

Module 3 Discussion board A

Week 3

Holistic Health Assessment: Culture exercise

This is an exercise for your reflection—I want you to understand that your patients have cultures, and so do you! Most minority students and those who are from another country originally, understand they are a part of a valued culture with rich traditions—they have a strong cultural identity. They can readily identify beliefs/traditions regarding diet, illness, death, pregnancy, how respect for others is demonstrated, etc. Many American students with ancestry from northern European countries think that they don't have a culture. I have heard MANY of them say, "Well, I don't really have a culture, I am just ...well, a plain American and I am not a member of a cultural group." When this happens, I ask a foreign student (who is well aware of his/her own culture), to reveal the group characteristics of the American culture to the ones who think they possess no culture. The foreign students usually say something like this: "For one thing, you Americans are obsessed with TIME! Everything has to be done on time, you try to arrive early for appointments and are always rushing around!" They often point out that Americans need a larger circumference for their personal space than many others. Americans have a strong need for independence—they would rather ride 5 miles on a bicycle they own, and be free to come and go at will, than arrange for friends or family to pick them up and take them places by a more comfortable mode of transportation. Many Americans, they assert, tend to be ethnocentric—they feel that the way they do things is the RIGHT way, and those differing from them are not just culturally different, but...not as advanced. Americans that haven't had exposure to other cultures may not realize that certain thought or actions have a cultural basis at all—though others would see it instantly. As you can see, actions and thoughts that are linked with culture are not necessarily right or wrong, but they do influence how people behave, how they react, and what they feel to be "normal."

Exercise 1

List three cultures of which you are a member. (Remember that “culture” may include any group-your profession, religion, country of origin or area of the country, philosophy, socioeconomic class, educational level, political leanings, leisure activity groups, “parental responsibility” groups (such as soccer or Little League parents), etc, Every culture has unspoken rules –identify the rules in your culture/s. (Anthropologists ARE beginning to explain these, but what does everyone that is a part of your cultures know to do, that others looking “in” might not understand?)

For instance, we are nurses. There is a culture in nursing. One of the “unspoken” rules is that everyone gets the best care we are capable of giving under the circumstances. The banker or CEO in room 123 gets the same interest/care from us as the prisoner chained to the bed, with the guard present, in room 124. I was socialized into that culture by nursing school and by my coworkers at one of best hospitals at which I have ever had the privilege of working. By their attitudes, my coworkers made me want to be a better nurse, and the culture of that entire hospital was, and is, one that fostered growth in its nurses. (I hope you work in such a place! If you don’t, start doing something to make it better, and foster a welcoming professionalism among your peers and the students you work with.)

Another culture to which I belong is the faculty of Nursing at UTA. A couple of the unspoken rules are: Remain calm and professional when dealing with difficult situations, always try to see the bigger picture, and never wear jeans on campus. ☺ I have been an avid birdwatcher (a “birder” as we say), since I was 14. An unspoken rule is that when encountering other birders who are looking at a bird through their binoculars, you do NOT speak loudly or move fast and scare off the bird they are focused upon. The ones watching the bird will quietly tell you what they see, so you can see it too. They will describe which tree, which limb the bird is on, and try to help you focus on it as well.

Cultures students have listed in the past include: the military, homeschooling, various religions, athletic associations, political action groups, support groups for medical conditions—these have a big impact on the way you live and your approach your life.

In this exercise:

First list what you feel is the one that most clearly influences your personal identity, and an unspoken rule that you have discovered. One student, identifying herself as a “Redneck from the South” listed what she felt were rules in her area—“You always offer guests sweet tea, have a garden (and share produce with your neighbors) and vote Democrat,” she reported. (No doubt her neighbors would have defined it differently, but then, people get to define what they feel cultural rules for their group are.)

Then list another social group, perhaps a church or some charitable organization and an unspoken rule—this would not be a doctrinal understanding but something you “get a feel for” once you have become a part of this group. (For it to be a culture, it can’t be something you do in isolation, like stamp-collecting or gaming if is done alone. For this exercise it must be something done in groups, and it must have some cultural mores/customs/conventions/understandings that you learn as you become a part of it.) Use the form provided since it will help you not to leave anything out and have points deducted. Take a look at the rubric so you understand how it will be graded. **Only reveal cultures/topics that you will be comfortable discussing with other students.**

Notes on posting:

Please be polite and professional here—list something you don’t mind others knowing about you. If someone lists a culture you don’t appreciate, comment on someone else’s posting instead. Keep it positive! This is to be a forum for introducing cultures which you understand from the inside, to the class-- who will not know them as you do. This exercise will give you insight into cultural mores/customs you may encounter in your work with diverse patients. We hope that come away from your RN-BSN classes with a new respect, enjoyment for, and willingness to work with, other cultures.

Please note:

This discussion board is a place for professional, supportive and positive comments. Please do not post slurs or denouncements against any racial, ethnic or other group—a zero will be given for this assignment to any students engaging in such activity, and the post will be deleted. As professional nurses working together in this class, I am proud to say that no one has ever yet posted inappropriately regarding any culture. However, just so that everyone understands the serious nature of academic hostility, this warning stands.

See form below:

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This completed form (see the form link below) will be copied and pasted to the discussion board. Here is what it looks like:

Name_____

Cultures of which I am a member (Please don't list nursing here since we are all nurses—you can select a nursing professional group or specialty, however.)

List your cultures here:	Unspoken rule in this culture (1-2 sentences are all that is needed here).
1. Ethnic or other culture important to you: _____	
2. Social group: _____	
3. Recreational group _____	
4. (Optional—other group). _____	

Who socialized you into each culture you listed?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What culture/s have you been a part of, and are not now? (Name at least one, and more if you can.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

You will fill out this form, copy and paste it to the discussion board, and reply to 2 colleagues with a substantive remark, citing an experience you have had or seen/heard of, a reference, or a link.

Week 3 Cultural Discussion Rubric

Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	Novice	Competent	Proficient	
Name of cultures Posted by Wednesday at 2359 Weight 25%	0% Missing or after due date	50 % Lists 1 culture	75 % Lists 2 cultures	100 % Lists at least 3 cultures
Rules for cultures Posted by Wednesday Weight 25%	0% Missing or after due date	50 % Lists a rule for 1 culture	75 % Lists a rule for each of 2 cultures	100 % Lists a rule for each of at least 3 cultures, answer is clear and thoughtful
Socialization Posted by Wednesday Weight 25 %	0 % Missing or after due date	50 % Lists only one of these: a past culture, lists those who socialized them into a culture.	75 % Lists all, but not clearly.	100 % Lists a past culture, lists those who socialized them into a culture.
Replies posted by Saturday at 2359 Weight 25%	0% Missing or after due date	50% 1 reply	75% 2 replies, cursory in fashion.	100% 2 or more replies, done in a professional and grammatical manner, consisting of an experience, a comparison, a reference or a link.

Substantive replies will consist of an experience, a comparison, a reference or a link to a professional or scholarly site.