

Vulnerable Populations

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Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is important in every aspect of life. There are a variety of cultures in the world, and it is key to understand how to treat others in a different culture. Culture is the way one lives one's life, how one acts and works, and how one recognizes life and death. Cultural competence can be defined in many ways. Cross (1989, as cited in Walkowska et al., 2024, p.2) defined cultural competence as “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.” Knowing the knowledge behind how one should be perceived or acknowledged is how life can have no difficulties. It can be hard when people are biased or have judgment towards another. By having cultural competence or knowing how important it is, recognizing what one's belief is important. Being exposed to different cultures can be difficult; however, accepting the differences can help improve how the population perceives one another.

Cultural Competence in Nursing

It is important for everyone to understand cultural competence and what it means. It is more important for healthcare staff to understand it. Empathy connects patients with their providers and even allows more emotions to reverberate (Srinivasan et al., 2024). Using empathy can help improve patient scores and how they feel in a vulnerable state. Another important factor that goes into healthcare is having compassion. Compassion can show that healthcare workers care for their patients and want to see a better outcome. Having patients from different backgrounds or cultures can be difficult, especially when one does not believe in the same thing. It is important to have cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity in healthcare. By having cultural awareness, a nurse can let their patient recognize their own culture and how it will affect

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their care plan (Walkowska et al., 2024). Cultural awareness is important in nursing because it allows nurses to be more aware of how their patient would like their plan of care, and it can help create the nurse-patient relationship. Another important aspect is having cultural sensitivity. Cultural sensitivity is when a nurse can recognize the patient's needs that surround their culture (Walkowska et al., 2024). It is important that healthcare staff understand how cultural awareness and sensitivity can improve their patient's care and what it means to take care of a patient with different beliefs. Healthcare is constantly evolving with treatments and medications along with culture exposure.

Vulnerable Population

One important vulnerable population is people who have a chronic illness. A chronic illness or disease is defined as a long-term illness (Lebel et al., 2020). These conditions can progress slowly and can be severe in certain cases. This population must live with the condition along with living their own life. It can be very hard, especially if the necessary resources are unavailable in their area. More than half of all deaths are related to a chronic illness (Lebel et al., 2020). In comparison, that means there are a lot of people in the population that have a chronic illness. There are a lot of factors that go into taking care of a patient who has a chronic illness. There are a lot of appointments, medications, and treatment plans. Not everyone has access to a variety of treatments or is able to afford the medication. One important area to look for people who have chronic illnesses is the incarcerated population.

The amount of the population that has a chronic illness means that, more than likely, there are people in prison who have a chronic illness. Lopez et al. (2024, p. 1180) stated, "More than 60% of US prison residents have a chronic medical condition." Prisons have wards to help treat prisoners who get injured or need medical attention; however, not every prison or jail has

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the resources to help their patients with chronic illnesses. It can be hard to provide the necessary needs to a prison patient without the right funding. As the article mentions, “To meet the health needs of those remaining in prison, policy changes to increase health care funding, such as the Medicaid Reentry Act, are needed” (Lopez et al., 2024, p. 1182). There are a lot of things that need to go into what resources can be readily available for the prisoners. If the prison does not have the resources or the medications to help out with their patient, then they could be transferred to a hospital. When a prison is transported to a hospital, the nursing staff that will be taking care of them do not need to know what crime or what was done for them to land in prison. If a nurse is judging their patient or has a bias towards prisoners, it can alter how they are treated or what treatment they can get.

Identified Bias or Judgements

It is hard to say whether someone has specific biases or judgments towards others, especially when they are their own patients. I try not to be a very judgmental person when it comes to taking care of my patients. I can tell that I specifically do not like taking care of younger patients in my unit because, most of the time, they do not want me taking care of them or any nurse or patient care tech. They always think they are better than us, and we often get into disagreements about care, especially younger patients who are involved in gang-related violence. It is sad to say, but I am a little biased toward patients who come in all the time, especially for diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). There are a few patients that I get who come in all the time for DKA, and they always make it seem like they did not do it on purpose or just doing drugs and not taking care of their diabetes, and it irritates me. They did it to themselves but came to the hospital for help. Another judgment I notice that I have is patients who come into the ER for something, but the second they come up to us in the ICU, they immediately want to leave. They

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signed a paper that they are okay with having treatment done, but when we try to do our work and take care of them, they freak out on us and start cussing because they do not need the help.

We always try to explain what it means to be in the ICU and what measurements we take to take good care of our patients. No matter how much we talk to them, they never understand or want to cooperate. Most of the time, they end up leaving against medical advice.

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