

Cultural Context

Pain

- *Arab Americans*: very expressive about pain, particularly in the presence of family members
- *Central Americans*: Pain is viewed as a necessary part of life to be endured.
- *Gypsies*: Grief is expressed by wailing and calling out to God over and over. Women may also beat their breasts and tear out hair.
- *Haitians*: Haitians have a very low pain threshold and are very verbal about what is painning them, sometimes moaning.

Decision Making

- *Arab Americans*: Families make collective decisions. Extended families participate in decision-making. Fathers, eldest sons or eldest uncles are usually the family spokesperson.
- *Gypsies*: Nonverbal communication is often gregarious and assertive therefore appearing aggressive or even threatening when showing concern for an illness. Can alternate mood quickly from aggression to begging for help. Gypsies are rarely violent. Very respectful of elders authority.
- *Russians*: In general, patients with terminal illnesses are not told about their conditions. Family members are notified and then decide whether to tell the patient. Usually, the family does not wish to create an additional burden.

Visitors

- *Arab Americans*: Social expectations place high priority on visiting. Visits are planned and expected to support grieving or rejoicing. Some visitors are treated as family and are incorporated into the care of the patient.
- *Gypsies*: Desire for close personal contact with family members. Allow family members to stay in the room at all times.
- *Koreans*: Visitors outside of the family frequently come to see the patient as a sign of respect. When a family member is in a care-taking role, they will sleep in a cot next to the bed. Visitors will also bring or prepare Korean food and feed the patient.

Literacy

- *Filipinos*: Most Filipinos speak and understand English but pace and tone have specific meaning. Filipino language as a practical language is not very rich. Instead, Filipinos change tone of voice to capture emotion. Vocal inflection can get loud in the presence of a group of family members.
- *Gypsies*: Older Gypsies have no formal education and are unable to read and write other than to sign their name. Many appear to understand medical terminology when they do not.

Source: *Culture & Nursing Care 1996*