

Increasing Oncology Nurse Cultural Knowledge, Sensitivity, and Humility in Caring for the Native Hawai'ian and Pacific Islander Population

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Stress affects people's physiologic and mental well-being. Compounded stress from natural disasters, intergenerational trauma, stigma, and mistrust of the dominant society may lead to illness and potential oncologic disorders. The concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion have become mainstays of nurses' interactions with patients. Nurses may need to support self-care for those experiencing intergenerational trauma and natural disasters, such as Native Hawai'ian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) individuals. This person-centered approach is ideal for the oncology nurse to implement in practice.

AT A GLANCE

- NHOPI patients may experience health care in the context of their unique cultural journey and intergenerational trauma.
- The theory of modeling and role-modeling can be used as a lens to provide quality, trauma-informed care for NHOPI patients with cancer.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion provides a key framework to support respectful interventions for patients with cancer to improve overall health.

KEYWORDS

cultural competence; sensitivity; cancer rates; Native Hawai'ian; Pacific Islander

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The social, political, and class stereotypes that produce stigma in multiple-heritage individuals may lead to discrimination, exclusion, and social isolation. Historically, this has been the case for many Native Hawai'ian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI) people. This article reviews the stressors experienced by this marginalized group, which may lead to greater incidence of illness and potential oncologic disorders (American Cancer Society [ACS], 2024a), through the lens of the theory of modeling and role-modeling (Erickson et al., 1983). The article presents a history of the people in Hawai'i, as well as healthcare inequities faced by NHOPI individuals, and examines health care within the context of Leininger's theory of culture care diversity and universality (McFarland & Wehbe-Alamah, 2019), Jeffreys's (2018) cultural competence and confidence framework, and the theory of modeling and role-modeling (Erickson et al., 1983).

A Historic Perspective of the Hawai'ian Culture

The Native Hawai'ian experience has often been linked to that of the Native American population because both cultures witnessed the overthrow of their tribes and culture by a colonizing majority and lost their power (Duran & Walters, 2004). This colonization came from various sources and resulted in deep depression, lack of cultural safety, and humiliation (Kirmayer et al., 2014). Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, in his 1993 apology to Native Hawai'ians, described the harsh conditions that they endured (Acosta, 2009).

The Native Hawai'ian people arrived from the Marquesas Islands and later from Tahiti more than 1,500 years ago on outrigger canoes, rowing more than 2,000 miles and bringing their culture, values, and beliefs (National Park Service, n.d.). In 1810, Kamehameha became the first crowned king of Hawai'i, and his family ruled the islands of Hawai'i into the late 1880s (National Park Service, n.d.). Meanwhile, nations across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, including China, England, Japan, Korea, and the United States, were trading with the islands, which resulted in the Native Hawai'ian people