

# Cultural Competent Patient-Centered Nursing Care



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## KEYWORDS

- Cultural diversity • Cultural competence • Theoretic framework • Ethics
- Cultural tool kits • Cultural assessment • Patient-centered care

## KEY POINTS

- Health care has a multicultural environment.
- Behaviors, biases, and attitudes of Health care providers contribute to health care disparities, patient dissatisfaction, and poor patient outcomes.
- Cultural competence is when health care professionals strive to work effectively within the cultural context of an individual, family, and community.
- Cultural diversity is awareness of the presence of differences among patients.
- Patient-centered care is successful when both the nurse and the patient mutually agree to health care needs, knowledge, and experiences.
- The front-line nurse needs to implement cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skill, and cultural encounter to develop cultural competent care.
- Embracing ethics empowers mutual respect, equality, and trust.
- The National League for Nursing and the Association of Colleges of Nursing provide cultural diversity tool kits for educational resources.
- Becoming a culturally competent front-line nurse meets the challenge to provide patient-centered care for culturally diverse patients, promotes patient satisfaction, and improves health outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

The United States is a melting pot that consists of multiple races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, immigrants, refugees, and patients with disabilities. These changes in the ethnic and cultural composition of the United States population challenges nurses daily to incorporate the diverse needs of their patients into the provision of quality

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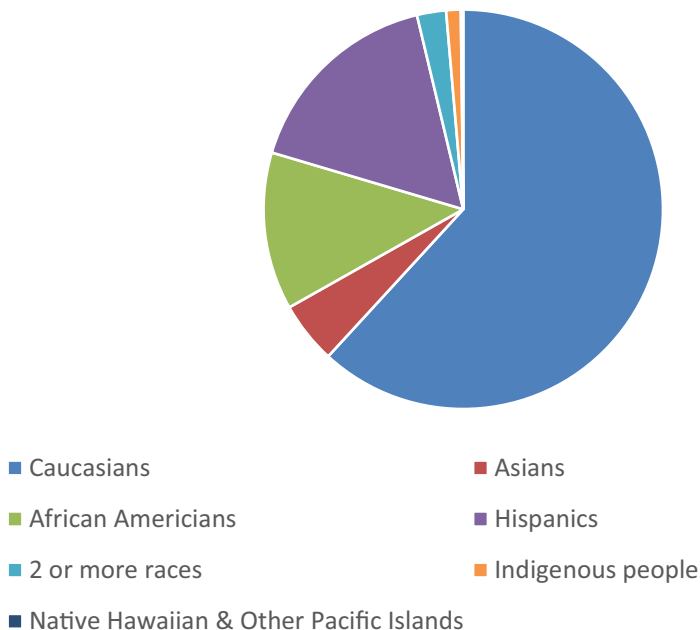
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nursing care while facing a shortage of adequate qualified staff to meet these needs.<sup>1</sup> The US Census projects that the minority populations will become the majority by 2042; therefore, professional nurses must demonstrate sensitivity in understanding a variety of cultures to provide optimum and quality care in multiple settings.<sup>2</sup> The composition of the nation's 2.7 million Registered Nurses who provide care in today's health care system consists of 87% Caucasians, 5% African Americans, 4% Asian/Pacific, 2% Hispanics, and 0.5% American.<sup>3</sup> For the current health care staff to meet the demands expected when providing health care services, it is imperative that the nursing staff is culturally competent to meet the needs of a culturally diverse nation while providing culturally appropriate care that will translate into effective outcomes. **Fig. 1** summarizes the United States ethnicities in 2012, demonstrating a need for diverse and culturally competent nurses.

### DEFINING CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Cultural competence is when health care professionals strive to work effectively within the cultural context of an individual, family, and community.<sup>4,5</sup> It is the explicit use of culturally based care and health knowledge in a sensitive, creative, and meaningful way to fit the general way of life and needs of individual or groups for their health care needs.<sup>6</sup> Cultural diversity is the awareness of the presence of differences among members of a social group or units.<sup>7</sup> Culture influences patients' perceptions of their health and the methods they pursue to maintain and restore their health.<sup>8</sup> The behaviors, biases, and attitudes of health care providers contribute to health care disparities that are prominent in minority populations and poorer communities. The goal of implementing culturally competent care and recognizing diversity is to reduce health care disparities and remove barriers that may prevent patients from getting well. The



**Fig. 1.** Ethnicities in the United States, 2012. (Data from American Association of College of Nurses. Fact sheet: enhancing diversity in the nursing workforce. 2014. Available at: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/diversityFS.pdf>. Accessed June 10, 2014.)

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