**AGE/POPULATION/CULTURAL PHILOSOPHY**

**DIVERSITY**

Our staff is committed to performing above and beyond the norm to exceed our customer's expectations not only in health care but also spiritually and emotionally but also recognizing and valuing individual differences. What we do for our patients, we must also do for ourselves. Just as a diverse group of patients feel comfortable at VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, so too must our employees. Only by appreciating and valuing our own differences, can we truly serve our patients and their families. To this end, we commit to utilizing our diversity to strengthen our working relationships, by:

* Being considerate in our comments, challenging others and being open to feedback when statements are made regarding race, gender, ethnic background, religion, appearance, disability, sexual orientation, religion or any other dimension of diversity.
* Actively attempt to communicate and learn about people that are different from me. Valuing people who are different from me for the opportunity they provide to learn and view things from a different perspective.
* Supporting the organization in valuing diversity by accepting the responsibility to challenge or report instances of discrimination against any individual for whatever reason.

**Steps in becoming culturally competent:**

1. Understand your own cultural beliefs.

2. Learn about other cultures, especially attitudes toward health care and ways of communicating/interacting.

3. Ask for help. You cannot be expected to know all the nuances of each of the world cultures, customs and languages. You are, however, expected to ask for help when needed.

***NOTE:*** Family members, particularly children, should NOT be used for interpreting medical information.

**Tips for Providing Culturally Competent Care**

**DO:**

* Try to understand people’s values, since values will influence their behavior.
* Keep in mind that there is always individual variation within a group.
* Include and understand the family as much as possible.

**DO NOT:**

* Stereotype. Don’t project your own cultural perceptions and biases.
* Expect that all patients make their own decisions. In some cultures, important decisions are made by the family. In cultures where males are dominant, the husband may make the final decisions regarding the health care of their wife and children.

**AGE/POPULATION SPECIFIC COMPETENCY**

Age-specific competency integrates developmental tasks with the health needs of specific age groups such as infants, toddlers, adolescents and adults. Each patient is unique. Every person grows and develops in his or her own unique way but follow general growth and development patterns. At VA GLAHS our patient population is mostly adult.

**Adolescent years (ages 13-20)**

*Physical growth*

* Girls begin puberty approximately 2 years earlier than boys
* Growth spurt may affect coordination
* Sex features develop such as breasts in girls and facial hair in boys
* Fine motor skills well developed
* Participates in sports and extracurricular activities
* Seeks employment outside the home

*Cognitiv*e

* Thinks abstractly
* Analyzes arguments
* Forms hypotheses
* Applies theories and ideas
* Considers potential alternatives to situations not yet experienced
* Has limited understanding of the structure and function of the human body
* May be self-conscious about body image
* Eating disorders and depression may be of concern

*Communication*

* Verbal, reads and writes well
* Emotional swings
* Peer pressure

*Socialization*

* Peers are role models
* Peers influence decision making
* Identifies feelings of self and others
* Considers own feelings to be unique
* Interested in sports

*Major fear*

* Loss of control
* Altered body image
* Separation from peer group

*Safety and Nursing Considerations*

* Emphasize the continued need for checkups, screenings and immunizations
* Maintain privacy
* Allow decision making and control
* Encourage safety regarding smoking, drinking, sexual activity and drugs
* Provide information in a sensitive manner
* Be an active listener, supportive and non-judgmental
* Teach correct terms and visual aids
* Discuss concerns
* Teach coping techniques of relaxation, deep breathing and imagery
* Teach healthy habits regarding seat belts, nutrition, exercise, hygiene and safety

**Young adult (ages 21-39)**

*Physical growth*

* Young adults reach sexual maturity and their adult height and weight

*Cognitive*

* More comfortable with their body image
* Develop a personal identity and self-reliance
* Experience sexual intimacy, choose a mate and raise a family
* Establishment of a career that provides personal satisfaction, economic security and a feeling of contributing to the welfare of society
* Support, honesty and respect
* Establishing a personal set of values and formulating a meaningful philosophy of life
* Evaluate new information in terms of their experiences

*Common health problems*

* Four major causes of death related to violence
* Vehicular accident
* Other accident
* Suicide
* Homicide
* Anxiety and depression related to pressures of
* Independence
* Competition in the work place
* Acceptance by peers
* Stress and new-found freedom may lead to
* Experimentation with various lifestyles
* Contributes to substance use and abuse
* Other physical health problems
* Pregnancy complications
* Cervical or breast cancer
* Orthopedic injuries

