. To this day, I live by that. While it is hard, and I have to work at it every day, I am learning to give myself grace and be patient with myself as I learn to live with my mental illnesses.

My bias towards people who struggle with mental health is when they let it control them. I have personally seen what it does to a person, and I know in my heart that I do not want to be like that. Even though it is easier to sit in my room and wallow in self-pity, I choose to have a

life that I am going to enjoy, even if it means having to push myself to get there. What I dislike even more is when others in my family will give grace to those struggling with mental illness but will not do the same for me. At those times, I remind them of myself and how I am not letting my mental illnesses control me.

### **Vulnerable Population Question**

#### **Patient Asking to End Their Life**

I have always thought about this but in a different perspective. I have always said that if I ever get to a point of time where I am just rotting in a bed or unable to make my own decisions, I want my life to end because, at that point, life is not enjoyable anymore. I always thought about what everyone would think and if they would let it happen. However, this is not what the question is asking. The question is asking how I would respond to a patient asking me to end his or her life. Honestly, I would help the patient to end their life. While this may seem cruel and inhumane of me to do, I also realize how cruel and inhumane the world can be. I realize how hard life is with a support system, but if you take that away, then life is almost impossible for some people. If a patient who was struggling with mental illness came in and asked me to help them end their life, I honestly would. I would not jump right into ending their life; I would educate them, help give them the resources they need, and have them sleep on it for a few days. If after those days have passed and they still want me to end their life, then I would gladly help them. I know what it is like to feel helpless and alone, fighting with the demons inside my head wanting them to go away. I was able to quiet those demons with medication. Was it a cure-all? Most definitely not. I still think about suicide from time to time and I have people I can talk to, but I understand how others are feeling. I understand that not everyone has a good support system like I do and I know what it is like to just want the voices to quiet down. I know what it is

like to feel as though the only way out of keeping the voices at bay is suicide. So, yes, I would help in assisting a patient with ending their life. Even if at the end of the day, I am a villain to the patient's family, I will know that I helped that patient stop suffering.

## References

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