**Week 3: Reflective Practice**

Self-Knowledge

Increasing diversity, globalization, and expanding technologies have produced complex ethical pressures that influence nursing practice. Master's-prepared nurses are challenged to take on leadership roles and effect positive change to promote health and health outcomes. To be effective in the advanced practice role, it is important to understand one's own personal values, beliefs, strengths, and limitations.

Knowing Self

Important prerequisites of the nurse's ability to deliver person-centred included self-knowledge and clarity of beliefs and values (McCormack & McCance, 2017). Self-awareness or self-knowledge is developed through reflection. Reflection allows for the examination of personal experiences, which helps clarify the values and beliefs that shape one's perspectives and actions. According to McCormack and McCance (2017), through reflection, self-awareness, and engagement with others, an individual is able to understand oneself. Self-awareness aids the nurse in understanding how personal beliefs and attitudes may influence interactions with others (Rasheed, 2015). Self-awareness has other advantages. Rasheed (2015) noted that self-awareness promotes personal and professional growth. Similarly, Eng and Pai (2015) found that nurses who engaged in self-reflection had higher nursing competence.

## Value and Belief Clarification

Self-reflection helps nurses clarify their personal beliefs and values. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, there is a difference. Beliefs are convictions or assumptions one holds to be true, sometimes without actual proof or evidence. Values relate to what one considers to be important in life. Values stem from beliefs, and may include principles or standards of conduct (DeNisco & Barker, 2015).

Values and beliefs influence one's thoughts, decisions, and actions. Clarification of values and belief is an ongoing process shaped by education; experiences (social, political, personal and professional); environment; and economic factors. Values and beliefs change over time as one engages in personal and professional development. Nurses are held to a standard of providing safe, quality care to all individuals in need. Nurses' personal values may or may not align with professional nursing values. Clarification of values and beliefs strengthens nurses' ability to make ethical decisions and to promote ethical and moral actions. A master's- prepared advanced practice nurse must understand the interrelationship of values and beliefs and the effect on professional practice.

Shahriari, Mohammadi, Abbaszadeh, and Bahrami (2013) described 10 common professional nursing values: human dignity, justice, autonomy in decision making, precision and accuracy in caring, commitment, human relationship, sympathy, honesty, and individual and professional competency. Similarly, Kaya, Isik, Senvuva,and Kaya (2016) found human dignity, altruism, aesthetic, equality, freedom, accuracy, and justice as core professional nursing values.

Biases and Stereotypes

Whether we realize it or not, we all have stereotypes and biases about a variety of things . Stereotypes and biases often develop out of the brain's natural need to filter stimuli. The brain receives a constant barrage of thoughts and sensations. The brain would quickly be overwhelmed if it had to provide an equal level of attention to every stimulus (Meyers & Twenge, 201 6 ). To efficiently discriminate between the most pressing matters and matters that may be handled automatically, the brain develops shortcuts, which are then selectively reinforced by our experiences. Examples of shortcuts include stereotypes, heuristics, and biases. People frequently rely on these shortcuts in decision-making without realizing they are doing so. Self-reflection can help us identify the stereotypes and biases we hold so that we can engage in authentic, person- centred care.

While some stereotypes may be neutral (Ex. Nurses wear white), others are harmful. Bias is a sensitive topic to address; however, it must not be ignored as bias may lead to intentional (explicit) or unintentional (implicit) disparities in care and subsequent health and healthcare outcomes ( DeNisco & Barker, 2015). Biases in the areas of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, and obesity are most relevant among health care providers (Dunagan , Kimble, Gunby, & Andrews, 2016). Ageism is also a concern in nursing and sustained through social stereotypes, lack of knowledge, and practice policies (Kagan & Melendez-Torres, 2015). Regardless of the type of bias, all have the potential to negatively impact health and healthcare outcomes. Attitudes of prejudice interfere with one's ability to practice cultural humility and to make nonbiased ethical decisions.

It is important to acknowledge personal biases, as these affect beliefs, behaviors, actions, and interactions with others. With this awareness, you can begin addressing your biases. Personal and professional growth are aspects of professional identity and are influential in the demonstration of leadership and the promotion of positive change in people, systems, and the profession of nursing (National League for Nursing, 2012). Identifying, understanding, and being mindful of stereotypes and prejudice help to reduce bias. Working toward controlling and resolving biases through the development of attitudes and skills that promote human dignity, respect, and value diversity and cultural humility is critical to effective nursing practice in varied settings.

**Reflection**

Students reflect on known biases. What are my biases and attitudes toward people with various cultural, gender, sexual orientation, age, weight, and religion that are different than my own? Identify new biases or confirm current biases. Develop a plan to reduce bias.

Complete selected surveys at Project Implicit, Harvard University [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html (Links to an external site.)](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility is another important aspect of person- centred care as well as a key concept of the Chamberlain Conceptual Framework of Nursing (Chamberlain University, 2018). Cultural humility begins with self-reflection . It involves the acknowledgement that one's own perspective is limited and may contribute to barriers in providing care (DeNisco & Barker, 2015). Cultural humility involves aware of cultural differences. The concept of cultural humility is a fluid and active process that allows for growth and knowledge development related to other cultures. One approaches cultural differences with respect, openness, flexibility and humility. As a practice of cultural humility, it is useful for the nurse to think about cultural phenomena, to understand variations related to different cultures, and to perform careful individual assessments to include personal preferences as there are intracultural as well as intercultural variations (Engebreston, 2016). Practicing cultural humility places the person at the center of care and helps to develop mutually respectful and beneficial partnerships.

Engebreston (2016) described six phenomena found in all cultural groups: communication, personal space, time, social organization, environmental control, and biological variations as the. Communication includes the expression of feelings, body contact, and humor; personal space incorporates comfort levels related to the area surrounding a person's body; and time includes both social time—the arrangement of social activities— and time that represents past, present, and future with emphasis on one being m ore dominant. Social organization includes family structure, one's relationship in the world, and environmental control centers on different perceptions on the ability to control. Locus of control can help provide insight on how one views the environment and whether he or she can influence events and outcomes based on personal decisions and actions. Lastly, the culture phenomenon of biological variations includes characteristics such as body size, hair texture, and variations in facial feat ures and skin color . Cultural humility acknowledges and seeks to understand differences.

**Reflection**

Think about the culture with which you identify. How are different phenomena demonstrated in your culture: communication, personal space, time, social organizations, environmental control, and biological variations? How do you feel when caring for people whose cultural backgrounds differ from your own? What actions can you implement to support ongoing engagement in cultural humility?