

Cultural Diversity in Health Care

OBJECTIVES/RATIONALE

Delivering quality treatment depends upon understanding how one's culture may influence their health care decisions. The student will understand the interrelationships of culture, religion, and ethnicity relative to health and illness beliefs and practices.

TEKS 121.3 (c) 1J, 2D, 8C

TAKS ELA 1, 4
Social Studies 2, 3, 5

KEY POINTS

Cultural Diversity Power Point

- I. Culture
 - A. Set of values, beliefs, attitudes, languages, symbols, rituals, behaviors, customs of a group of people
 - B. Learned, shared, and social
 - C. Dynamic and changing
- II. Ethnicity
 - A. Classification of people based on national origin or culture
 - B. Examples
 - 1. African American
 - 2. Asian American
 - 3. European American
 - 4. Hispanic American
 - 5. Middle Eastern, Arabic American
 - 6. Native American
- III. Race
 - A. Classification of people based on physical or biological characteristics
 - B. Involves multiple cultures and ethnic groups
- IV. Cultural Diversity
 - A. Differences based on cultural, ethnic, and racial factors
 - B. "Melting Pot" or "Salad Bowl"
 - C. Must be considered when providing healthcare
 - D. Healthcare providers must have sensitivity, ability to recognize and appreciate the characteristics of all clients/patients
 - E. Holistic care must be developed to include the cultural diversity of America
 - F. Holistic care addresses the 3 aspects of well-being: mental/emotional, physical, and social
 - G. Areas of cultural diversity
 - 1. Family organization
 - 2. Language

3. Personal space
 4. Touching
 5. Eye contact
 6. Gestures
 7. Health care beliefs
 8. Spirituality
 9. Religion
- H. Impacts beliefs about birth, death, health, illness, and health care
- V. Health
- A. World Health Organization: a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease
 - B. Definition varies based on cultural background
 - C. Examples from Diversified Health Occupations, Sixth Edition, p. 223
 1. South African: harmony with nature, harmony of mind, body, spirit
 2. Asian: physical and spiritual harmony with nature, balance of yin and yang
 3. European: personal responsibility with diet, rest, exercise, and prevention
 4. Hispanic: good luck, reward from God, balance between hot and cold forces
 5. Middle Eastern: spiritual causes, cleanliness
 6. Native American: harmony between man and nature; balance between body, mind, and spirit; spiritual powers
 - D. Healthful hints from long ago Cultural Diversity in Health and Illness, p. 9
 1. "A sassafras root carried in the pocket guards against illness." (superstition of Old Saint Simons)
 2. "Asafetida worn on a string around the neck protects a child from many diseases; and a buckeye carried in the pocket protects against rheumatism." (Blue Ridge and Great Smokey Mountains)
 3. "A single, pierced nutmeg, worn around the neck on a string, will protect you from boils, croup, body lice, and various lung diseases." (New England)
 4. "A well-ventilated bedroom will prevent morning headaches and lassitude." (1914 Almanac)
- VI. Illness
- A. Abnormal functioning of a body's system or systems
 - B. Beliefs concerning causes vary based on cultural/ethnic background
 - C. Examples from Diversified Health Occupations, Sixth Edition, p. 223
 1. South African: spirits/demons, conflicts in life, God's punishment
 2. Asian: imbalance in yin and yang, supernatural forces, unhealthy environment
 3. European: sin, outside sources (microorganisms, toxins)
 4. Hispanic: sins, fright, evil eye, envy, imbalance between hot and cold

5. Middle Eastern: sins, evil eye, spiritual causes
6. Native American: supernatural forces, violation of a taboo, imbalance between man and nature

