The Process of Developing Cultural Competencies

- Cultural awareness is an intentional and cognitive process in which health care providers become aware of and sensitive to the values, beliefs, attitudes, practices, and problem-solving strategies of a patient's culture.
- To become culturally aware, the nurse must engage in a reflective exploration of personal cultural values while also becoming aware of the cultural practices of others.
- In addition to reflecting on one's own cultural values, the culturally competent nurse seeks to challenge harmful prejudices, ethnocentric views, and attitudes.
- Cultural awareness goes beyond a simple awareness of the existence of other cultures and includes an interest, curiosity, and appreciation of other cultures.

The Process of Developing Cultural Competencies

- **Cultural Desire**: The internal motivation to engage with diverse cultures.
- **Cultural Awareness**: Self-examining personal biases and cultural background.
- **Cultural Knowledge**: Seeking educational frameworks regarding global worldviews.
- **Cultural Skills**: Developing the ability to accurately assess cultural needs.
- **Cultural Encounters**: Actively engaging in cross-cultural interactions to refine practices.

The development of cultural competence begins in basic nursing education.

- Carefully reflect on the following questions and think about your answers as you begin your journey of providing culturally responsive care as a nurse.(Questions are adapted from the Anti-Defamation League's "Imagine a World Without Hate" Personal Self-Assessment of Anti-Bias Behavior).

- **Have you reflected on your upbringing and childhood to better understand your implicit biases and the ways in which you internalized the messages you received?**

- **Have you ever considered using language to avoid terms or phrases that may be derogatory or hurtful to other groups?**

- **How willing are you to give equal attention, care, and support to people regardless of culture, socioeconomic class, religion, gender expression, sexual orientation, or other "differences"?**

- Cultural knowledge also includes understanding the historical backgrounds of diverse cultural groups in society, as well as physiological variations and the incidence of certain health conditions in diverse cultural groups.
- Cultural knowledge is best acquired through cultural encounters with patients from diverse backgrounds to learn about individual variations that occur within cultural groups and to prevent stereotypes.
- When acquiring cultural knowledge, it is important to demonstrate cultural sensitivity.
- Cultural sensitivity means being tolerant and accepting of people's cultural practices and beliefs.

- Cultural sensitivity is demonstrated when the nurse conveys unbiased concern and respect through words and actions, as well as an understanding that some health care treatments may conflict with a person's cultural beliefs.

- Cultural sensitivity also implies an awareness of the detrimental effects of stereotyping, prejudice, or bias on patients and their well-being.

- Nurses who do not act with cultural sensitivity may be seen as careless or inconsiderate, causing a breakdown of trust for the patient and their family members.

- When a patient experiences nursing care that conflicts with their cultural beliefs, they may experience moral or ethical conflict, disrespect, or emotional distress.

- Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and knowledge are the cornerstones for developing cultural competence.
- Cultural competence is reflected in the nurse's ability to gather and synthesize culturally relevant information about their patients while planning care and using culturally sensitive communication skills.
- Culturally competent nurses provide care that is consistent with the cultural needs of their patients and consciously take steps to ensure a safe healthcare environment that is free from discrimination or intolerance.
- For example, a culturally competent nurse will make space and seating available within a patient's hospital room for family companions when this support is appreciated by the patient.

Cultural meetings

- Cultural encounters are a process where the nurse directly engages in face-to-face cultural interactions and other types of encounters with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds with the goal of modifying existing beliefs about a cultural group and preventing potential stereotyping.

- By developing the characteristics of cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skills, and cultural encounters, a nurse develops cultural competence.

Cultural Differences When Communicating

