

DEI Experience Reflection

APTA E-Learning Course: Clinical Decision Making in Diverse Populations

Through my APTA membership, I was able to complete an online clinical education course titled "Clinical Decision Making in Diverse Populations." I found this course to be informative and eye opening. The course prompted self-reflection on my previous interactions with patients during clinicals and the personal progress I would like to make. I learned that factors influencing clinical decision making fall into two categories, clinical and non-clinical influences. The non-clinical influences, which include patient factors and clinician factors, are important when working with patients from diverse populations. Increasing my awareness of healthcare disparities, or the inequalities in healthcare provision and access, is an important component of being a culturally competent practitioner. A critical step is to first acknowledge my own culture, beliefs and values, and reflect on how my preconceptions may impact others. With this in mind I thought about my lack of confidence in communicating with limited English speaking patients, how I may have failed to realize that I may speak louder instead of speaking slower to these patients, and how in the past I may have not taken adequate time to demonstrate or repeat things to the patient to ensure understanding. I like to think that I am a good listener, but I could use practice in validating the patient's concerns and really practicing mindful listening. Through introspection, I also thought about how I could better promote family centered care and shared decision making. It is easy to fall into the pit of deciding what is best for the patient based on my own experiences, beliefs, and values, without considering how involvement of the patient and family in decision making leads to more effective care. This course additionally enlightened me on how I need to try to better think about clinical and non-

clinical influences at each stage of the patient management model. For example, have patient preferences been considered before I've performed a test during the examination? Have I established rapport with the patient and considered my own personal biases during the evaluation? Have I considered what is important to the patient and if there are any cultural or religious issues associated with the interventions initially considered? This course was extremely helpful in prompting me to reflect on my shortcomings and personal biases, and even consider my unconscious biases based on personal life experiences thus far. I hope to embody someone who has an open mind and is willing to be self-aware, but I acknowledge that this does not come easy, and takes continual effort and time to obtain the knowledge and communication skills required to do so.