

NURSING PRACTICE & SKILL

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

What Is Providing Culturally Competent Care for Muslim 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 the individual

- **What:** Culturally competent (CC) care for Muslim patients with mental health disorders (e.g., anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder [PTSD], depression) is holistic and incorporates Muslim cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions. CC care for Muslim patients with mental health disorders includes encouraging compliance with the prescribed medication regimen and collaborating with the family's religious leader (called an *imam*) to identify CC care interventions if desired by the patient and family. CC care involves initiating strategies to preserve patient privacy, modesty, social etiquette, and dietary practices; promoting social support for the patient and family; respecting the patient's religious items (e.g., religious amulets, a prayer rug); and arranging for visits by a hospital clergyperson or the family *imam*. (For more information about Muslim culture and caring for Muslim patients, see the series of related *Nursing Practice & Skills*)

- **How:** CC care for Muslim patients with mental health disorders is provided based on information from patient and/or family interviews, completed written questionnaires, if available, and facility protocols regarding CC care for the Muslim patient. CC care interventions are provided by face-to-face interaction with the patient and family members, making telephone calls to schedule visitation for spiritual support and to reserve a room where the family members and other visitors can meet, and direct communication with the family *imam*, family members, and other members of the healthcare team regarding the treatment plan and scheduling patient care planning conferences as needed

- **Where:** CC care can be provided for Muslim patients with mental health disorders in any healthcare setting, including the inpatient and outpatient healthcare setting, and in the home

- **Who:** CC care can be provided for Muslim patients with mental health disorders by any appropriately trained healthcare clinician. These duties cannot be delegated to unlicensed clinical staff members (e.g., nurses' aides). With patient permission, it is appropriate for family members to be present during the provision of CC care for Muslim patients with mental health disorders because family members can provide important information regarding Muslim cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions

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What Is the Desired Outcome of Providing Culturally Competent Care for Muslim Patients with Mental Health Disorders?

- › The desired outcomes of providing CC care for Muslim patients with mental health disorders are that
 - the patient and family understand what to expect, experience reduced anxiety, and become comfortable participating in and adhering to the individualized CC plan of care
 - the patient and family feel satisfied with the care received and when asked, state that the care provided appropriately incorporated Muslim cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions
 - the patient and family experience social support from family members, friends, and their *imam* regarding stress related to the patient's mental health disorder, and attend support group meetings for Muslim persons with mental illness and their families, if such a support group is available in the community
 - the patient adheres to the prescribed medication regimen
 - the patient's *imam* assists the healthcare team in identifying CC interventions that are appropriate for the patient, if desired by the patient and family

Why Is Providing Culturally Competent Care for Muslim Patients with Mental Health Disorders Important?

- › Providing CC care for a Muslim patient with a mental health disorder is important because it
 - promotes clear communication and effective interaction between the Muslim patient and members of the healthcare team
 - allows for planning and delivery of appropriate, individualized, and effective care for the Muslim patient with a mental health disorder