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Document:
Transcultural Nursing Certification and Recertification: A Global Mandate

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Transcultural Nursing Certification and Recertification: A Global Mandate

After transcultural nursing was launched in the mid 1950s, the need for transcultural nursing certification was apparent by the mid 1970s. Nurses with limited cultural knowledge and skills were attempting to care for immigrants, refugees and people of diverse and unknown cultures. There was evidence of some harmful, offensive, and inappropriate nursing care practices with some cultures. Formal courses and programs in transcultural nursing had been introduced to educate nurses, but certification through examinations to verify knowledge and competencies was clearly needed as well as recertification to maintain competencies.

Accordingly, a Certification Committee was established in 1988 within the Transcultural Nursing Society. The purposes, expectations and benefits for certification of nurses in transcultural nursing were explicitly stated. Applications with appropriate portfolio documentation were required for transcultural nursing certification. After review of the applications, nurses were notified to sit for written and oral examinations conducted by the Certification Committee chaired by Dr. Grayce Roessler for nearly a decade. These oral and written examinations were valuable to assess the nurse's knowledge and ability to use transcultural nursing principles, concepts, theories, and research-based culture care knowledge with practices to provide culturally congruent care. We used the later term which I coined as the goal from my theory and as the major desired goal of transcultural nursing since the early 1960's.

The field is generally built upon undergraduate study and baccalaureate graduates may provide general transcultural nursing care to clients. There may be situations where a few baccalaureate nurses have had equivalent knowledge and competencies. The committee is most willing to review these applicants for equivalent knowledge and competencies to qualify to take the certification examination. However, a master's degree or a Certification Program in transcultural nursing is usually needed to apply for certification, but does not mean that one is automatically certified. These nurses must apply and take the examinations for transcultural nursing to be Certified Transcultural Nurses. It is important to remember that having a Certificate or having attended a Certification Program in transcultural nursing does not mean that one is automatically certified.

As the founder of transcultural nursing, I stated that "the purpose and goal of certification and recertification in transcultural nursing is essential and a critical means to provide culture care health needs of people worldwide by nurses who are prepared and competent to practice humanist and scientific transcultural nursing care" (Leininger, 1976). Certified and recertified nurses continue to be...
respected, and receive status and public recognition. Often advancement in their employment places are given because of their unique and valuable service to diverse cultures. Certified transcultural nurses are also meeting a critical need to prevent racial biases, cultural clashes, cultural imposition, and many other unfavorable practices due to cultural ignorance and lack of transcultural nursing practice skills.

The Certification Committee was reorganized in 2000 with a focus on refining and updating standards, policies, examinations, and the general processes for certification and recertification of nurses. This change was essential to meet a rapidly growing multicultural need for worldwide protective and therapeutic care practices to diverse cultures and subcultures.

A major purpose of recertification is to protect clients of diverse cultures from negligent, offensive, harmful, unethical, non-therapeutic or inappropriate care practices. Other purposes and potential benefits of certification and recertification of transcultural nurses are to:

- Provide quality and research based cultural care knowledge for competent care practices.
- Recognize the expertise of transcultural nurses prepared to care for clients of diverse and similar cultures.
- Protect the public from unfavorable transcultural nursing practice.
- Maintain quality based standards and policies for transcultural nursing practice.
- Inform the nurses and the public of the competencies of nurses prepared in transcultural nursing.
- Serve as transcultural role models to nurses and other associates.

Today certified transcultural nurses (CTN's) are demonstrating the importance of their knowledge and competencies and showing confidence, professional pride and satisfaction in providing culturally based care to people of diverse or similar cultures. These certified nurses are prepared to function locally, nationally, and globally to protect vulnerable cultures from unsafe practices. Graduate preparation in transcultural nursing guides nurses to be effective, competent, and safe clinicians with cultures. Recertification is an important means to assure continued competencies in transcultural nursing by maintaining the nurses' knowledge and skills in the discipline with established and new research based knowledge.

Today graduate preparation has become essential for clinical nurse specialists and for all advanced nurse practitioners to insure knowledge based competencies in specialty areas of nursing. Transcultural nursing is a specialty practice area. It is a complex, comparative and holistic culture care discipline and professional practice area that necessitates in-depth knowledge of several cultures focused on...
culturally based care expressions, meanings, practices and multiple forces
influencing care actions or decisions.

Accordingly, certification and recertification of transcultural nurses has been
strengthened. The standards and processes have been made explicit as shown in
this new Portfolio of Information. The certification of nurses in transcultural
nursing is a significant, unique and imperative given the global need to provide
culturally competent, safe, and responsible quality-based care practices to human
beings. Nurses today need to be prepared in the discipline and become certified
for consumer and nurse protection in caring for diverse cultures. It is also one of
the most valuable rewarding ways to grow and maintain professional
competency. Becoming a certified transcultural nurse (CTN) remains the current
and future mandate to serve diverse cultures and all human beings worldwide.

Madeleine Leininger, PhD, LDH, DS, RN, CTN, FRCNA, FAAN, LL
Founder and conceiver of Certified Transcultural Nursing