3.1: Diverse Patients Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Reflect upon personal and cultural values, beliefs, biases, and heritage\(^1\)
- Embrace diversity, equity, inclusivity, health promotion, and health care for individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, and spiritual backgrounds across the life span\(^2\)
- Demonstrate respect, equity, and empathy in actions and interactions with all health care consumers\(^3\)
- Participate in life-long learning to understand cultural preferences, worldviews, choices, and decision-making processes of diverse patients\(^4\)
- Protect patient dignity
- Demonstrate principles of patient-centered care and cultural humility
- Make adaptations to patient care to reduce health disparities
- Adhere to the Patient’s Bill of Rights
- Identify strategies to advocate for patients
- Use evidence-based practices

No matter who we are or where we come from, every person belongs to a culture. The impact of culture on a person’s health is profound because it affects many health beliefs, such as perceived causes of illness, ways to prevent illness, and acceptance of medical treatments. **Culturally responsive care** integrates these cultural beliefs into an individual’s health care. Culturally responsive care is intentional and promotes trust and rapport with patients. At its heart, culturally responsive care is patient-centered care. The American Nurses Association (ANA) states, “The art of nursing is demonstrated by unconditionally accepting the humanity of others, respecting their need for dignity and worth, while
providing compassionate, comforting care."[6]

Nurses provide holistic care when incorporating their patients’ physical, mental, spiritual, cultural, and social needs into their health care (referred to as holism). As a nursing student, you are undertaking a journey of developing cultural competency with an attitude of cultural humility as you learn how to provide holistic care to your patients. Cultural competency is a lifelong process of applying evidence-based nursing in agreement with the cultural values, beliefs, worldview, and practices of patients to produce improved patient outcomes. Cultural humility is defined by the American Nurses Association as, "A humble and respectful attitude toward individuals of other cultures that pushes one to challenge their own cultural biases, realize they cannot know everything about other cultures, and approach learning about other cultures as a life-long goal and process."[9] The bottom line is you will improve the quality of your nursing care by understanding, respecting, and responding to a patient’s experiences, values, beliefs, and preferences.[10]

This chapter will focus on developing culturally competency and cultural humility and providing culturally responsive care.