



CULTURAL PRACTICES AFFECTING HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

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Objectives

- Explains cultural variations that will influence physical assessment.
- Discusses the various techniques of communication that can inhibit or enhance a health assessment.
- Describes the nursing implications when interviewing a client from a different cultural background.
- Culturally Responsive Care - Care centered on client's values & beliefs into the plan of care

Cultural Concepts

- **Culture** – Thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups
- **Diversity** – Refers to the state of being different
 - Factors include sex, age, culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and religious affiliation
 - Occurs between cultural groups but also within a cultural group
- **Cultural Competence** – Caregiver's ability to work effectively within the cultural context of the patient.
 - Includes cultural desire, awareness, knowledge, skills, and encounters
- **Assimilation** – Process of developing a new cultural identity
- **Acculturation** – Incorporation of traits from another culture, often from the host society or dominant culture

Cultural Concepts cont'd

- **Race** – Social construct which groups humans based on ancestry and cultural & social characteristics, holds no scientific merit
- **Racism** – Refers to assumptions held about other groups such as that race is biologically discrete and unequal
 - Can exist at an individual level or at an institutional level
- **Ethnography** – Study of human cultures with a focus on cultural patterns of behaviors and thoughts.
- **Ethnicity** – Relationship among individuals who believe they share cultural characteristics that make them a distinct group
 - Often used interchangeably with the term race

Cultural Concepts cont'd

- **Ethnocentrism** – Belief in the superiority of one's own culture and lifestyle
- **Generalization** – Statements of common cultural patterns
 - May not hold true at an individual level which leads to stereotypes
- **Stereotyping** – Assumptions that an individual reflects all characteristics of a larger group
- **Prejudice** – Preconceived notion that is not based on sufficient knowledge which can lead to discrimination
 - Can be positive or negative
- **Health Disparities** – Differences in care experienced by one population compared with another population

Transcultural Nursing

- Madeleine Leininger (1925-2012) is the founder of the worldwide Transcultural Nursing movement
- Theory of culture care diversity and universality
- Strives for culturally responsive care which takes into account the context in which the client lives.
- "That the culture care needs of people in the world will be met by nurses prepared in Transcultural Nursing".
- "The ultimate goal of the theory is to provide cultural congruent nursing care practices".



Cultural Competence

- **Cultural Desire** – Having the motivation to become more culturally aware, knowledgeable, and skillful
- **Cultural Awareness** – Examining your own prejudices and biases but also understanding your own cultural background
- **Cultural Knowledge** – Obtaining a solid foundation on various cultures around the world
- **Cultural Skills** – Ability to collect culturally relevant data in a culturally sensitive manner
- **Cultural Encounters** – Face-to-face encounters with individuals from diverse backgrounds and adapting your previously held beliefs to prevent stereotyping

Culturally Responsive Care

- Recognize clinical differences among different ethnic and racial groups
- Know how the patient communicates best (verbal/body language; space/time orientation)
- Respect other's belief systems and the effects those beliefs have on well-being
- Build trust... through honesty, respect, and acceptance of others' points-of-view/needs

Verbal Communication

- Vocabulary, grammar, tone, rhythm, speed, pronunciation, and silence
- Wide diversity in style within each language
- Get translator if patient doesn't understand English – in General Hospital call Health Care Interpreter Network (HCIN) 323-226-3600
- Translator – converts written material from one language to another
- Interpreter – transforms a spoken or signed source language into the equivalent in a target language maintaining the original intent
- Cultural broker – an effective interpreter engages both the speaker and the listener to effectively transmit the nuances present in each language

Nonverbal Communication

- Majority of communication occurs with body language
- Facial expressions
- Touch
- Eye contact
- Body position
- Arm placement
- Hands/fingers
- Personal space
- Silence

Personal Space

- Proxemics is the study of distance between people in their interactions
- Western societies have
- Intimate zone – 0-1 ½ ft
- Personal zone – 1 ½-4 ft
- Social zone – 4-12 ft
- Public zone – 12 ft and beyond
- Caregivers are often working in a patient's intimate zone so must be aware at all time of the client's response

Nutritional Patterns

- Staple foods- readily available foods within a certain culture or region
- Each culture defines what foods to eat or not eat for certain illnesses
- Be aware of holiday foods for different cultures
- Be aware of Religious practices associated with foods
- When in doubt, ask the patient or his/her family
- Compare ordered diet type with culture

Family Relationships

- Include a cultural assessment of the client and family as part of your overall assessment
- Roles of specific family members
- Discuss the client's wishes in regard to family involvement
- Do not make assumptions about beliefs or practices of family members
- Use the richness of diversity within a family group as an asset to your practice

Religious & Spiritual Practices

- Important to the patient?
- Helps the patient cope?
- Influences or conflicts with medical decisions?
- Degree of involvement with spiritual community
- LAC/USC Chaplains: Spiritual Care Department #409-4715

Complementary & Alternative Medicine (CAM)