VII. Folk Remedies

- A. Beliefs and practices ethnically similar
- B. Socialization practices similar among ethnic groups
- C. Religion plays role in perception of, interpretation of and behavior in health and illness
- D. Women, especially mothers and grandmothers, are prime care givers
- E. Can create a delay in seeking professional health care
- F. Examples from Cultural Diversity in Health and Illness
 1. Jewish
 - a. Prevention: camphor around the neck (in winter) in a small cloth bag to prevent measles and scarlet fever
 - b. Home treatments
 - (1) Sore throat: go to the village store, find a salted herring, wrap it in a towel, put it around the neck, let stay there overnight, gargle with salt water
 - (2) Boils: fry chopped onions, make a compress and apply to the infections
 2. Black and Native American
 - a. Prevention: keep everything clean and sterile, stay away from people who are sick, regular checkups, blackstrap molasses
 - b. Home treatments
 - (1) Bloody nose: place keys on a chain around neck to stop
 - (2) Sore throat: suck yolks out of egg shell; honey and lemon; baking soda, salt, warm water; onions around the neck; salt water to gargle
 3. Black African (Ethiopia)
 - a. Prevention: eat hot food such as pepper, fresh garlic, lemon
 - b. Home treatments
 - (1) Eat hot and sour foods, such as lemons, fresh garlic, hot mustard, red pepper
 - (2) Make a kind of medicine from leaves and roots of plants mixed together
 - (3) Colds: hot boiled milk with honey
 - (4) Evil eye: put some kind of plant root on fire and make the man who has the evil eye smile and the man talks about his illness
 4. German

- a. Prevention: no sweets at meals, drink glass of water at meals, cod-liver oil, plenty of milk, spring tonic (sulfured molasses)
- b. Home treatments
 - (1) Coughs: honey and vinegar; hot water and Vicks; boiled onion water, honey and lemon
 - (2) Earache: few drops of warm milk in the ear, laxatives when needed
 - (3) Swollen glands or mumps: put pepper on salt pork and tie around the neck
 - (4) Constipation: Ivory soap suppositories
 - (5) Sore throat: salt water gargle
 - (6) Sore back: hot mustard plaster
 - (7) Sty: cold tea-leaf compresses
 - (8) Fever: mix whiskey, water and lemon juice to drink before bed; causes person to sweat and break fever
 - (9) Headache: boil a beef bone and break up toast in the broth and drink

5. Islam

- a. Prevention: dress properly for the season and weather; keep feet from getting wet in the rain
- b. Home treatments
 - (1) Sore throat: gargle with vinegar and water
 - (2) Cough: honey and lemon
 - (3) Indigestion: baking soda and water
 - (4) Sore muscles: alcohol and water
 - (5) Rashes: apply corn starch

6. Irish

- a. Prevention
 - (1) Clean out bowels with senna for eight days
 - (2) Every spring, drink a mixture of sulfur and molasses to clean blood
 - (3) Avoid sick people
 - (4) Onions under the bed to keep nasal passages clear
 - (5) During flu season, tie a bag of camphor around the neck
 - (6) Never go to bed with wet hair
 - (7) Eat lots of oily food
 - (8) Take Father John's Medicine every so often
 - (9) Prevent evil spirits: don't look in mirror at night, close closet doors
 - (10) Drink senna tea at every vacation, cleans out the system
 - (11) Maintain a strong family with lots of love
 - (12) Be goal-oriented
 - (13) Nurture a strong religious faith

b. Home treatment

- (1) See doctor only in emergency
- (2) Fever: spirits of niter on a dry sugar cube or mix with water; cold baths, alcohol rubdowns
- (3) Earache: heat salt, put in stocking behind the ear
- (4) Colds: tea and toast; chest rub; vaporizer; hot lemonade and a tablespoon of whiskey; mustard plasters; Vicks on chest/in nostrils; hot milk with butter, soups, honey, hot toddies, lemon juice and egg whites; ipecac
- (5) Coughs: honey and whisky; onion syrup cough medicine; linseed poultice on chest; flaxseed poultice on back; red flannel cloth soaked in hot water and placed on chest all night
- (6) Menstrual cramps: hot milk sprinkled with ginger; shot of whiskey; glass of warm wine; warm teas; hot-water bottle on stomach
- (7) Splinters: flaxseed poultice
- (8) Sunburn: apply vinegar; put milk on cloth and apply to burn; cold, wet teabag on small areas
- (9) Nausea: hot teas; castor oil; hot ginger ale; bay leaf; cup of hot boiled water; potato; baking soda
- (10) Sore throat: paint throat with iodine, honey and lemon, Karo syrup; paint with kerosene oil with rag and then tie sock around the neck; paint with iodine or Mercurochrome and gargle with salt and water, honey melted Vicks

