

How can community health nurses apply the strategies of cultural competence to th...

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## **Application of cultural competence approaches**

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Overwhelming evidence suggests that culturally competent nursing care greatly enhances patient outcomes. On account of this, various professional bodies and associations, the federal government and the private sector now require nurses to be capable of providing culturally competent care.

Associations such as the American Nurses Association have developed standards for enhancing the cultural competencies of nurses. This paper will explore how community health nurses can apply the following strategies for cultural competence to their practice: cultural preservation, cultural accommodation, cultural re-patterning, and cultural brokering.

Cultural accommodation entails supporting and facilitating the use cultural practices that have been shown not to be harmful (College of Nurses of Ontario, n. d.). It helps in the achievement of desired outcomes. For example, a nurse may support the practice amongst Mexican mothers of placing metallic objects such as a key or a coin on the umbilicus of a new born baby. The practice has been found to promote faster healing of the raw umbilicus.

Cultural re-patterning entails working with individuals, families, and communities to help them change harmful cultural practices (College of Nurses of Ontario, n. d.). For example, diabetic patients from Latino communities tend to use traditional herbs that have been found to have adverse effects when used with hypoglycemics such as insulin. A nurse needs to negotiate with such patients to abstain from such traditional medications.

Cultural brokering involves the use of a health care intervention via which the nurse increasingly utilizes cultural as well as biomedical knowledge and skills to negotiate with both the client and health care system for a beneficial and effective care plan (National Center for Cultural Competence, 2011). A community health nurse caring for an epileptic child can help explore family belief systems affecting patient and family compliance with medications and medical appointments and then negotiate with both the family and health care providers on how these problems can be resolved effectively. In conclusion, nurses have to be able to utilize the various evidence-based cultural competence strategies as current circumstances force them to care for patients drawn from diverse cultures. These strategies enhance patient outcomes and need to be tailored to the specific situation as evidenced in the examples discussed.

## References

National Center for Cultural Competence (2011). Promising practices: Cultural brokers help families and providers bridge the cultural divide.

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