

Cultural Implications in Nursing

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Throughout their career, nurses encounter many different people and cultures. Each patient has their background and story that makes them unique. It is crucial as a nurse, to pay special attention to the care of special populations. Examples of special populations range from people who are incarcerated, mentally ill, or of lower socioeconomic status, to the unborn and more. How we care for people of these specific groups is vital to their healthcare experience. It is of utmost importance to be sensitive and to avoid judgement when interacting with special populations. Just taking the time to learn and explore people's differences can help to appreciate each patient better.

Cultural Competence

“As society becomes increasingly diverse, transcultural care has become an important aspect of healthcare. The need for clinicians to become more sensitive to cultural differences and gain an understanding of transcultural concepts has been repeatedly stressed” (Coffman, 2004). This statement is so important in the healthcare field. With the population in the United States becoming progressively diverse, healthcare providers must pay special attention to the culture and background of each of their patients. Being culturally competent means that the healthcare worker acknowledges the differences among each patient and can alter the delivery of care to meet the patient's needs best.

Challenges Among Cultural Diversity

One of the main issues regarding different cultures is communication. Communication doesn't only involve spoken language. It encompasses things like body language and interpreters as well. Not being able to communicate with a patient directly can make it difficult to relate to the patient. Using different forms of body language or hand signs can be a way to help promote

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communication. Doing some simple research on the client's culture and what some typical non-verbal communication cues are can drastically improve relationships between the nurse and patients.

Different cultures also have varying healthcare techniques. Some cultures rely heavily on rituals and religious practices to aid healing. Again, it is important to be aware of those specific practices when you are taking care of a culturally diverse individual. Even though the nurse may not appreciate the importance of the ritual or religious practice, they should still find ways to allow the patient to incorporate it into their healthcare if the situation allows it. Some cultures may only allow women or men to provide healthcare to the patients. If that is the case for a culturally diverse patient, it may be necessary to have the preferred gender give the care to make their healthcare experience most beneficial.

Another challenge that I am going to talk about is socioeconomic status. Individuals of low socioeconomic status face many different challenges when it comes to healthcare. One of those challenges is that they may not have the access to the basic healthcare they need. Yearly wellness checks or visits to a primary care physician may not be feasible for a patient of low income. Also, some individuals are so used to figuring how to manage on their own that asking for help is very difficult. There are resources out there to help with the cost of healthcare and medications, but some patients just don't want to ask for help.

One article I came across talks about the diversity among young children and the challenges it brings to school nursing. Some issues that these children are facing is hostility from peers and staff. Many of these children have gone through enough trauma in their life already. The school nurse has to educate other students and staff about the best ways to handle culturally diverse students (Clausson, 2019).

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Personal Bias

While I like to think that I am very accepting of other diversities, I know that I am not perfect and have some areas that need to improve on. One area that I struggle with is people of low socioeconomic status. I tend to jump to the conclusion that they just don't care, when in reality that is not true at all. Many people of low socioeconomic status take great pride in their life and what they have accomplished. Some people have so much pride, that asking for assistance to help with healthcare needs is very difficult. Due to education reasons or family background, they may not know about the benefit of healthcare. Which is why it is our job as a nurse to help educate them, in a non-judgmental or biased manner.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many different cultural implications that affect healthcare as a whole. Being aware and educated about the different cultures you may deal with as a nurse is so important. If you don't know how to deal with a patient because of their diversity, use various resources to obtain that information. It may also help to ask yourself questions regarding cultural issues and biases. One example would be to ask yourself whether or not you would want to know the crime of the prisoner to whom you have been dealing with. For me personally, it wouldn't matter because every patient deserves the same level of care. Reflecting on the different cultures and how you would handle each situation can help to prepare you for situations that may present themselves. Diversity is something that should be celebrated and not discouraged among our patients.

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Resources

Clausson, E. K. (2019). Migration, School Nursing, and School Health Services. *The Journal Of School Nursing: The Official Publication Of The National Association Of School* , 35(5), 315. doi: 10.1177/1059840519866531

Coffman, M. J. (2004). Cultural caring in nursing practice: a meta-synthesis of qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 11(3), 100–109. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.lakeview.col.edu:2090/ehost/detail/detail?vid=12&sid=64aaf336-0483-4729-a8be-ac66dbc80cc2@pdc-v-s_essmgr03&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ==#AN=15689144&db=mnh