

NURSING PRACTICE & SKILL

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

What is Providing Culturally Competent Care to Black 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 healthcare, 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 Black patients with mental health disorders is holistic and incorporates appropriate cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions when planning and providing care. Providing CC care to Black patients with mental health disorders typically involves encouraging the patient to pursue adequate social support, promoting rapport and trust with the patient, responding to concerns about quality of care, asking about the use of natural and traditional folk remedies, and arranging for visits from the clergyperson of the patient's choice. Except where otherwise indicated, the information that follows is on Black American culture and Black patients and families in general. (For more information about Black culture and caring for Black patients, see the series of related *Nursing Practice & Skills*)
- **How:** Planning and providing CC care of Black patients with mental health disorders and their families is based on information from patient/family interviews, completed written survey tools, if available, and facility protocols specific to CC care of the Black patient. Interventions involve face-to-face communication 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 can be provided to Black patients with mental health disorders and their families in any healthcare setting, including inpatient, outpatient, and home-care settings
- **Who:** CC care can be provided to Black patients with mental health disorders and their families by any appropriately trained, licensed healthcare clinician. These duties cannot be delegated to unlicensed healthcare staff members (e.g., nurses' aides). It is appropriate for family members to be present when CC care is provided to Black patients with mental health disorders because family members can provide essential information regarding Black cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions

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

- › The desired outcome of providing CC care to Black patients with mental health disorders is that patients and their families
- understand what to expect, experience reduced anxiety regarding receiving care, and become comfortable participating in and adhering to the individualized CC plan of care
- feel satisfied with the care received and when asked, state that the care provided appropriately incorporated their cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions

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- adhere to the prescribed treatment regimen, including seeking appropriate social support, taking prescribed medications, and/or attending therapy sessions, as appropriate
- develop a sense of trust and rapport with the treating clinician and the healthcare team
- experience no interactions between traditional Black American folk remedies and conventional Western medical treatments

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

- › Providing CC care to Black patients with mental health disorders is important because it
- promotes trust, clear communication, and effective interaction between Black patients and the healthcare team
- leads to decreased patient anxiety regarding receiving care
- allows for planning and delivery of appropriate, individualized, and effective care

Facts and Figures

- › United States Census data shows that there are currently more than 43 million Black Americans (US Census Bureau, n.d.)
- › Signs and symptoms of depression in Black patients are often different from those in persons of other races, and Black patients are frequently underdiagnosed with regard to depression (Das et al., 2006). Rather than exhibiting sadness and/or talking about feeling sad (as is typical among White patients), Black patients typically express feeling physical pain, exhaustion, lethargy, sorrow, anger, or regret and older Black patients often describe depression as a feeling of "having the blues" (Black et al., 2011; Perkins et al., 2014)
- › The lifetime prevalence of major depression among Black patients is 10% compared with 17% among White patients,