

NURSING PRACTICE & SKILL

Amish Patients: Providing Culturally Competent Care to Patients with Mental Health Disorders

What is Providing Culturally Competent Care to Amish Patients with Mental Health Disorders?

› The term cultural competence (also known as cultural responsiveness, cultural awareness, and cultural sensitivity) refers to a person's ability to interact effectively with persons of cultures different from his/her own. With regard to health care, cultural competence is a set of behaviors and attitudes held by clinicians that allows them to communicate effectively with patients of various cultural backgrounds and to plan for and provide care that is appropriate to the culture and to the individual

- **What:** Culturally competent (CC) care of Amish patients with mental health disorders is holistic and incorporates cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions when planning and providing care. Providing CC care to Amish patients with mental disorders often involves using an interpreter, advocating for care of the patient in the home when appropriate and desired by the patient and family members, careful questioning about the use of home remedies and herbs, encouraging the patient and family to pursue counseling from their religious leader (e.g., minister or bishop) regarding the patient's mental health needs, planning transportation to the hospital when necessary, using nontechnical language when teaching the patient and/or family members about psychiatric medications, and making personal telephone calls for the patient and/or family members as needed. (For more information about for Amish patients, see the related *Evidence-Based Care Sheets* and series of *Nursing Practice & Skills* topics)
- **How:** Planning and performing CC care of Amish patients with mental health disorders is based on information from patient/family interviews, completed written survey tools, if available, and facility protocols specific to CC care of Amish patients. Interventions involve face-to-face interaction with the patient and family members, communicating with other members of the healthcare team regarding patient/family stated preferences, and making telephone calls to reserve a room where the family and visitors can meet and schedule visits by the family clergyperson or other spiritual leader
- **Where:** CC care of Amish patients with mental health disorders can be provided in any healthcare setting, including the inpatient, outpatient, and home-care setting
- **Who:** CC care of Amish patients with mental health disorders can be provided by any appropriately-trained, licensed healthcare clinician. These responsibilities cannot be delegated to unlicensed healthcare staff members (e.g., nurses' aides). It is appropriate for family members to be present during CC care of Amish patients with mental health disorders, as family members can provide essential information regarding Amish cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions

What is the Desired Outcome of Providing Culturally Competent Care to Amish Patients with Mental Health Disorders?

- › The desired outcome of providing CC care of Amish patients with mental health disorders is that the Amish patient
- understands what to expect and becomes comfortable participating in and adhering to the individualized CC plan of care

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- experiences reduced anxiety related to his/her care
- feels satisfied with the care received and when asked, states that the care provided appropriately incorporated Amish cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions
- experiences no interactions between herbal medicines and conventional Western medical treatments

Why is Providing Culturally Competent Care to Amish Patients with Mental Health Disorders Important?

- › Providing CC care of Amish patients with mental health disorders is important because it
- promotes clear communication and effective interaction between Amish patients and their healthcare providers
 - allows for planning and delivery of appropriate, individualized, and effective care of Amish patients with mental health disorders

Facts and Figures

- › Over 330,000 Amish live in North America and approximately 63% of this population lives in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. The Amish population doubles in size about every 20 years, largely due to its high birth rate of an average of 5 or more children per family and the fact that 80–90% of Amish children choose to remain in their home community as adults. In 2015, the Amish formed 2 new settlements in the south American countries of Bolivia and Argentina^(3,13)
- › Therapists suggest that there is a great need to focus on education of Amish patients and family members about mental health disorders and psychiatric medications and the effectiveness of psychotropic medications for psychiatric symptoms. They also state that because addiction often complicates mental health struggles in Amish patients, it is important for