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N432: Culture Report: Single Mothers

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Women who are parenting their children alone, without the assistance of a partner, are known as single mothers. Divorce, separation, the decision to have children on one's own, or the passing of a spouse are some of the causes of this (Kim & Kim, 2020). Single mothers are in charge of their family's emotional and material health and may have one or more children. A socially and financially vulnerable demographic, single mothers are susceptible to a range of physical and mental health issues. For example, compared to parents who live together, single mothers had worse physical and mental health (Kim & Kim, 2020).

Many times, single mothers will turn toward their religion to help them feel supported and spiritually connected. As coping strategies, single moms turn to their social networks, support systems, and religious beliefs (Dharani & Balamurugan, 2024). Being a single parent can be difficult, yet faith can provide relief, hope, and direction. For support and a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves, many single moms seek peace in their religious communities. Socializing with other members of their faith communities may provide reassurance to single mothers. Some single mothers may identify as spiritual but not follow organized religion, and not all of them are religious. Depending on their individual opinions and life circumstances, some people may not be religious at all. The ways that single mothers engage spirituality and faith vary widely. Many times, women might feel more comfortable with female providers, especially if they have dealt with any sexual assault by men in the past. For some, it might also be in their religion that they should not be seen by male providers.

Single mothers deal with pain and suffering more than married couples do. These mothers tend to deal with depression, low self-esteem, and anxiety, all while dealing with everything alone (Dharani & Balamurugan, 2024). There was a depression symptom screening done and it was found that single mothers have a higher depression rate than married mothers

(Kim & Kim, 2020). These mothers will have to deal with pain and suffering all throughout their journey of raising their children. They will sometimes feel guilty because their child does not have both parents or because of the challenges that are faced alone. There are not any specific practices relating to labor, delivery, or postpartum for single mothers. This is because all people deal with it in their own way and come up with their own personal plan that works best for them. The only difference is that they have to go through these processes alone and deal with anything that comes their way, without a support system.

The common structure in families with single mothers is that the mother is the primary caregiver and financial support. Being a single mother and managing control without a partner are the main sources of mental stress for single mothers. Psychological stress causes emotional strain, loneliness, low self-esteem, sadness, anxiety, and violence in single mothers (Dharani & Balamurugan, 2024). This can cause many issues in the household and it is shown that adolescent adjustment problems are frequently linked to living with an unmarried mother (Stritzel & Crosnoe, 2023). Many times, single mothers will have to live on their own to raise their children, unless she has support from her parents and then the family might have to live with the mothers' parents. These children have hard times with only one parent and have to learn to be independent much faster than a child with both parents. Many single mothers will have to deal with their children acting out and this can put more mental stress on the mother.

The normal communication for this culture is from the mothers. They do not have any assistance when it comes to speaking up about things and have to face many challenges (Dharani & Balamurugan, 2024). Single women can communicate in a variety of ways, such as by talking to friends about the delights and challenges of parenthood, asking loved ones for emotional support, negotiating co-parenting situations, and standing up for their wants and rights. Open

communication is crucial for single moms to preserve their emotional health, create networks of support, and make sure their children prosper. The verbal and nonverbal communication will depend on the mothers' specific culture and differs all over the world. These cues are related to their race, religion, and country.

Many times, the specific diet that single mothers will have will depend on their financial status and how much they are able to afford. These single mothers will normally follow the typical after birth diet that is recommended by the healthcare team, unless they have a specific belief that they choose to follow. Hospitalization can be greatly impacted by culturally specialized dietary needs, particularly after childbirth or the postpartum period. These dietary requirements, which may be based on ritual, religion, or personal beliefs, may have an impact on a patient's sense of well-being, comfort, and respect while they are in the hospital.

How individuals and communities view healthcare, especially throughout the childbearing years, is greatly influenced by core values. These values affect how healthcare workers interact with and support pregnant women, including single moms, as well as the decisions they make throughout pregnancy, labor, delivery, and the postpartum period. Some of the ways that these values impact healthcare relating to the childbearing experience is that these mothers will have to go through the birthing process alone. They will have to be the decision maker for everything and not have someone where to be their support system and help them navigate through all of the hard decisions. These values have the power to influence women's decisions about prenatal care, birth planning, postpartum healing, and interactions with medical professionals. In order to provide culturally competent, patient-centered care that promotes mothers' physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being during one of the most important life changes, medical professionals must comprehend and uphold these core principles.

The first tip students should use is being patient and supportive of the mother, they are having to deal with a lot and be alone through it all. The student can help these mothers feel comfortable and understand that someone is there for them. The next tip would be to make sure you know what the mother wants to do and follow her plan of care. This can be very important for them and help them get the proper care that they need. The last would be to offer the mother meals, encouragement, and if she needs some time away from the baby to get some sleep, then be able to provide that to her. For example, if the mother is so worn out and doesn't want to do much, then offer to change the baby or help her feed them.

References

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