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Individual and Family Development
Week 1

I choose the book *Journey Across Life Span* to discuss three interesting points.

The first important point in the lecture was about The American Health System. As someone from Brazil, I was struck by the realization that despite having a higher poverty level compared to the United States, Brazil has a more efficient and cheaper health system regarding urgency and emergency care.

One of the key differences between the two health systems is accessibility. In Brazil, health care is mixed: it is provided by the public and private systems. The public system is available to all citizens regardless of their income or insurance status. Anyone needing health care, including urgent and emergency care, can receive it without financial barriers. In contrast, the American health system is based on a private insurance system, making it difficult for some individuals to access health care, particularly those uninsured or underinsured.

Another difference is the availability of primary care services. Brazil has a well-established network of primary care clinics and centers that provide the population with preventative care, screenings, and basic health services. This has helped improve the population's overall health and reduce the burden on emergency care. In the United States, primary care services are less accessible and often require a specialist referral, making it more difficult for some individuals to access the care they need.

Additionally, the government manages the public healthcare system in Brazil, allowing for a more centralized and coordinated approach to healthcare delivery. This helps to ensure that resources are distributed equitably and that all citizens have access to the care they need. In the United States, the healthcare system is more fragmented and relies on a mix of public and private insurance, which can lead to disparities in access to care and health outcomes.

Overall, while the American healthcare system has its strengths, the comparison to the healthcare system in Brazil highlights some of the challenges and shortcomings of the American system, particularly in terms of accessibility, primary care services, and coordination.

Understanding how the American Health System works, its limitations and strengths will help me work more consistently as a counselor.

The second point that caught my attention in the first week's lectures of the book "*Journey Across Life Span*" is the importance of culture in care services in the United States. As a country with a diverse population representing people from around the world, the United States has a unique challenge in providing care services sensitive to its citizens' cultural needs and beliefs.

One of the critical issues is the need for more cultural competency among healthcare providers. Many healthcare providers in the United States may need to gain the knowledge, skills, or understanding to provide care sensitive to their patient's cultural needs. This can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication, negatively impacting the quality of care and the health results of patients from diverse backgrounds.

Another issue is the need for more language access in healthcare services. For many individuals from diverse countries, language can be a barrier to accessing healthcare services. The

availability of interpreters and translated materials can help to overcome this barrier, but it can be challenging to find, particularly in rural or remote areas.

Additionally, cultural beliefs and practices can affect how individuals understand and approach health and illness. For example, some cultures may emphasize traditional healing practices, while others may rely more on Western medicine. Understanding these cultural beliefs and practices can help healthcare providers provide more appropriate and effective care for their patients.

Overall, the importance of culture in care services is a significant issue in the United States. Ensuring that healthcare providers are culturally competent and that care services are sensitive to patient's cultural needs and beliefs can help improve the quality of care and health outcomes for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The third point was about the discussion about the definition of family across time.

The changing definition of *family* over time is an important topic to understand for several reasons. One reason is that it helps to explain how family structures and dynamics have changed over time. For example, in the past, families were often large, extended units that included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins living together. This type of family structure often resulted in a strong sense of community and support within the family. However, with the rise of the nuclear family in recent times, families have become smaller, and the emphasis on the nuclear family has resulted in a shift in family dynamics and interactions.

Another reason why understanding the changing definition of family is important is that it helps to explain how family roles and responsibilities have changed over time. In the past, the traditional roles of men and women were more clearly defined, with men often being the primary breadwinners and women being responsible for raising the children and managing the household. However, with changes in the definition of family, these traditional roles have become more fluid and flexible.

Furthermore, the changing definition of the family also has implications for how society views and understands family. The traditional nuclear family was considered the ideal and the only acceptable family structure in the past. However, today, society is more accepting of various family structures, including single-parent households, composite families, and non-traditional arrangements. This shift in societal views of the family can have important implications for how families are treated and supported by government policies and social services.

Overall, understanding how the definition of family has changed over time provides valuable insight into how family dynamics and interactions have evolved and how society views and understands family. It can also help inform policies and practices that support families and their well-being.