

Caring: A Theory put Into Practice

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Abstract

This paper will discuss the nursing theorist Jean Watson and this author's philosophy of nursing. Jean Watson is a nursing theorist who developed and wrote about the theory of caring. Watson believes that "caring is considered as one central feature within the metaparadigm of nursing knowledge and practice" (Watson, 2008). This author also believes that caring for people should be the number one driving force in the profession of nursing. "Caring is one of the most important qualities in building trust with others" (Hardin, n.d.). By trusting the nurse, the patient puts the patient's care in the nurse's hands. Trust is an essential component of the relationship between the nurse and the patient. Another crucial quality for a nurse to demonstrate is listening to the patient. Patients need to be heard and validated. This author is of the opinion that without the innate ability to care for others, an individual pursuing a career in nursing may very well fail and the care provided may be lacking. Nursing and caring go hand in hand – you cannot have one without the other. Along with caring in nursing, the four concepts of the metaparadigm of nursing must be present: person, environment, health, and nursing. The qualities of caring, compassion, and trust are ones that this author demonstrates regularly as a nurse. Therefore, this author believes that this author will make an exceptional nurse and, in the future, a caring and knowledgeable nurse practitioner. In this paper, this author will discuss caring, compassion, and trust and how these components of nursing fit into this author's personal philosophy of nursing.

Keywords: nursing, caring, practice, theory, trust, philosophy, metaparadigm of nursing

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The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines nursing as “the profession of a nurse; the duties of a nurse” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Caring for others as a nurse involves a duty to provide compassionate care. Merriam-Webster also defines caring as “feeling or showing concern for or kindness to others” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). (See Appendix). This author believes that all nurses as well as all healthcare professionals should show concern and caring for all people. When one thinks of a nurse, one imagines a caring and compassionate person. This author displays these attributes as a nurse. This author’s personal philosophy of nursing is that being a caring and compassionate nurse is the backbone of the profession of nursing and that these are attributes that the author demonstrates that will make the author a successful nurse.

Caring for a Person is Personal

Watson writes “assistance with another’s basic needs gives nurses access to the physical body in a very intimate way” (Watson, 2007). For this discussion, person will be interchangeable with the patient. When caring for a person, one must remember that the person is in a vulnerable state during illness. The person is depending on the nurse to care for and counsel the person. This is an instance where the person places trust in the hands of the person providing care, the nurse. Anyone who has been ill and, in the hospital, has experienced the feeling of being dependent on someone else. Imagine that the individual, or nurse, who is providing care shows no empathy or sympathy with the care provided. The patient may then feel unsure and nervous. This could be a major impediment to the recovery of the patient.

The Environment of Care and Health

Sonya Hardin, states that “a caring hospital ... provides a space where people can feel safe resulting in less stress. With less stress, there is less release of cortisol, a hormone that

causes inflammation and slows the healing ... [of] the body” (Hardin, n.d.). Two of the four elements of the metaparadigm of nursing are environment and health. Providing an environment where the patient or person feels compassionate care and trust is essential to the person’s recovery from illness. In this way, the health of the patient is put first.

Knowledge and Nursing

In the pursuit of an associate degree in nursing, this author has acquired the knowledge necessary to provide care to patients. This knowledge is essential but is not the only quality needed to be a good nurse. As mentioned previously, empathy, compassion, trust, and caring need to be an integral part of the development of a good nurse. Nursing school has provided the tools needed to be a nurse but in order to wield them effectively, this author will incorporate the necessary qualities outlined in this paper.

A nurse should be caring, sympathetic, empathetic, trustworthy, and compassionate in all care provided. Any person on the receiving end of the care provided by such a nurse would be in a healthy and healing environment. The metaparadigm of nursing illustrates person, environment, health, and nursing. In this paper, this author has written about all of the aspects of the metaparadigm of nursing and how they are incorporated into this author’s personal philosophy of nursing.

In pursuing a career in nursing, this author wants to be effective in others’ lives by providing individualized care to each patient. Looking at the patient as an individual is essential. But also important is listening to the patient to find out what the patient needs. By listening to the patient, the patient is provided with some control over the plan of care. From experience, this author has found that patients want to be heard. Sometimes patients feel invisible when meeting with a physician. A person or patient presenting to the hospital for whatever reason may be

overwhelmed and unable to express concerns to medical staff. This is where the nurses and healthcare providers need to really listen to the patient as the patient expresses fears and concerns about illness and subsequent treatment.

Conclusion

This author believes that the field of nursing was the correct career path to choose. Compassion, empathy, sympathy, and caring are qualities that this author possesses and ones that the author will use in the future as a nurse. Coming from a family of nurses, this author wants to continue the tradition of nursing by providing up to date information and care in a timely and compassionate manner. This author plans to continue a career in education and obtaining a master's degree in nursing to work as a nurse practitioner.

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Appendix



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