

## Cultural Competence Reflection

What is cultural competence? Cultural competence is the ability to interact with people of many different cultures. (Bellamy, 2013). Culture can be any differences from religion, race, geography, gender and more. We live with cultural differences every day. Some differences are easily seen like race, while some go unseen such as how a person grew up and what values they now have. While this is true, there are many similarities as well which help us in become more culturally competent.

It is very important to know and recognize cultural differences in a health care setting. To meet the needs of all patients and be able to accommodate them you also must understand the differences. When living in a bilingual area it is necessary to have directions, instructions and ways of communication for both languages. This way the patient will go home with the information and the confidence of understanding, insuring that they are getting the most out of each appointment for the best quality of care. Income will also affect the health care of patients leaving them with financial burdens or preventing them from the care they need. Some hospitals now award grants to patients who cannot afford the rising medical costs. A patient I know was required to pay 1000 dollars after Medicare payments for daily shots. Although the shots were necessary, without a grant this patient would not have been able to afford them. The grant made

it possible for the patient to get the best treatment for her condition. There are also cultural differences common with the elderly. By knowing these differences before the patient arrives you can be prepared to make adjustments in the care provided for that patient. For example, some things might seem more important at a clinic such as not being able to hear out of one ear. Knowing this ahead of time the provider can now stand in the best place and talk slower and louder. This can help to ensure that the patient is getting all the information correctly.

Providers that are not working towards cultural competence or at least becoming culturally aware are not providing the best possible care to their patients. Their patients may go home confused, scared and not understanding their own health care needs. This may prevent them from going back to that provider or any provider and possibly compromising their health. Patients who know they can trust their provider to not only care for their health, but their cultural needs as well are more likely to return and recover from their conditions. Having a provider, they are comfortable with makes it easier for the patient to speak freely about their needs giving the provider the ability to best adjust the patient plan of care. “The obvious benefit to society is better patient care and better care results.” (Ries, 2006).

When looking into culture, I myself have a lot of different cultures just within my own family. My Mother’s side is French while my Father’s side is German. As our family grew so did our culture and we now have Malaysian, Native American, African American, Mexican along with special needs and many different values and beliefs. While the family does have its differences, one value has stayed very much the same, the importance of family. My Great

Grandfather called the family “the united nations”. We all came from different walks of life uniting as one family.

## Citations

Bellamy, J. (2013, September). Video: The Importance of Cultural Competence. Retrieved from <http://www.apta.org/CulturalCompetence/Importance/>

Ries, E. (2006, November). Coloring the Future: Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Physical Therapy. Retrieved from <http://www.apta.org/PTinMotion/2006/11/Feature/ColoringtheFuture/>