The Healthcare Professional's Guide to Clinical Cultural Competence

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Edited by Rani H. Srivastava of the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto, *The Healthcare Professional's Guide to Clinical Cultural Competence* features contributions from a diverse range of authors from across Canada and from a variety of backgrounds.

The book is geared to health professionals in all disciplines and aims to enhance their clinical competence. Its 14 chapters seek first to build a foundation in understanding cultural competence and then to apply that understanding in a variety of health care settings. Each chapter begins with a series of learning objectives and a list of key terms, and ends with an extensive list of references from which the reader can pursue topics of interest.

As well as being very useful in terms of up-to-date and relevant research and references, this book is extremely readable, thanks to the use of numerous examples; short "Cultural Competence in Action" sections; and many tables, illustrations, and useful tools. Many of the discussions were thought provoking or reinforced my own thoughts on certain topics. For instance, my own experiences have led me to be cautious about stereotyping cultural groups and have made me aware that communication (both verbal and non-verbal) can be tricky. The description of the cultural competence continuum presented in chapter 1 made me rethink my approach to cultural proficiency, especially as it relates to student education.

Some chapters focus on generic topics in cultural competence, such as cross-cultural communication, working with interpreters, and caring for diverse families; chapter 7 is a guide to illness beliefs and paths of healing. Other chapters deal with specific situations such as the perinatal period and the end of life.

A good example of the uses of this book is chapter 13, which deals with pain management. After examining differences in pain thresholds among cultural groups and affective responses to pain from around the world, the author gives examples and guidelines for providing culturally sensitive pain care. For instance, a helpful illustration of establishing pain assessment tools takes into account how culturally specific affective responses and culturally specific practices can be incorporated into the care plan. I found this information particularly applicable to the rehabilitation setting, as it reinforces the concept of not making generalizations about populations but nevertheless trying to understand the role of culture in approaches to care.

While the chapters on applying cultural understanding cover only a small set of situations, the general learning from this book can be applied to numerous different situations.

I would expect this book to be very valuable for health care providers both in Canada and around the world. It is easy to read, and its approach is not overly prescriptive but helps the reader to consider his or her own clinical practice from a variety of difference perspectives. I very much enjoyed this publication and would highly recommend it.

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