

# CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- Culture is a set of beliefs, attitudes, and practices shared by a group of people or community that are accepted, followed, and passed on to other members of the group.
- The word "culture" can sometimes be used interchangeably with terms such as ethnicity, nationality, or race.
- Cultural beliefs and practices bind members of a group or community together and help form a cohesive identity.

- Culture has a lasting influence on a person's view of the world, expressed through language and communication patterns, family and kinship ties, religion, cuisine, dress, customs, and other rituals.

- Culture is not static but is dynamic and constantly changing; it changes as members encounter beliefs from other cultures.



# Nursing and cultural competence

- Nurses and other members of the health care team are influenced by their personal cultural beliefs. For example, a widespread belief in American health care is the importance of providing services on time; medications are administered at specific times, and showing up for appointments on time is considered essential.
- Most cultural beliefs are a combination of beliefs, values, and customs that have been passed down through family members and authority figures.
- The first step in developing cultural competence is to be aware of your own cultural beliefs, attitudes, and practices.

- A subculture is a smaller group of people within a culture, often based on a person's occupation, hobbies, interests, or place of origin.

  People who belong to a subculture may identify with some, but not all, aspects of their larger "parent" culture.

  Members of the subculture share beliefs and commonalities that distinguish them and do not always align with those of the larger culture.

| Age/ Generation | Baby Boomers, Millennials, Gen Z |
|---|---|
| OCCUPATION | Truck Driver, Computer Technician, Nurse, etc. |
| Hobbies/ Interests | Birdwatchers, Gamers, Foodies, Skateboarders |
| Religion | Hinduism, Baptist, Islam |
| Gender | Male, Female, Non-binary, Two-Spirit |
| RESIDENCE | Rural, Urban, Middle East |

Culture is much more than a person's nationality or ethnicity.

Culture can be expressed in a multitude of ways, including:

- Spoken languages
- Religion and spiritual beliefs
- Gender identity
- Socio-economic status
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- GeographyEducational background
- Life experiences
- Living situation
- Employment status
- Immigration statusDisability

# Assimilation

- Assimilation is the process of adapting to or conforming to the practices, customs, and norms of a cultural group. As a result, the person gradually takes on a new cultural identity and may lose their original identity in the process.
- An example of assimilation is a newly graduated nurse who, after several months of orientation on a hospital unit, helps a colleague who is busy.
- The new nurse has developed confidence in the role and has developed an understanding that helping others is the norm for nurses on that unit.
- Assimilation is not always voluntary, however, and can become a source of concern. There are historical examples of involuntary assimilation in many countries. For example, in the past, authorities in the United States and Canadian governments required indigenous children to attend boarding schools, separated them from their families, and punished them for speaking their native language.

# Cultural beliefs and values

- Culture provides an important source of values and comfort for patients, families, and communities. Think of culture as a thread that weaves through a person's world and influences their choices, perspectives, and lifestyles.
- It plays a role in all a person's life events and permeates the development of their self-concept, sexuality, and spirituality.
- It influences eating habits throughout life, as well as coping strategies for death and dying.

# Cultural Concepts

- Culture influences how a patient interprets "good" health, as well as their perspectives on illness and its causes.

- The way pain is expressed is also shaped by a person's culture.

| Cultural concepts | Examples of Values and Beliefs Influenced by Culture |
| --- | --- |
| **Family models** | Family size<br>Views on contraception<br>Roles of family members<br>Naming customs<br>Value placed on the elderly and children<br>Discipline/education of children<br>Funeral rites<br>End-of-life care |
| **Communication models** | Eye contact<br>Touch<br>Use of silence or humor<br>Intonation, vocabulary, grammatical structure<br>Topics considered personal (e.g., difficult to discuss)<br>Greeting customs (handshakes, hugs) |

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| **Orientation in space** | Personal distance and intimate space |
| **Time orientation** | Focusing on the past, present, or future<br>The importance of following a routine or schedule<br>Arriving on time for meetings |
| **Nutritional patterns** | Common meal choices<br>Foods to avoid<br>Foods to cure or treat illness<br>Religious practices (e.g., fasting, dietary restriction)<br>Foods to celebrate life events and holidays |

# A person's culture can also influence encounters with healthcare providers.

- Level of family involvement in care.
- Timing of seeking care.
- Acceptance of treatment (as a preventative measure or for an ongoing health problem).
- Accepted decision-maker (i.e., patient or other family members).
- Use of home or traditional remedies.
- Seeking advice or treatment from non-traditional providers.
- Acceptance of a caregiver of the opposite sex.