

# Cultural awareness in nursing practice

Science



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Introduction In this essay my aim is to describe and discuss my own Filipino cultural background and how it might influence my nursing practice. Culture is our way of living (Wepa, 2005). It is also shaped by our values, beliefs, norms, and practices that are shared by members of the same cultural group (Giger & Davidhizar, 1995).

I will be discussing some of the values and traits that we Filipinos have in common such as pagmamano and po at opo or gestures that show respect to our elders, kagandahang loob or shared humanity, (pakikipagkapwa-tao or regard for others, bayanihan or comradeship or cooperation and lastly, tiwala sa Diyos or trust in God. I will also include some of our shared traditions and beliefs and try to link my cultural experiences to my nursing practice. Brief Background of the Philippines Philippine is located in Southeast Asia, with Manila as its capital city.

Filipinos are basically of Malay ancestry, though proof of foreign influence can be trailed in our culture. We are actually a blend of different cultures rolled into one. For three centuries we were under the Spanish colony, as a result, there is a significant amount of Spanish and Mexican influence in our customs and traditions. Then later, under the American regime for four decades and their obvious contribution to us is the English language. Other ethnic groups such as the Chinese and Japanese have also influenced our way of living.

Pagmamano, po at opo or gestures that show respect to our elders

Pagmamano and po at opo or gestures that show respect to elders go hand in hand. Pagmamano is holding an elder's one hand and placing on your

forehead and the phrases po at opo are used to show respect and courtesy when talking to someone in authority and elder. Filipinos are not used to calling people in authority by their first names; we say their designation first before their name, as we consider calling them by their names as rude and mal educada or uneducated. I wish to take this trait of showing respect to the elders and to everyone in my nursing practice by advocating and protecting the rights of the client in order to prevent harm and recognizing their culture when it comes to collecting and storing health information (NCNZ, 2005). I can also apply this trait in my interaction with my colleagues by valuing their personal culture and contribution to the team. Kagandahang loob or shared humanity and Bayanihan or comradeship Kagandahang loob or shared humanity refers to being able to help others in time of needs. Related to this is the bayanihan or comradeship which Filipinos are famous for.

We come in unity to help our family or the community in one spirit in attaining a common goal. Best example is in time of calamity; we gather together and extend our helping hands to those who need them without expecting in return. It is an act of selflessness, willing to be of service for other's welfare. Showing hospitality to strangers is also an example of kagandahang loob that we are famous of, not that we are the only one that is hospitable. Even the humblest home along the road can be offered as a temporary shelter for a stranger who has lost his way.

We consider it also impolite to not invite an unexpected visitor that arrived during mealtime, to sit down and share what we have on the table. In cases that the unexpected visitor needs to stay for the night, he or she will be

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offered the best room in the house to the extent of having the host to sleep in the sala or lounge. This trait I intend to instil in my nursing practice by being fair and truthful to my client and colleagues, by being competent in what I do thus preventing and ensuring that I am practising ethically. Shared traditions and beliefs

When I was a child, my family had lived at our Lola's (grandmother) rural home. She was a tough lady, always want everything tidy and in place. One dinner time, we were all sitting and having our meal quietly, no one was allowed to speak as it was her sacred rule that it was rude to talk while eating; she also had this habit of observing us, as if she's waiting for us to make mistakes. She noticed that I wasn't eating the head of the fish; she then called my attention and told me that I should eat the head of the fish as well because it makes us brighter and smarter.

Thinking of what she said, I innocently asked her " how if the fish was dumb?". I got into trouble by asking that. I grew up following traditions and believed many beliefs that have been passed down from many generations to the next. For instance, we have these beliefs in child rearing of causes of a child's disability have something to do with the mother not following her dietary practises during pregnancy. For example, eating crabs would cause an unborn baby to have clubbed fingers and toes, eating dark foods such as grapes, squids and chocolates would make the baby to have dark skin.