WORKING WITH PATIENTS FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES

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Objectives of this topic:

- Students will learn how to identify and understand the transcultural needs of patients in healthcare practice.
- Students will learn how to properly use communication skills when working with patients from different cultures.
- Students will learn how to provide the best health care to patients who come from different cultures in an expert and professional way.





Healthcare is about more than just medical treatment – it's about supporting people in the most sensitive moments of their lives. Understanding and respecting the cultural differences of patients is crucial. Cultural values and beliefs influence not only behavior, but also how people perceive illness, treatment, and care.





Increased demographic and cultural diversity due to global population migration poses new challenges for health professionals who have legal, ethical and moral responsibilities to provide high-quality, equitable, culturally competent health care. Cultural sensitivity is a prerequisite for achieving cultural competences. It is vital for building relationships, as it involves awareness and respect for cultural differences, norms and values. This means avoiding assumptions or stereotypes and treating each individual as a unique person with their own beliefs and practices.





Nursing is based on a humanistic and holistic approach that harmonizes compassion, honesty, kindness, and altruism in the delivery of health care. It includes taking into account the cultural needs of patients, the need for equal access to healthcare, respect for their background and beliefs.

Respect, knowledge, understanding, awareness of oneself and others, a non-judgmental attitude and effective communication are essential skills for today's nurses.

Some common **cultural barriers** that can hinder building relationships with these patients are most commonly language barriers, differences in communication styles, different concepts of timing and punctuality, cultural norms and taboos, and stereotypes or prejudices. It is important to be aware of these barriers and make a conscious effort to overcome them through understanding, flexibility and empathy. Some **potential challenges** that may arise when building relationships with patients from different cultural backgrounds include miscommunication, misunderstandings, and cultural conflicts.





Some **key strategies** for building relationships with patients from different cultural backgrounds include being open and respectful, actively listening and striving to understand their points of view, showing genuine interest in their culture, customs, and adapting their communication style to accommodate their cultural norms.



Communication is the most important aspect in nursing practice. Language barriers are a pervasive challenge, limiting communication and negatively affecting the delivery of healthcare. Patients from other cultural backgrounds often receive poorer quality care, largely due to language barriers and a lack of understanding of patients' needs. Language barriers also increase the stress and workload on nurses, causing feelings of insecurity and incompetence.

Empathy is also an important factor in building relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds. By putting themselves in their shoes and trying to understand their experiences, emotions, and perspectives, nurses can develop a deeper connection and foster a sense of trust and mutual respect. Empathy enables effective communication and helps bridge cultural gaps.



Active listening is a key skill in building relationships with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Showing full attention, presence, and sincere listening shows respect, leading to effective communication and a stronger relationship. Suggestions for improving communication recommended by some authors relate to the use of interpretive services or online translation tools, which are simple, accessible and free, and which can improve healthcare and patient satisfaction. Also, learning basic phrases in the patient's language is cited as a valuable and authentic means of overcoming the language barrier and improving communication.



Practical Examples of the Impact of Intracultural Competencies

1. **Religious rituals and spiritual beliefs:** In many cultures, religious rituals have a major impact on how the disease is approached. Nurses who are aware of these beliefs can include them in their daily care, thereby improving the patient's well-being.
2. **Nutrition and hygiene practices:** Understanding and adhering to special eating habits or hygiene rituals can build a closer relationship and increase patient satisfaction with the services offered. Respecting patients' cultural needs and beliefs not only improves communication, but also creates a sense of belonging and respect. Patients who feel understood and accepted in their cultural context are more willing to cooperate during treatment and have greater trust in medical staff.




ABC

PATIENT-CENTRED APPROACH

The patient-centered approach has four dimensions:

1. Assessment of key cross-cultural issues – Key issues to explore are: communication styles, trust, decision-making and family/loved one dynamics, traditions and spirituality, and sexual and gender issues.

2.Patient's understanding of the disease – The explanatory model represents how the patient understands his disease: its cause, meaning and effect. This allows the clinician to tailor communication and treatment recommendations to the patient's concerns and perspectives.



3. Social context – The manifestations of a person's illness are related to the social environment of the individual. Four aspects of the patient's social context are relevant to a cross-cultural clinical encounter: a change in the environment (such as immigration status); literacy and language; social stressors; and social networks.

4. Negotiating a mutually acceptable approach to treatment – Even when sociocultural backgrounds are similar, there can be significant differences in expectations and values between patients and clinicians. The process of cross-cultural negotiation can be useful in identifying different explanatory models or agendas and developing management strategies.



The Benefits of Transcultural Competence

Improved communication: When healthcare professionals understand their patients' cultural nuances, language preferences, and specific needs, they can communicate more effectively. Among clinicians, this can lead to a better understanding of symptoms, a clearer explanation of treatment, and information-based patient decision-making.

Building trust: Cultural competence allows healthcare professionals to interact with patients in ways that show respect and understanding for their cultural background. This can significantly increase patient confidence, and lead to more open communication and a stronger doctor-patient relationship with clinicians.



Benefiti posjedovanja transkulturalnih kompetencija

Personalized care: Every culture has beliefs and practices related to health, illness, and healing. By understanding these differences, healthcare professionals can tailor their care to better meet the individual needs of each patient. This may include acknowledging traditional medicines, understanding cultural views on certain procedures, or being aware of specific dietary restrictions.

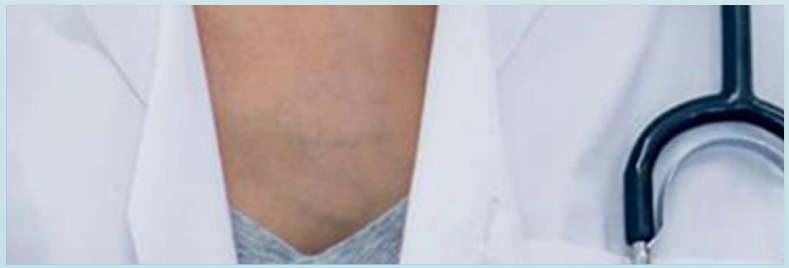


Emotional comfort: For many patients, especially those from minority communities, entering a healthcare facility can be daunting. Patients can feel more at ease when they see their culture represented and respected, whether through multilingual signage or culturally diverse staff. This emotional comfort can lead to a more positive overall experience.

Reducing misunderstandings and medical errors: Cultural misunderstandings can lead to misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, or non-compliance with medical advice. By promoting cultural diversity and understanding, healthcare facilities can reduce these risks, ensuring patients receive the care they need.









Scientific evidence

1.Cultural competence improves patient outcomes

Research results: A study published in the Journal of Transcultural Nursing (2016) found that culturally competent nursing improves patient satisfaction, health outcomes, and adherence to treatment.

2. Reducing health disparities

Research results: A systematic review published in The Journal of Nursing Scholarship (2011) found that cultural competency training for health professionals, including nurses, helps reduce health disparities between minority and immigrant populations.

3. Improving communication between nurse and patient

Research results: Effective communication is the foundation of nursing practice. According to research published in The Journal of Nursing Education (2014), culturally competent communication improves understanding between nurses and patients, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings that could lead to medical errors.

4. Addressing mental health needs

Research results: A study in the journal Psychiatric Services (2007) showed that culturally competent nurses are more likely to recognize and address mental health problems in different populations. This is especially important in addressing the cultural stigma around mental health.



Thank you for your attention

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