

NURSING PRACTICE & SKILL

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

What is Providing Culturally Competent Care to Thai 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 Thai patients with mental health disorders is holistic and incorporates cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions when planning and providing care

- **How:** The content of CC care for Thai patients with mental health disorders is based on information from patient/family interviews, completed written questionnaires, if available, and facility protocols specific to CC care of the Thai patient. Providing CC care to Thai patients with mental health disorders involves performing interventions to reduce the patient's and family's feelings of stress, guilt, and shame related to the patient's mental illness. Care can also include questioning about use of natural and traditional remedies, arranging for visits by a clergyman or other spiritual leader, and arranging for an area where family members and other visitors can meet. An interpreter is used as needed. (For more information about Thai culture and caring for Thai patients, see the series of related *Nursing Practice & Skills*)

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

- **Who:** CC care can be provided to Thai patients with mental health disorders by any healthcare clinician. These duties cannot be delegated to unlicensed clinical staff members (e.g., nurses' aides). It is appropriate for family members to be present during care of Thai patients with mental health disorders because family members can provide essential information regarding Thai cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions regarding mental illness

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

› The desired outcome of providing CC care to Thai patients with mental health disorders is that

- the patients understand what to expect, experience reduced anxiety, and become comfortable participating in and adhering to the individualized CC plan of care
- the patients feel satisfied with the care received and when asked, state that the care provided appropriately incorporated Thai cultural beliefs, attitudes, and traditions
- the patients' caregiver(s) experience reduced caregiver stress related to the patients' mental health condition

ICD-9

294.9, 298.9, 300.9

ICD-10

F99

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- the patients and their families experience reduced feelings of guilt and shame related to the patients' mental health condition

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

- › Providing CC care to Thai patients with mental health disorders is important because it
- promotes clear communication and effective interaction between Thai patients and the healthcare team
 - allows for planning and delivery of appropriate, individualized, and effective mental health care of Thai patients
 - can reduce feelings of stress, guilt, and shame experienced by the patients and their families related to mental illness

Facts and Figures

- › The cultural origin of the people who first migrated to what is now Thailand (which was formerly called Siam) is not fully known, but is probably from Southern China with strong cultural influences from India during the first century AD. The population of Thailand is currently over 64 million. Historically, Thailand has remained relatively independent of Western foreign powers because it is the only Southeast Asian country that has never been colonized by Westerners. Thailand's government is a constitutional monarchy in which the Thai king acts as a principal spiritual and cultural leader and democratic governing power is held by an elected prime minister and parliament. English is widely spoken as a second language throughout Thailand. Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist culture, with 93.6% of the population practicing Buddhism and a small proportion observing Islam (4.9%) or Christianity (1.2%). Approximately 150,000 Thais currently live in the United States (Ross et al., 2013, United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2016)