



## Culturally Sensitive Care MODULE 05

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# Elements of Providing Culturally Sensitive Care: Facilitating Client Choice

**The goal of this learning module is to identify elements of providing culturally sensitive care.**

### **What Will I Learn?**

By completing this learning module on Facilitating Client Choice you will learn to:

- Identify the importance of understanding how clients differ in their understanding of health and healthcare, based on their culture
- Understand the importance of your role as a nurse to assist clients to meet their specific healthcare needs
- Develop an understanding of clients' perspectives and how important they may be to them

### **How Will I Learn?**

- By reviewing the content provided relating to how a nurse will facilitate client choices
- By reviewing the case study
- By analyzing the case study and reflecting on the content and how it relates to your values and beliefs
- By utilizing your nursing knowledge, experience and expertise to determine if there are other alternatives or approaches
- By applying what you have learned in this module to your nursing practice

## Facilitating Client Choice

In our day to day nursing care and the opportunities we have as healthcare professionals to care for a diverse patient population, it is profoundly understood that clients differ in so many ways.

Clients differ in their definitions of health, well-being, and quality of life, as well as their overarching goals for treatment and who they consider are appropriate providers of care.

Our primary responsibility and accountability as nurses is to help the client meet his/her specific health goals. The approaches we may take as professionals will differ based on our knowledge and expertise as well as past experiences. For this reason, personal self-reflection and continuous life-long learning guides us in making good decisions and helps us best meet client care needs.

Assisting clients in attaining their specific health care goals requires exploration from the client's perspective and to make every attempt to understand the meaning behind each request as well as the client's overall goals for treatment.

There are times when a client may engage you as a nurse to request a particular treatment or procedure that the client may not clearly understand, identify or be in their best interest. Having said this, it is absolutely imperative that the nurse clearly understands the client's perspective as this is extremely important to the therapeutic nurse-client relationship.

There may be times where there are concerns that a client's cultural preference will negatively affect the client, so the nurse must work very closely with the client to explain the potential harm and risks associated with their choice of proposed treatments.

Similarly, when the client's choice may pose a risk or harm to the well-being of other clients, the nurse must endeavour to find ways of achieving some elements of the client's preference while providing a safe and quality environment for others.

## Case Studies

**Keep a notebook to write down your ideas and answers to the questions in the following case studies**

**Case Study One:** Ms. Sarandeep Kaur is a woman in a small community who has recently emigrated from Somalia to Ontario. She gave birth to her daughter three months ago and has contacted you at the Public Health Unit. Ms. Kaur would like your assistance with arranging for the excision of her daughter's genitalia as this is very important to her and her family.

### Reflection

Based on the information presented in this case study:

1. What are some strategies the nurse should consider to resolve this situation?
2. Does this nurse have a culturally sensitive practice issue or the potential for a problem?
3. In your analysis, identify the Professional Standards that are not being met in this situation.
4. Review this case with a colleague and discuss your results. Consider the following when determining if a culturally sensitive situation is a problem.

## Discussion

Regardless of Ms. Kaur's personal feelings about female genital excision, the nurse needs to understand the meaning of this custom for this client, which is directly linked to values about family purity and family honour.

The nurse however, knows that this practice is illegal in Canada. The nurse needs to plan a visit to help inform Ms. Kaur in a non-judgmental and non-threatening manner of the potential risks and harm associated with this practice and of the legal implications.

By exploring the custom and providing education and support to the woman, the nurse will have a much better chance of preventing a practice that carries considerable risk of harm to her daughter.

**Case Study Two:** A client from the First Nations community has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. His family requests that a sweet grass ceremony be performed in the hospital as part of his treatment. This ceremony requires the need for chanting and burning of some substances, which will result in small amounts of smoke (similar to incense).

### Reflection

Based on the information presented in this case study:

1. What are some strategies the nurse should consider to resolve this situation?
2. Does this nurse have a culturally sensitive practice issue or the potential for a problem?
3. In your analysis, identify the Professional Standards that are not being met in this situation.

## Discussion

The nurse has never had this request and she didn't initially think this would be possible because the patient was confined to the hospital and it's against hospital policy.

Yet, the nurse recognized how incredibly important this was to the client and his family. The nurse approached her manager and explained the situation, and with support of her colleagues, they explored the potential impact on other clients in the unit.

Collectively, the staff approached other members of other departments and reviewed all fire procedures and codes. It was identified that this could be achieved and minimize the risks to other clients by transferring the client to a private room to conduct the ceremony.

The nurse's ongoing commitment to quality client-centered care prompted her to seek opportunities to meet the client's needs within the hospital setting. Lack of experience and fear are two of the most common barriers to providing culturally sensitive care.

Through collaboration with other colleagues, nurses are able to address assumptions that may or may not be achievable and determine ways of meeting client needs without exposing other clients to risk, harm or any discomfort. Also, by doing this, the nurse takes accountability and responsibility for influencing policies and procedures in the practice environment.

Review this case with a colleague and discuss your results. Consider the following when determining if a culturally sensitive situation is occurring.

**Consider the following when determining if a culturally sensitive situation is a problem.**

*The following worksheet allows you to capture your ideas!*

1. What are the potential or actual risks to the patient if this situation does not get resolved?
2. How does this issue conflict with CNO's Standard of Practice? Which Standards?
3. What practice setting or unit policies/procedures are you unable to meet?
4. Who else is affected by this issue/problem?
5. How could you resolve this issue or problem? If you are not able to, who would you go to?
6. What resources might give direction to resolve the issue/problem?
7. What ideas or suggestions can you offer to resolve the problem?