Diversity And Social Identity: The Example Of Madam Walker

Diversity can be defined as the differences that are seen amongst all people. Diversity regards one's race, gender, religion, social-economic status, culture, etc to name a few.

Diversity impacts your daily life because it determines how you perceive and interact with others around you. For example, if one never had any interaction with the Muslim religion; then one may not know that Muslims do not eat pork. Islam rules prohibit alcohol, non-Halal animal fats, pork, by-products of pork, and any animals that have not been slaughtered according to Islamic customs (Attum, 2019). It is important to be aware of this factor because if you do not want to offend a Muslim by offering them pork when it goes against their religious practices. Diversity affects me as a nurse because I want to be culturally competent of others practices and beliefs. My profession calls for me to take care of patient when they are sick; therefore, if I patient is refusing a treatment I need to understand what is driving their motivation to refuse; while respecting and accommodating their wishes.

Diversity and social identity are intertwined because one's social identity is that which makes them diverse. Social identity refers to those aspects of our identity that are shaped by our group memberships (Ferber, Jimenez, Herrera, and Samuels, 2009, pg. 7). Group memberships consist of a variety of factors like race, skin color, gender, and religion. These different factors that make up a group membership are the factors that make a group diverse.

The matrix of domination illustrates that regardless of where we are situated at any given time, we all fit somewhere in the matrix. As a result, we are all, always, implicated in the matrix of domination in some way, for everyone is shaped by some combination of these interacting statuses or social categories, and everyone experiences varying degrees of oppression and privilege depending upon her or his location in society (Ferber, Jimenez, Herrera, and Samuels, 2009, pg. 2-3). For example, in the United States of America you always hear of rags to riches stories that show how intersection between diversity and social identity play out in the matrix of domination. Madam C. J. Walker (1867-1919) was lauded as “the first black woman millionaire in America” for her successful line of hair care products. Born Sarah Breedlove, she was widowed by age 20 and took work as a laundress. After seeking treatment for hair loss, she developed the “Walker system” and sold her homemade products directly to black women (History.com, 2009). She experienced racism while being an African American female during her era; however, her wealth from her hair care products changed her socioeconomic status and allowed her to help others who were disadvantaged.

Below is a video on Madame C J Walker:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEKXMHIGmrQ

References:

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