

Cultural competency in nursing



Importance of Cultural Competency in Nursing Culture consists of patterns of behavior acquired and transmitted symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consist of historically derived and selected ideas and especially their attached values (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952).

Knowledge of cultural diversity is vital at all levels of nursing practice, whether in a clinical setting, education, research or just administration. The changing demographics of the nation as reflected in the 1990 census will increase the cultural diversity of the U. S. population by the year 2000 and what have heretofore been called minority groups will, on the whole constitute a national majority (“ American Nurses Association,” 1990).

Nurses having the knowledge and skills dealing with diverse culture can strengthen the patient care relation. It helps the nurse better understand and interact with the patient and help them with their need. There are barriers to cultural competence like stereotyping, discrimination, racism, and prejudice.

We as nurses are taught to overcome these barriers in order to provide effective care. Cultural competence is an ability to provide effective care for clients who come from different cultures. It calls for good communication both verbal and nonverbal, body language, simple things like addressing by last name, maintaining space, eye contact. If we as nurses are aware of the diverse culture we work in or live around can help us better serve the patients. We need to be flexible in adapting other cultures and beliefs and respect them.

For example, in the operating room setting, the patient with language barrier is very anxious before surgery. As a nurse I do my very best to make sure the patient understands the procedure, and we as nurse will be there for the patient in the operating room. I go a step further and talk to the family and assure them that I will take good care and update them of how the patient is doing during surgery. This helps the family and the patient with language and cultural barriers.

The importance of Cultural competence helps us eliminate cultural barriers, and see the entire picture of the patient to improve quality of care with diverse cultural backgrounds and learn to listen and understand and how we respond to them is greatly influenced by culture.