

Expert Panel Justification of Recommendation

The expert panel attributed value to conducting cultural assessments so that care plans can be tailored to the person’s needs and preferences. Moreover, the expert panel determined that persons would value even small improvements in their care if they received culturally safe care that was in alignment with their wishes. Therefore, despite the fact that there was low confidence in the evidence, the expert panel determined the strength of the recommendation to be strong.

Practice Notes

- Organizational policies for health providers are required in order to facilitate culturally safe care in palliative care and end-of-life care (46).
- Nurses should regularly assess their knowledge level and ability to conduct an appropriate cultural assessment prior to doing so in clinical practice, and the expert panel highlights that trust must be established before conversations with persons and families occur. Furthermore, communication is central to culturally safe care, and nurses must avoid making assumptions about persons and families, regardless of their cultural, ethnic or spiritual background (46, 61).
- The expert panel emphasized that culture is unique to each individual, and there are individual differences within the same cultural umbrella.
- While culture is defined broadly, evidence within the systematic review was not found specific to certain population groups. Research is required in these areas. Refer to **Table 10** for research gaps and future implications.

Table 5: Components and Strategies for Cultural Assessments Identified within Research Literature and by the Expert Panel

<p>Components of cultural assessments</p>	<p>Components within the research included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exploring the person’s family context, coping strategies, holistic needs, expression of emotions, meaning of behaviours and all dimensions of pain (57). ■ Within the literature, nurses reported that because a person’s experience of suffering is multidimensional, it was valuable to explore their experience from various domains in order for the person to feel truly understood (19). <p>Components identified by the expert panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asking persons and families if they have any religious or cultural concerns related to progressive life-limiting illness and death may assist in assessing the cultural needs and values of persons and families. ■ For a subset of the population, culture and spirituality are intertwined; thus, acknowledging both domains during a cultural assessment may be warranted (see Recommendations 2.2 and 2.6).
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Strategies for conducting cultural assessments

Strategies within the research included:

- Nurses observed persons and families to learn about care practices and inquired about practices that would typically be conducted at home (57).
- A cultural assessment may also involve the active involvement of family, including determining the family contact person, exploring factors of personal importance to the family and examining family communication (57).

Strategies identified by the expert panel:

- Cultural assessments should be implemented and completed as part of a holistic approach to care, as outlined in **Figure 2: Domains of Issues Associated with Illness and Bereavement**. Assessment findings should be communicated with members of the interprofessional health team and documented.
- Nurses should recognize situations wherein persons and families do not wish to partake in cultural assessments. Recognizing and responding to verbal and non-verbal cues regarding the appropriateness of such assessments for the person and their family is integral.
- The expert panel also recognized that some populations, such as those who are experiencing homelessness or incarceration, may not have family available to provide support, and thus they would have unique support needs with regards to palliative care and end-of-life care.