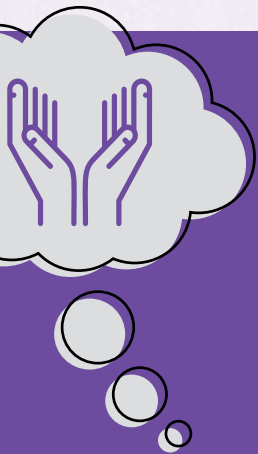


# COMPASSIONATE Care

*How does a patient's religion, gender, race and socioeconomic status factor into clinical decision-making?*

Patient values are individual characteristics such as gender, race and ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status that can influence health and well-being. As health care providers, it's important for athletic trainers to consider patient values during their clinical decision-making process. There are several strategies you can use to improve your cultural competence as a health care provider, such as Linda Leavitt's three-step strategy.\*

1. Reflect on your personal experiences when specific values have influenced your decisions as a patient and as a clinician.
2. Learn about the different values that influence outcomes and have positive and negative influences on patient experience.
3. Value the communication between patients and clinicians – don't be afraid to start a conversation and ask questions.



## RELIGION

Religion is shown to have a positive impact on an individual's physical and mental health, with those who regularly attend religious services more likely to have healthy eating habits, higher levels of physical activity and better coping skills. Regular attendance has shown to decrease in depression and substance abuse.

### What to consider:

- As you're providing care, be aware of any potential religious concerns when evaluating and treating patients.
- Be aware of any dietary restrictions associated with certain faiths, such as Orthodox Judaism and Islam. Make accommodations for religious fasting practices, such as those that take place during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

## GENDER IDENTITY

One's gender and gender identity are highly intertwined with health and health care disparities. Research shows that transgender patients and those who identify as LGBTQIA+ are less likely to seek care because of perceived negative attitudes and stigma from practitioners as well as a fear that practitioners have a lack of understanding or knowledge. Women, especially ethnically diverse women, often have less access to quality reproductive and women's health care. Men are often more hesitant to show emotion or admit to mental health concerns.

### What to consider:

- Transgender individuals are more likely to have higher rates of depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse and self-harm.
- Know your local resources and identify facilities and providers that are welcoming and affirming.
- A patient's first impression of athletic trainers can greatly influence their care moving forward. Find ways to make your area more inclusive.



## RACE AND ETHNICITY

Race and ethnicity are directly linked to the health care disparities also associated with gender and socioeconomic status. Ethnically diverse patients have been shown to have less insurance coverage and more barriers to health care. Health concerns, such as asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity are higher in African Americans, Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

### What to consider:

- Know your patient's race and ethnicity so you can be aware of the associated health care disparities.
- If there is a language difference, make sure the patient thoroughly understands any at-home exercise or medication-related instructions.



## SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Socioeconomic status has a significant impact on a patient's prior and current health status. Individuals who live in or grew up in poverty have overall a lower health status, less access to care and a higher mortality rate.

### What to consider:

- Preteens and adolescents in low socioeconomic households experience a higher rate of risky behavior, decreased physical activity and a higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Adults in low socioeconomic households are at higher risk for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, osteoarthritis and depression.



\*Source: National Athletic Trainers' Association (original article, with references, printed in October 2017 *NATA News*)  
Infographic provided by the National Athletic Trainers' Association (Updated 2023)