The 8th edition of Rachel Spector’s (2013) book on Cultural Diversity in Health and Illness provides extensively updated and current content on cultural care. In addition to Spector’s well-established HEALTH Traditions Model, the text addresses the latest National Standards for Culturally Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care (CLAS) and institutional mandates by the Joint Commission regarding cultural and linguistic competency. The most recent U.S. Census 2010 demographic data and Healthy People 2020 goals enhance the discussions of cultural changes and health equity. Recent information on racial categories, ethnicity, immigration patterns, generational differences, and religious affiliations provide relevancy to the core content of the book.

The philosophy of CulturalCare is foundational for applying the HEALTH Traditions Model to cultural competency. CulturalCare is an approach in which “HEALTH, ILLNESS, and HEALING are understood holistically” (p. 14). HEALTH is a holistic (physical, mental, and spiritual) balance within the body and with the outside world (natural, communal, and metaphysical.) ILLNESS is a state of imbalance within the person (body, mind, and spirit) or
HEALING is a phenomenon that restores balance within the person (body, mind, and spirit) or “between the person and the environment” (p. 358). Each of these concepts provides the basis for attending to a person’s perspective when it comes to health, illness, and healing.

The HEALTH Traditions Model explores what people do from a traditional and/or alternative perspective to maintain HEALTH, protect HEALTH or prevent ILLNESS, or restore HEALTH (HEALING). In this model the words “traditional” and “alternative” also take on specific meaning. These terms are often used by healthcare professionals to indicate particular methods of care. Incorporating the person’s individual perspective, these practices will vary according to the person’s choice and background. For Spector, traditional methods of care are derived from a person’s ethnocultural and religious heritage and are often handed down from generation to generation. Alternative care, on the other hand, is whatever system of care a person elects to use that is not a part of their personal background. Spector makes an important distinction that defines traditional or alternative care as based on the person’s own perspective, not the assumptions of the healthcare providers.

Spector is known world-wide for her collections of HEALTH-related objects and exhibits. This edition provides new photos of items from a wide range of cultures that are used to maintain, protect, or restore HEALTH. Examples from different cultures show how to apply the HEALTH Tradition Model and assist the reader to use the model when caring for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

It has been four years since the last revision of this text. The 8th edition provides resources that are accessible to the healthcare provider or educator that can be used to keep current. Many chapters in this book conclude with newly added sections entitled “Keeping Up,” which include online references to historical articles and resources that are regularly updated. In addition to providing a wealth of helpful information for the healthcare provider, this book also contains tools and resources useful in nursing education.

Reference

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