

# UNIT 11

## Developing Cultural Sensitivity

This table lists some of the common belief systems related to health and illness.

**TABLE** BELIEF SYSTEMS RELATED TO HEALTH/ILLNESS

Culture	Related Concepts	Health Care Provider	Cause of Illness	Methods of Treatment
European Americans	Illness is not superficial, but can be influenced by poor health practices; disease is treatable and sometimes curable	Physician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Punishment for sins</li> <li>▪ Self-abuse; outside forces such as germs</li> </ul>	Diet, exercise, home remedies, medication, surgery, religious rituals, wearing amulets
Asian Americans	Body has two energy forces: <i>yang</i> , which is cold, and <i>yin</i> , which is hot (hot and cold do not refer to temperature); hot conditions are treated with cold foods and treatments; cold conditions are treated with hot foods and treatments	Traditional healers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Imbalance between the positive (<i>yang</i>) energy and the negative (<i>yin</i>) energy found in the body</li> <li>▪ Overexertion</li> </ul>	Herbs, hot foods for conditions associated with conditions and cold foods for conditions associated with yang conditions; home remedies and folk medicines
Hispanic Americans	Body contains four humors (fluids) that must be balanced. Illness develops from imbalance. Humors are blood (hot, moist), phlegm (cold, moist), black bile (cold, dry), yellow bile (hot, dry)	Native healers (jerbero, curandera)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Punishment from God for sins</li> </ul>	Candles, prayers, wearing medals, hot and cold foods to restore balance of humors
Native Americans	Spiritual powers control body's energy; harmony must exist between body, mind, and spirit; illness results when harmony is disrupted	Medicine man, shaman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Violation of taboo</li> <li>▪ Attack by witch or evil spirits</li> <li>▪ Do not believe in germ theory</li> </ul>	Sandpainting to diagnose condition and determine treatment; elaborate rituals; carrying medicine bundles; wearing masks to hide from evil spirits
African Americans	Body, mind, and spirit must be in harmony for health; life is a process rather than a state; illness can occur if self-care is not taken	Folk practitioners, root workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Punishment from God</li> <li>▪ Spirits and demons</li> </ul>	Prayer, diet, home remedies, wearing copper and silver bracelets, wearing talismans and amulets

Islamic Americans	Magico-religious; emotional distress expressed as “heart disease”; feel responsible to visit and help ill; the individual has no control over life events, as good and evil usually are result of “Will of Allah”; male-dominated society with male children more highly valued than female children; may use female circumcision to ensure faithfulness and be accepted by the women; may resist medical direction	Traditional healers; physicians	Will of Allah; punishment for sins; various beliefs in causes such as imbalance of hot and cold; influence of an “evil eye”	Magico-religious; prayer; self-care and medical science; use amulets inscribed with verses from the Koran; turquoise stones; charm of a hand with five fingers to protect against the evil eye; male health professionals prohibited from touching or examining females; males may refuse health care from females
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## EXPLORING THE WEB

### Description

About.com, Transcultural nursing

Center for Cross-Cultural Health

Cultural Profiles Project

Culture Clues Tip Sheets

Culture Diversity

CulturedMed

Diversity Rx

Ethnic, Cultural, and Special Audience Food Pyramids

EthnoMed

Handbook on cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs

The Many Faces of Aging: Resources to Effectively Serve Minority Older People

Minority Health

Minority Health Care

Native American Elders Health Care Series

OSHA Hispanic Outreach

Provider’s Guide to Quality and Culture

Transcultural C.A.R.E. Associates

Transcultural Nursing Society

Vanderbilt Medical Center Cultural Manual

### Location

<http://www.nursing.about.com>

<http://www.crosshealth.com/>

<http://cwr.utoronto.ca/cultural>

<http://www.depts.washington.edu/pfes/cultureclues.html>

<http://www.culturediversity.org>

<http://culturedmed.sunyit.edu/>

<http://www.diversityrx.org>

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000023.html>

<http://ethnomed.org>

<http://www.sdhl.nhs.uk/documents/cultural.html>

<http://www.aoa.gov>

<http://healthweb.org/browse.cfm?subjectid=53>

<http://www.omhrc.gov/>

<http://learn.sdstate.edu/share>

[http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance\\_assistance/quickstarts/hispanic/index\\_hispanic.html](http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/quickstarts/hispanic/index_hispanic.html)

[http://www.msh.org/programs/providers\\_guide.html](http://www.msh.org/programs/providers_guide.html)

<http://www.transculturalcare.net>

<http://www.tcns.org>

<http://vumcpolicies.mc.vanderbilt.edu/>