**Module 2 DB: Cultural space within healthcare settings**

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**\** The challenges healthcare professionals face when cultural perceptions of space differ

between patients and providers must be embraced with respect and sensitivity. In the United

States, there are many different cultures blending. We encounter

people from all over the world. There is no doubt that in our daily lives we will encounter people from different cultures in our everyday life. We enter the melting pot of culture through school interactions, business transactions, and recreation.

Challenges we may face in healthcare are interactions beginning at the first interaction which is often at the admission station in the hospital or healthcare facility. Some cultures like eye contact, others find it offensive. Touch can be perceived positively or negatively. Tone of voice, facial expressions, personal space, and affect play a role in comfort. Treatment modalities that are accepted as a norm in the United States might be very foreign to someone of a different culture. In some Hispanic cultures, giving information to the senior male in the family is protocol. if the nurse gives information to the patient without inquiring about what their expectation is could create a communication block. Language differences can interfere with patient teaching and understanding. If a nurse has explained something to the patient and they are quietly nodding yes, that does not mean they are understanding. Lack of understanding can directly lead to poor patient outcomes. Diabetes education is a good example of the potential for a negative patient outcome. Lack of understanding in insulin administration and dosing could harm the patient.

A strategy to help overcome a language deficit is to employ a language line for accurate medical translation. A strategy for embracing culture differences would be exemplified by using a motorcycle group as an example. The group might consider themselves the family of the patient. Inviting several members of the group to stay with the patient during the hospital stay might be a good. idea to help the patient feel supported.

Healthcare professionals can use nonverbal communication, body language, and spatial awareness in cross cultural healthcare interactions to improve healthcare delivery and boost patient compliance and satisfaction. Nonverbal communication and body language are vital in presenting to the patient a willingness to help the patient feel comfortable. If the nurse comes in the room without knocking, and dropping equipment, the patient could feel devalued and worry that the nurse is in a hurry and might make a mistake in haste. Standing at the door, giving a little knock, offering a smile and waiting for the invite in is a much more pleasant presentation to the patient. Silence is important to allow the patient time to gather their thoughts and read the nurses body language of professionalism before patient care begins. Spatial awareness is very important to consider. In general, our culture in America is to have space in between people. Asian cultures, Middle Eastern Cultures and Eastern cultures are more acclimated to crowded space. A brush of the body while moving about the room could be offensive to an American where the other cultures might think nothing of it. Human touch varies greatly within cultures. Being aware of how human touch affects the patient can be a real asset. Placing a hand on the body of some cultures is offensive. Other people like the gentle interaction. (Giger &Haddad, 2021).

Having an awareness of other cultures is very important in healthcare delivery. If the nurse is unsure, asking questions on the front end of care is very appropriate. (Green, 2018). Opening the communication line can set the tone for really good care and shows sensitivity and acceptance which is an attribute most people respect.

**References**

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