7. Italian

a. Prevention

- (1) Garlic cloves strung on piece of string around the neck of infants and children to prevent colds and “evil” stares from other people (which cause headaches, pain/stiffness in back or neck); red ribbon or cloth on infant did the same
- (2) Keep warm in cold weather; keep feet warm
- (3) Never wash hair or bathe during period
- (4) Never wash hair before going outdoors or at night
- (5) Stay out of drafts
- (6) To prevent “evil” in the newborn, a scissor was kept open under the mattress of the crib
- (7) To prevent bowlegs and keep ankles straight, up to the age of 6-8 months, a bandage was wrapped around the baby from the waist to the feet
- (8) If infants got their nights and days mixed up, they were tied upside down and turned all the way around

b. Home treatment

- (1) Chicken soup for everything from colds to having a baby
- (2) Boils: cooked oatmeal wrapped in a cloth (steaming hot) and applied to drain pus
- (3) Headache: kerchief with ice in it is wrapped around the head; mint tea
- (4) Upset stomach: herb tea made with herbs sent from Italy
- (5) Sore throat: honey; apply Vicks to throat at bedtime and wrap up throat
- (6) Sprains: beat egg whites, apply to part, wrap up
- (7) Fever: cover with blankets to sweat it out
- (8) Cramps: crème de menthe
- (9) Acne: apply baby's urine
- (10) Backache: apply hot oatmeal in a sock; place a silver dollar on the sore area and light a match to it, while the match is burning put a glass over the silver dollar and then slightly lift the glass, and this causes suction which lifts the pain out
- (11) To build up blood: eggnog with brandy; Marsala wine and milk

VIII. Healthcare Providers' Culture (Quoted from Cultural Diversity in Health and Illness, Second Edition, p. 70)

A. Beliefs

1. "Standardized definitions of health and illness"
2. "The omnipotence of technology"

B. Practices

1. "The maintenance of health and the prevention of disease through such mechanisms as the avoidance of stress and the use of immunizations"
2. "Annual physical examinations and diagnostic procedures such as Pap smears"

C. Habits

1. "Charting"
2. "The constant use of jargon"
3. "Use of a systematic approach and problem-solving methodology"

D. Likes

1. "Promptness"
2. "Neatness and organization"
3. "Compliance"

E. Dislikes

1. "Tardiness"
2. "Disorderliness and disorganization"

F. Customs

1. “Professional deference and adherence to the ‘pecking order’ found in autocratic and bureaucratic systems”
2. ““Handwashing””
3. “Employment of certain procedures attending birth and death”

G. Rituals

1. “The physical examination”
2. “The surgical procedure”
3. “Limiting visitors and visiting hours”

H. In direct opposition to some cultural beliefs concerning epidemiology and pain responses

1. Bacteria/viruses/carcinogens/pollutants versus “soul loss”/”spirit possession”/”spells”/voodoo/witchcraft
2. Free, open expression of feelings versus never revealing true feelings
 - a. “Mr. Smith in room 222 is the ideal patient. He never has a single complaint of pain.”
 - b. “Mrs. Cohen in room 223 is a real complainer. She is constantly asking for pain medication and putting on her light.”
 - c. “Mrs. O’Mally in room 224 is an ideal patient. She never complains about pain. For that matter, she never complains.”
 - d. “Mr. Chen in room 225 says nothing. I often wonder what he is feeling.”
 - e. “Mrs. Petrini in room 226 dramatically cries every time I look at her and complains of pain at every opportunity.”

