

- persons who are incarcerated
- persons who abuse alcohol and other substances
- persons who lack family and social support
- persons who are questioning their sexual orientation

■ Awareness of Vulnerabilities

FCNs are exposed to vulnerable populations in the community. Awareness of the problem and appropriate resources are advantageous. A range of healthcare issues may contribute to, or arise from, vulnerability, including:

- **Access to health care.** The primary concern is that lack of access to health care will lead to unnecessary illness. Ideally, most individuals want the best possible health care regardless of age, sex, race, or ability to pay (Koch, 2017).
- **Cost of health care.** Be aware of the economics of health care in order to advocate for appropriate care of diverse populations.
- **Inadequate housing.** Inadequate housing can involve exposure to environmental hazards.
- **Homelessness.** Homeless individuals have complex physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs, and their access to health care is problematic. Nursing interventions for the homeless are unique and require education (Caldwell, Meraz, & Sweeney, 2018). Homeless children are at risk for poor school performance due to multiple factors, including lack of access to facilities for personal hygiene and lack of school supplies (National Center for Homeless Education, 2014).
- **Hunger or food insecurity.** Hunger and food insecurity are likely to occur in geographic areas where affordable and nutritious food is difficult to obtain, particularly for those without access to transportation. These areas, typically called *food deserts*, usually exist in rural areas and low-income communities. Food deserts are sometimes associated with supermarket shortages and food security. Diet-related health problems can be common in affected populations (Milan, Wolf, & Fagan, 2015).
- **Right to life issues across the life span.** For issues such as abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, or other deliberate destruction of human life, have denominational and health-related resources and referrals available.
- **Violence in the family and in the community.** Understand the basics about domestic violence. Work alongside secular advocates in the community.
- **Lack of health insurance.** Be aware of a variety of health care assistance programs available to help those who lack health insurance.
- **Cultural diversity.** Cultural groups view life processes, health, and illness differently. People may choose to seek health care from traditional healers instead of using healthcare institutions.

These issues can be overwhelming for the FCN. The Serenity Prayer may serve as a reminder that God is ultimately in control. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Outcome 3

Apply advocacy skills in faith community nursing practice.

■ Understanding Advocacy Skills

Specific advocacy skills include:

- honesty
- assertiveness
- power

Critical Thinking

What person or group of vulnerable persons is present in your faith community?

What, if any, health care disparity do you identify with?

Critical Thinking

List the health care issues of vulnerable persons in your faith community in priority of greatest to least.

Which issue would you consider the most important to address first? How would you approach this issue?