

Quick Reference Sheet for Amish

-Caution on Stereotyping-

Background:

Farming people - live in rural areas

Model their lives after Christian faith

Attempt to live simple lives

Value the Christian standards derived from the Bible

Statistics:

Wisconsin has 4th highest Amish population in U.S

Social Structure:

Family is very important and children are valued

Average family has 6-7 children

Age is valued (elders are deeply respected)

Divorce is prohibited

Supportive community

Practice very traditional Christianity

Beliefs/Values:

Submission, humility, forgiveness, suffering, non-resistance, and working in righteousness

Avoid worldliness

Mainstream personal space of 2 ft. is appropriate

Modesty is of key importance

Males and females may have more formalized behavior with each other

Traditional Medical Practices:

A healthy person has a good appetite, looks physically well and can do rigorous physical labor

Illness = the inability to perform daily chores
Physical and mental illness accepted equally

The Amish utilize a variety of healthcare providers

Typical “cure-alls” (Oils, salves, minerals, herbs, compounds, lotion, poultices, and health foods)

5 week formula (sometimes used in last 5 weeks of pregnancy)

Amish traditionally have a high pain tolerance and therefore often very sick once they reach hospital/clinic

Western medicine is usually valued and accepted

Always ask about home remedies for possible drug interactions

Biological Variations – Disease Trends:

Amish tend to be generally healthy

Do not usually use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Preventative medicine is not always embraced

Communicable diseases (measles, whooping cough) may occur due to lack of immunization

Limited gene pool may result in an increase of hereditary diseases (Hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, dwarfism, neurological disorders, Down syndrome)

End of Life:

Death is usually accepted as a natural occurrence

Father/husband will probably be the main decision maker

Expect large numbers of visiting family

Care is traditionally provided by family members

Prolongation of life may be seen as “against God’s will”

Autopsy is generally not favored, but may be accepted if the necessity is explained

Organ donation usually not preferred

Tend to be stoic

Please see the following PowerPoints for further details:

Amish – Clinical Provider:

http://www.lacrosseconsortium.org/uploads/content_files/Amish_CL_Proivder_9_12.pdf

Amish – General:

http://www.lacrosseconsortium.org/uploads/content_files/Amish_General_9_12.pdf