I. Must change to accommodate other cultural beliefs and behaviors towards health and illness

IX. Healing

A. Religion and Healing

1. Vital role in perception of health and illness
2. Rites surrounding birth and death
 - a. 3rd, 7th, 8th, 40th days after birth critical for newborn and mother → most rituals observed on these days
 - b. Cutting lock of hair and animal sacrifice
 - c. Giving silver to poor
 - d. Circumcision
 - e. Baptism
 - f. Rites to protect the dying and dead person and the remaining family
3. Diet

B. Traditional Etiology: Evil Eye

1. Power of eye strikes victim
2. Injury, illness, misfortune is sudden

3. Person with evil eye may not be aware of it
4. Victim may not know the source of the evil eye
5. Prevented or cured by rituals or symbols
6. Explains sickness and misfortune
7. Prevention and cure involve removal of spell or evil agents

C. Traditional Methods of Prevention

1. Use of protective objects
 - a. Amulets
 - b. Bangles
 - c. Talismans
2. Use of substances ingested or eliminated from surroundings or worn or hung in the home
 - a. Garlic
 - b. Onions
 - c. Chachayotel
 - d. 1000 year-old eggs
 - e. Kosher foods
 - f. Balance of “hot” and “cold” food
 - g. Balance of yin and yang foods
3. Religious practices such as burning candles, rituals of redemption, and prayer
 - a. Social, moral and dietary practices
 - b. Blessing of the Throats on Saint Blaise Day
 - c. Virgin of Guadalupe
 - d. St. Anthony of Padua → barren women
 - e. St. Odilia → blindness
 - f. Our Lady of Lourdes → bodily ills

D. Beliefs Affecting Therapy

1. Use of healers with divine powers
2. Natural products i.e. herbs, berries
3. Purgatives
4. Blood-letting
5. Removal of person with evil eye
6. Avoidance of provocation of envy

E. Other Forms of Healing

1. Spiritual healing
2. Inner healing
3. Physical healing
4. Deliverance or exorcism
5. Auric healing
6. Pilgrimages

F. Healthcare providers must be aware of the multitude of sources outside of mainstream medicine available to the patients.

ACTIVITIES

- I. Complete the Family Practices in Health Care.
- II. Read “Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss (or view the video) and complete the “Sneetches” Worksheet and discuss.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Sources Used Diversified Health Occupations, Sixth Edition, Louise Simmers
Cultural Diversity in Health and Illness, Second Edition, Rachel Spector
Book or video, “Sneetches and Other Stories”
“Sneetches” Worksheet

ASSESSMENT

Multimedia Rubric
Completion of Sneetches Worksheet

ACCOMMODATIONS

For reinforcement, the student will create a chart comparing their cultural beliefs concerning healthcare to another culture represented in their community.

For enrichment, the student will complete the Cultural Awareness Project

REFLECTIONS

Family Practices in Health Care

Trace your family's practices in the protection and maintenance of health, the prevention of illness, and the diagnosis and treatment of illness. Identify the variety of influences that your culture and ethnicity have on the interpretations of the concepts of health and illness.

1. How does your family define health?
2. How does your family keep healthy?
3. How does your family define illness?
4. What would your family define as a minor medical problem? Give examples.
5. How does your family know when a given health problem does not need medical attention?
6. Does your family "self-diagnose"? Give examples.
7. Does your family use over the counter medications? Which ones and when?
8. Who is the first person you turn to when you are ill?
9. Who do you go to and where do you go from there?

Interview a family member in order to better understand your personal ethnic heritage and belief system.

1. What is the family's ethnic background? Country of origin? Religion?
2. What did they do to maintain health?
3. What did they do to prevent illness?
4. What home remedies did they use to treat illness?

Present using multimedia technology.

Cultural Awareness Project

Identify the cultural/ethnic/religious groups represented in community. Research the following information concerning each of the groups identified:

1. major health concepts
2. beliefs in the causes of illness
3. types of traditional healers utilized
4. methods of treatment
5. response to pain
6. beliefs/practices surrounding births
7. beliefs/practices surrounding deaths
8. health care beliefs
9. special symbols, books, religious practices

Present your findings to the class.

Sneetches” Worksheet

After reading the story about the Sneetches (or viewing the video), answer the following questions:

- 1) Describe how the original Sneetches with stars on their bellies feel about others who are different from them. What event(s) in history were similar?
- 2) Do you think people today make generalizations about people “who are different”? List examples.
- 3) How do you think people form these “generalizations” or prejudices?
- 4) What generalizations about people might health care workers make? How would that affect the care the people receive?