Writing Assignment #2

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Health care professionals have to interact with the number of people daily. To treat people effectively or to advocate for any health care issue it is necessary to understand the cultural and religious background of the people (Schwartz, 2002). Specifically, discussing the US, it is a country that is known as a melting pot due to its diversity. There are many ethnic groups residing in the US due to which the concept of cultural competence among health care professionals is highly important. In the US and especially in New Jersey there many ethnic groups present. I know a lot of ethnic groups as I have always been an activist in promoting health care among the vulnerable population and people of different cultural backgrounds. However, I am unfamiliar with one ethnic group that is Asian Americans.

According to the statistics, there are about 5.6% of Asian Americans living in the US. Also, more than 9.4% of Asian Americans are living in New Jersey and their number is growing day by day (Bureau n.d.). Since childhood, I used to read books regarding different cultures and even after growing up I liked to explore more cultures. I have always been a pro-black and I have joined several NGOs that work for the upliftment of black people. Due to this I never had difficulty in advocating for health care issues for people of different backgrounds.

Children are the most vulnerable population as they are dependent on their elders for everything. In short, their wellbeing is associated with the family and community they are living in. As a child advocate, I had to interact with multiple people so that I can advocate for children’s wellbeing (Biglan & Sandler, 2012). During my interaction with people from different backgrounds, I have always learned new things about different cultures. Despite meeting people with different backgrounds, I never had any interaction with Asian Americans until during an internship in the NGO that advocates for children's wellbeing my path crossed with Asian American people. I have never heard of Asian Americans in my entire life. Although, I knew Asians were unfamiliar that Asians are American citizens too. As I was unaware of their culture it was challenging for me to advocate for Asian American children's wellbeing. Growing up in a certain culture can nurture the identity of a child or dismantle it. Therefore, knowing about the cultural background of a child is very important. Typically, Asian parents' parenting style is authoritative so it is a bit difficult to advocate for children's rights and needs in from of them (Wong, 2002). However, after interacting with Asian Americans I think they are a bit different from them yet their parenting style is also authoritative. However, as I was unfamiliar with the culture I did not know that most Asians decide what things and careers are suitable for their children and usually, they do not focus on children's mental health. The challenge of advocating gets tougher and tougher as according to them, illness is something in which a person is physically ill. Thus, they do not consider mental diseases as an illness rather they believe that mental illness is just an excuse child make to escape from studies and working etc. So while advocating for children's emotional and mental wellness the parents immediately disregard the idea of mental health. Despite several efforts, they did not consider emotional and mental illness as a disease. Additionally, while advocating about how staying in the hospital was important for a sick child rather than care at home they refused the idea. In many Asian families taking care of a sick person is considered a noble deed. Therefore, they often prefer to take care of a sick person at home. Although, a friendly environment at home can facilitate a person in recovering sometimes it is necessary to admit patients in the hospital. So while advocating them the importance of regular clinic visits and hospital admittance they again refused to listen. They constantly argued regarding the admittance of sick to the hospital as according to them they can take care of the sick person better than any nurse (Liang & Hwang, 2017).

This situation was very difficult as being a child advocate I had to ensure child safety while also incorporating the parents’ cultural values. Due to the lack of cultural competence and background knowledge I was unable to effectively advocate for children. Despite, being an activist for the right of black people and knowing how to relate to and interact with people of different ethnicity I was unable to convey my message to Asian American people. So to resolve the challenge I reflect upon my experience with interacting black people while also researching Asian American people's culture. It is necessary to initiate a conversation with the person and listen to their perspective is the best way to learn about any person. This will facilitate in understanding their culture. Therefore, I also started listening to the perspective and concerns of Asian American people and I realized that in their culture there is no concept of emotional and wellness as Chinese people believe that mental illness is attributed to the influence of ancestral spirits (Kuo & Kavanagh, 1994). So to back up my suggestions regarding children and mental health by providing several pieces of evidence that mental illness is real while also spreading awareness regarding the stigma that is associated with mental illness in their culture. This helped them in understanding the causes of mental illness. Also, they became more aware of how severe mental illness can get. Thus, this way I successfully advocated for children’s well-being to the Asian Americans while I was working in the NGO.

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