- Western medical practices - Conventional medicine, biomedicine, & allopathic medicine
- CAM therapies are practiced all over world
- Many are based on practices handed down over thousands of years
 - Examples Egyptian, Chinese, Indian, Greek, and Native American traditional medicine
- Other therapies are more recent such as bioelectromagnetics, chiropractic, and mind-body approaches
- Complementary medicine – CAM used together with conventional medicine
- Alternative medicine – CAM used instead of conventional medicine

Concepts in Alternative Healing

- Holism - Combination of mental, emotional, spiritual, relationship, & environmental components
- Humanism - Perspective that mind and body are indivisible; well-being is a combination of personal satisfaction and contributions to the large community
- Balance - A desirable point between mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and environmental components
- Spirituality - Involves relationship with self, others & higher power. Gives us meaning & purpose in life.
- Energy - The force that integrates mind, body & spirit
- Healing Environments – Created by empowering patients with the knowledge, skills, & support to help them make healthy decisions

Healing Modalities

- Ayurveda - Traditional Indian system of medicine
 - Focus on balance between individual health and quality of life uses individualized diet, herbal treatment, and yogic breathing practices
- Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) – Focus on the uninterrupted flow of body energy or Qi using acupuncture, acupressure, massage, herbal medicine, qi gong, and t'ai chi
- Native American Healing – The Great Power or Divine Spirit is the only one who heals; a Medicine man or woman can use ceremonial treatments such as a sweat lodge, singing, dancing, vision quests, smudging, or herbs to help the sick individual achieve balance of mind and body
- Curanderismo - a traditional Latin American healing system – Curanderos or Curanderas use religious rituals, herbs, cleansing rites, and prayers in their healing therapies.

Botanical Healing

- Herbal Medicine - Using plants to treat illness and promote health
 - Important to discuss with use of herbal supplements with client because of possible side effects or interactions with medication
- Aromatherapy - Therapeutic use of plant-derived, aromatic essential oils to promote physical and psychological well-being.
 - Sometimes used in combination with massage and other therapeutic techniques as part of a holistic treatment approach
- Homeopathy - A system of therapeutics based on the use of natural substances which produce symptoms similar to the disease being treated
 - Stimulates the self-healing capacity of the client
- Naturopathy – Naturopaths mix and match different approaches potentially using all CAM therapies to customize a treatment plan for each individual. Rare use of prescription drugs with a focus on supporting the body's natural healing processes using a wide variety of therapies, such as hydrotherapy, heat, massage, and herbal medicine.

Manual Healing

- Chiropractic – Practitioner performs adjustments to the spine & other parts of the body to correct alignment
- Massage therapy - scientific manipulation of soft tissues of body that loosens muscles, improves blood flow & movement of lymph fluid, and improves flexibility & range of motion
- Acupuncture - Involves use of sharp, thin needles that are inserted at acupuncture points to relieve pain and cure illness – moderates the flow of qi
- Acupressure - Same points on body used as in acupuncture, but are stimulated with finger pressure instead of needles
- Reflexology - Therapeutic method of relieving pain by stimulating predefined pressure points on feet, hands, and ears
- Hand-Mediated Biofield Therapy - Involves Therapeutic Touch, Healing Touch, and Reiki

Mind-Body Therapies

- Yoga – Breathing exercises with body poses but also a way of life or philosophy - can be used as ethical guide towards enlightenment
- Meditation – Relaxing the body & easing the mind to cope with stress or feel oneness with God or the universe
- Hypnotherapy – Hypnosis used to treat medical or psychological disorders
- Guided Imagery - Use of focused attention to change behavior and reactions to stressors
- Biofeedback – Uses visible or audible evidence to help a client control physiological responses
- Qi gong – Chinese discipline uses breathing and mental exercises combined with body movements
- T'ai chi – Combines physical fitness, medication, and self-defense
- Pilates - Series of nonimpact exercises to develop strength, flexibility, balance, and lung capacity – developed in a WWI prison camp

Spiritual Therapy

- Faith – Belief in a 'higher' power or being, often linked to adherence to a particular religion or belonging to the congregation or church
 - Power to accept the nature of life as it is and life in the present
- Prayer – Communication and fellowship with the Creator, a Deity, nature, or in a more general spiritual sense
 - Provides clients comfort, increases hope, and promotes healing and psychological well-being

Miscellaneous Therapies

- Music Therapy – Relaxation and distraction during procedures, reduces both pain intensity and distress
- Humor & Laughter - Relieves tension/anger, establishes rapport or relationship, helps learning, helps coping with difficult feelings
- Bioelectromagnetics - Living organisms interacting with electromagnetic fields – magnet therapy
- Detoxifying Therapies – Detoxification – Hydrotherapy, Colonics, Chelation therapy (EDTA for lead poisoning)
- Animal-assisted therapy - Used for physical or psychological conditions
- Horticultural Therapy - Gardening as adjunct therapy to occupational and physical therapy
