Responsible Cultural Care

- After creating a culturally sensitive environment and conducting a cultural assessment, nurses and nursing students can continue to promote culturally responsive care.

- Culturally responsive care includes creating a culturally safe environment, utilizing cultural negotiation, and considering the impact of culture on patients' temporal orientation, spatial orientation, eye contact, and food choices.

Safe Cultural Environment

- A key responsibility of the nurse is to ensure that the environment is culturally safe for the patient.
- A culturally safe environment is a safe space for patients to interact with the nurse, without judgment or discrimination, where the patient is free to express their beliefs, values, and cultural identity.
- This responsibility belongs to both the individual nurse and the broader healthcare organization.

NEGOCIMI KULTUROR

- Many aspects of nursing care are influenced by the cultural beliefs of the patient, as well as by the beliefs of the healthcare culture.
- For example, the healthcare culture in the United States places great importance on punctuality for medical appointments, yet a patient may belong to a culture that views "being on time" as relative.
- In some cultures, time is simply defined by whether it is day or night, or a time to wake up, eat, or sleep.
- Making allowances or accommodations for these aspects of a patient's culture is essential in fostering the nurse-patient relationship. This accommodation is called cultural negotiation.

- During cultural negotiation, both the patient and the nurse seek a mutually acceptable way to deal with the competing interests of nursing care, prescribed medical care, and the patient's cultural needs.
- Cultural negotiation is reciprocal and collaborative.
- When a patient's cultural needs do not significantly or negatively impact their treatment plan, their cultural needs should be accommodated whenever possible.
- Consider the previous example of a patient for whom a specific schedule conflicts with their cultural views.
- Instead of instructing the patient to take a daily medication at a specific time, the nurse could explain that the patient should take the medication every day when they wake up.

- Another example of cultural negotiation is illustrated by a scenario in which the nurse is preparing a patient for a surgical procedure.
- As the nurse reviews the preoperative checklist, the nurse asks the patient to remove her head covering (hijab).
- The nurse is aware that personal items must be removed before surgery; however, the patient wishes to keep her hijab.
- As an act of cultural negotiation and respect for the patient's cultural beliefs, the nurse makes an agreement with the surgical team to keep the patient's hijab in place for the surgical procedure and to cover the patient's hijab with a surgical cap.

DECISION-MAKING

- The culture of healthcare in the United States reflects the country's cultural norms, with an emphasis on individuality, personal freedom, and self-determination.
- This perspective may conflict with a patient whose cultural background values group decision-making and decisions made for the benefit of the group, not necessarily the individual.
- For example, in the 2019 film The Farewell, a Chinese-American family decides not to tell the matriarch of the family that she is dying of cancer and has only a few months to live.
- The family keeps this secret from the wife, believing that the family must bear the emotional burden of this knowledge, which is a collectivist view in contrast to the individualistic American view.

ORIENTATION

- The amount of space a person needs to feel comfortable with is influenced by culture. (Read more about spatial orientation in the "Communication" chapter).
- For example, some people would feel uncomfortable standing four inches away from another person while having a social conversation, but for others a little personal space is expected when talking to another.
- There are times when a nurse must enter a patient's intimate or personal space, which can be emotionally distressing for some patients.

- **The nurse should always ask permission before entering a patient's personal space and explain why and what will happen next.**
- **Patients may also be concerned about their modesty or exposure to it. A patient may respond to a violation of their space by withdrawing from the situation, turning away, or closing their eyes.**
- **The nurse should recognize these signals for what they are, an expression of cultural preference, and allow the patient to assume a position or distance that is comfortable for them.**
- **Like cultural influences on personal space, touching is also determined by culture. This has implications for nurses because it may be inappropriate for a male nurse to provide care to a female patient and vice versa.**
- **In some cultures, it is also considered inappropriate to touch a person's head without permission.**

EYE CONTACT

- Eye contact is also a culturally mediated behavior.
- In the United States, direct eye contact is valued when communicating with others, but in some cultures, direct eye contact is interpreted as impolite or rude.
- Instead of making direct eye contact, a patient may look away or look down at the floor to show respect and deference to the person speaking.
- The nurse should note these cultural cues from the patient and mirror the patient's behaviors when possible.

FOOD CHOICES

- Culture plays a significant role in the dietary practices and food choices of many people. Food is used to celebrate life events and holidays.
- Most cultures have staple foods, such as bread, pasta, or rice, and special ways of preparing foods.
- Special foods are prepared to heal and cure or to demonstrate family ties, care, and love. For example, in the United States, chicken noodle soup is often prepared and offered to family members who are ill.
- Conversely, certain foods and beverages (such as meat and alcohol) are forbidden in some cultures.
- Nurses must meet or negotiate the dietary requirements of their patients, knowing that food has such important meaning for many people.