

# **VI. CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN HEALTH CARE**



# Cultural Diversity Overview

At Randolph Hospital, it is our goal to provide *continual education* to our administration, staff, volunteers and physicians in cultural diversity. By doing so we can continue to offer the best possible service and care to all customers of both similar and different cultures.



# Behaviors that do NOT Support Diversity

- Discrimination
- Stereotyping
- Harassment
- Intimidation
- Collusion



# Behaviors: Discrimination

- Discrimination is the unfair treatment of a person or group. It is the result of prejudice.
- Prejudice is a preconceived judgment or opinion about a group of people. Prejudice often takes the form of ethnocentrism. This often results in the belief that one's own group is better than all others.
- For example, a hiring manager believes that Caucasians are smarter than members of other ethnic groups. As a result, only Caucasians are hired. Equally qualified minorities are not considered for the job. This is a **discriminatory practice** resulting from a **prejudicial belief**.

# Behaviors: Stereotyping

- A stereotype is a form of prejudice; it's a generalization about a group of people that is applied to ALL group members.
- For example, the following generalization is true:
  - *Nursing is a female dominated profession.*
- This becomes a stereotype when we assume that:
  - **All nurses** are women.
  - **All** male healthcare providers are physicians.



# Behaviors: Harassment

- Harassment is any form of unwelcome behavior that:
  - Disturbs or irritates others.
  - Creates a hostile work environment.
- Sexual harassment involves unwelcome physical or verbal behavior of a sexual nature.



# Behaviors: Intimidation

- Intimidation occurs when one employee treats another in a way that causes them to feel:
  - Belittled
  - Frightened
  - Discouraged
  - Inhibited
- Forms of intimidation include:
  - Using terms such as "honey" or "girl" when addressing a woman.
  - Referring to an adult as "kiddo".



# Behaviors: Collusion



Prejudice can be reinforced through agreement or cooperation. This is called collusion.

## Forms of collusion include:

- Silence: A coworker tells an ethnic joke. You do not object. You are now a silent party supporting the stereotype.
- Denial: This type of collusion occurs when employees treat prejudices as if they did not exist.
- Active cooperation.: Exchanging ethnic jokes with a coworker.



# Value Diversity



- To value diversity, we must learn to:
  - Accept and appreciate differences among people.
  - Understand our coworkers.
  - Avoid treating some coworkers as insiders and others as outsiders.
  - Acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of each person.
  - Work together as a team.

# Patients from Different Cultures

- Be able to talk with the patient regardless of culture.
- It is impossible to know social customs and values of every culture.
- It is possible to tailor your speaking style to the needs of the patient.
- The more you know about your patient's culture and values, the more likely you are to get your point across.



# Patients from Different Cultures, cont.

- Ask questions:
  - Ask about the patient's culture as it relates to treatment.
  - Ask about any special dietary needs.
  - Explain to the patient what they can expect in the way of treatment.
  - Explain how the treatment may differ from what the patient is used to.
  - Asking questions about a patient's culture will add to your ability to see issues from his or her point of view.

# Communication



- Pay attention to *how* the patient answers questions.
- A person who values boldness may think it is polite to make eye contact.
- Watch how close the person stands to you, gestures and tone of voice.
- In some cultures, standing close when speaking is a sign of respect.
- If you accidentally offend someone, apologize.
- Smile, speak in a friendly tone of voice, treat others fairly and respectfully.