3.12: III Glossary

**Assimilation:** The process of adopting or conforming to the practices, habits, 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.

**Bias:** To carry an attitude, opinion, or inclination (positive or negative) towards a group or members of a group. Bias can be a conscious attitude (explicit), or a person may not be aware of their bias (implicit).

**Cultural awareness:** A deliberate, cognitive process in which health care providers become appreciative and sensitive to the values, beliefs, lifeways, practices, and problem-solving strategies of a patient’s culture. Cultural awareness goes beyond a simple awareness of the existence of other cultures and involves an interest, curiosity, and appreciation of other cultures.

**Cultural competency:** The process of applying evidence-based nursing in agreement with the preferred cultural values, beliefs, worldview, and practices of patients to produce improved patient outcomes.

**Cultural diversity:** Cultural differences in people.

**Cultural encounters:** A process where the nurse directly engages in face-to-face cultural interactions and other types of encounters with clients from culturally diverse backgrounds in order to modify existing beliefs about a cultural group and to prevent possible stereotyping.

**Cultural humility:** 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 lifelong goal and process. [1]

**Cultural negotiation:** A process where the patient and nurse seek a mutually acceptable way to deal with competing
interests of nursing care, prescribed medical care, and the patient’s cultural needs. Cultural negotiation is reciprocal and collaborative. When the patient’s cultural needs do not significantly or adversely affect their treatment plan, the cultural needs can be accommodated.

**Culturally responsive care:** Nursing actions that integrate a person’s cultural beliefs into their care.

**Culturally safe environment:** A safe space for patients to interact with health professionals, without judgment or discrimination, where the patient is free to express their cultural beliefs, values, and identity.

**Culture:** A set of beliefs, attitudes, and practices shared by a group of people or community that is accepted, followed, and passed down to other members of the group.

**Discrimination:** Unfair and different treatment of another person or group, denying them opportunities and rights to participate fully in society.

**Ethnocentrism:** The belief that one’s culture (or race, ethnicity, or country) is better and preferable than another’s.

**Gender expression:** A person’s outward demonstration of gender in relation to societal norms, such as in style of dress, hairstyle, or other mannerisms.

**Gender identity:** A person’s inner sensibility that they are a man, a woman, or perhaps neither.

**Health disparities:** Differences in health outcomes resulting from entrenched economic, sociopolitical, or environmental disadvantages. Health disparities negatively impact groups of people based on their ethnicity, gender, age, mental health, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, socioeconomic status, geographic location, or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

**Health care disparities:** Differences in access to health care and insurance coverage.

**Holism:** Treatment of the whole person, including physical, mental, spiritual, and social needs.

**Intersectionality:** The many ways in which a person expresses their cultural identity are not separated, but are closely intertwined.

**Justice:** A principle and moral obligation to act on the basis of equality and equity; a standard linked to fairness for all in society. [2]

**LGBTQ:** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning in reference to sexual orientation.

**Prejudice:** To “prejudge”; a preconceived idea, often unfavorable, about a person or group of people.

**Race:** A socially constructed idea; there are no truly genetically or biologically distinct races. Humans are biologically similar to each other, not different.

**Racism:** The presumption that races are distinct from one another and there is a hierarchy to race, implying that races are unequal. In racism, expression of one’s cultural beliefs is viewed as a heritable trait.
**Sexual orientation:** A person’s physical and emotional interest or desire for others. Sexual orientation is on a continuum and is manifested in one’s self-identity and behaviors.

**Social determinants of health:** Nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes, including conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider sets of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.\(^3\)

**Social justice:** Equal rights, equal treatment, and equitable opportunities for all.\(^4\)

**Stereotyping:** Assuming that a person has the attributes, traits, beliefs, and values of a group because they are a member of that group.

**Subculture:** A smaller group of people within a larger culture, often based on a person's occupation, hobbies, interests, or place of origin.

**Transcultural nursing:** Incorporating cultural beliefs and practices of people to help them maintain and regain health or to face death in a meaningful way.