*Safety and Nursing Considerations*

* Continue to encourage immunizations, checkups and screenings
* Keep contact with family and friends
* Assess for stress related to new adult roles
* Encourage discussion about feelings and concerns regarding illness, injury, family and finances
* Involve the patient and family members in decision making and education
* Educate about injury prevention and a healthy lifestyle
* Stress management
* Resources and instructional courses in household management and parenting
* Encourage exercise, weight control and hygiene
* Awareness of the dangers of substance abuse
* Encourage group learning situations and support groups
* Periodic assessment to screen for hypertension, anemia, cholesterol, breast, cervical, and testicular cancer

**Middle Adult (ages 40-64)**

*Physical growth*

* Experience physical changes, such as decreased endurance
* Women experience menopause
* Illness or injury may interfere with plans
* Chronic illness may develop

*Cognitive*

* Concern for the next generation
* Help children gain independence
* Helping children grow to become happy, responsible adults
* Become active in the community
* Achieve mature social and civic responsibility and involvement in altruistic activities and concerns
* Balance work with other roles and prepare for retirement
* Accept role reversal with aging parents
* Sandwich generation (caring for parents as well as children)
* Prepare emotionally for the death of living parents
* Accept and adjust to physical changes of middle adulthood
* Maintain healthful ways of living

*Common health problems*

* Major causes of death
* Cardiovascular disease
* Stroke
* Lung cancer
* Breast Cancer
* Cirrhosis of the liver
* Other Major health problems
* Chronic respiratory disease
* Hypertension

*Safety and Nursing Considerations*

* Annual physical exam to screen for hypertension, diabetes, respiratory disease and cancer
* Assessment of nutrition, exercise, occupational hazards, sexual dysfunction and adjustment to menopause
* Assessment of over the counter use of medications, alcohol and tobacco use.
* Encourage self-care
* Allow time to talk about frustrations, accomplishments, dreams and any concerns
* Talk about stress
* Assist client with referrals to meet health-care costs
* Involve the patient and close family in decisions about care

**Older Adult (ages 65-79)**

*Physical growth*

* Experience changes in skin, muscles and sensory abilities
* Higher risk of health problems such as infection and chronic illness
* Sleep more, often napping during the day
* Many older adults stay in good health

*Cognitive*

* Adapt to changes
* Take up new activities and roles
* Redirection of energy and talents to new roles and activities
* May experience depression, loneliness and anxiety over changes or about the future
* Development of a personal view of death that prepares one for this final stage of life
* May have reduced attention span
* May remember things more slowly

*Common health problems*

* Cardiovascular disease
* Cancer
* Diabetes
* Respiratory disease
* Gastrointestinal problems

*Safety and Nursing Considerations*

* Stress the need for immunizations, checkups and screenings
* Encourage healthy habits and social activity
* Educate client about safety measures that include
* Fall prevention
* Safe medication use
* Caution with hot water
* Provide a safe, comfortable environment
* Night light
* Temperature
* Give the patient chances to reminisce to help promote a positive self-image
* Speak clearly and avoid background noise during teaching
* Use larger-print materials and adequate lighting
* Encourage the patient and family to take an active role in care
* Discuss concerns
* Talk about family and other support systems
* Involve patient in care decisions

**Late Adulthood (80 and older)**

*Physical growth*

* Higher risk of infection, dehydration, poor nutrition and chronic illness
* Effects of chronic illness may be more severe
* Mobility becomes difficult

*Cognitive*

* May feel isolated or upset due to loss of family, friends, sensory abilities or financial independence
* May lose self-confidence as their abilities decline
* Reflect on life and built toward the acceptance of death
* Learning may be slower with a reduction in attention spans

*Safety and Nursing Considerations*

* Continue to stress the need for screenings, checkups and immunizations
* Encourage physical and social activity
* Encourage reminiscing
* Promote, and assist with self-care and independence as much as possible
* Allow choices whenever possible
* Avoid treating the patient as a child
* Assist with end-of-life planning
* Monitor age-related risks
* Ensure safety measures to prevent falls and burns
* Educate about home safety and safe medication use
* Educate in an appropriate environment with suitable materials
* Involve the patient and family or other caregivers
* Teach while the patient is a peak energy