Role of Nursing in Holistic Health

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Introduction

Nursing has come a long way since the days of Florence Nightingale and her pioneering actions that define her as “The Mother of Modern Nursing.” One thing that has not changed, and is unlikely to change anytime in the near future, is the presence of illness and its effect on people.

Illness has the power to strike down the mightiest of individuals; no one is immune. As nurses, we must be knowledgeable about how diseases affect our patients.

Due to the high patient load and often intense time constraints placed on nurses, it can be easy to simply treat the physical being and move on to the next patient, resident, or client.

It is important to care for the whole person and to see them as just that; a whole person, not just a patient or diagnosis.

Holistic Care
Holistic Nursing

Definition

Holistic nursing is defined as “all nursing practice that has healing the whole person as its goal.”

This practice recognizes the totality of the human being. Holistic Nursing is a specialty practice that draws nursing knowledge, theories, expertise and intuition to guide nurses in becoming therapeutic partners with people in their care.

It is a holistic approach to helping patients deal with pain management, healing and recovery, and preventive care. The practice of holistic nursing includes a specific body of knowledge, evidence-based research, unique skills, defined standards of practice, a diversity of modalities from a broad range of health practices, and a philosophy of living and being that is grounded in caring, relationship, and interconnectedness.

The goal of holistic nursing is the “enhancement of healing the whole person from birth to death.”

Holistic nursing encourages the nurses to integrate:

- Self-care
- Self-responsibility
- Spiritually
- Reflection in their lives

Importance of Holistic Nursing Care

Holistic nursing is “All nursing practice that has healing the whole person as its goal.”

- Holistic nursing care involves healing the mind, body, and soul of our patients. It involves thinking about and assisting patients with the effects of illness on the body, mind, emotions, spirituality, religion, and personal relationships.
- Holistic nursing care also involves taking into consideration social and cultural differences and preferences.

Holistic nurses are those that recognize and treat each individual differently.

Holistic nurses are often described by patients as those nurses that “truly care.” This leads to better patient outcomes and can increase the happiness and purpose in your work as a nurse.

Role of Nursing in Holistic Health

- Learn the patient’s name and use it.
- Make good, strong eye contact.
- Ask how a patient is feeling and sincerely care.

• Smiling and laughing when appropriate.
• Use therapeutic touch.
• Assist the patient to see themselves as someone that deserves dignity.
• Preserve their dignity.
• Educate your patients on the importance of self-care.
• Ask the patient how you can reduce their anxiety or pain.
• Use non-pharmacological methods of pain control such as imagery, relaxation techniques, and more.
• Encourage patients and assist as needed with alternative treatment modalities; never underestimate the benefit of a massage, aromatherapy, or music.
• Ask if patients have certain religious, cultural, or spiritual beliefs; be sensitive and accepting if they do.

Standards of Holistic Nursing

- Recognize that a person’s body mind-spirit has healing capacities that can be enhanced and supported through self-care practices.
- Identify and integrate self-care strategies to enhance their physical, psychological, sociological, and spiritual wellbeing.
- Recognize and address at risk health patterns and begin the process of change.
- Consciously cultivate awareness and understanding about the deeper meaning, purpose, inner strengths and connections with self, others, nature and God.
- Use clear intention to care for self and to seek a sense of balance, harmony, and joy in daily life.
- Participate in the evolutionary holistic process with the understanding that crisis creates opportunity in any situation.
- Develop an awareness of the most frequently encountered challenges to holistic communication.
- Increase therapeutic and cultural competence skills.
- Explore with each person those strategies that can assist him/her to understand the deeper meaning of life.
- Promote environment conducive to healing.
- Partner with the person in a mutual decision process to create a healthcare plan.
- Collaborate with the person and other healthcare team members.

Some Techniques Used to Promote Holistic Health

- Healing Touch, Reiki, acupuncture, Yoga, imagery, biofeedback, massage, Tai Chi, meditation, music, aromatherapy, acupressure, are some of the holistic approaches administered by nurses.
- Not only does holistic healing help assist our patients but it is also a great way to help ourselves as nurses to take care of our body and mind.
#Yoga and Mindfulness

- Yoga provides with space to move and breathe, giving an opportunity to discover what really lies at the inner core of our heart and mind.
- It gives us a chance to experience the deepest truth about simply being, and to learn that we are not our thoughts.
- Yoga's emphasis on observation, listening to our breath, focusing on a single point of concentration, and attention to our alignment in poses brings about a certain steadiness of mind.
- Bringing this state of mind and skill into the practice of nursing allows a nurse to respond to the needs of any situation.

#Healing Touch: A Gift to Our Patients, Our Staff and Ourselves

- Healing is defined as the movement toward wholeness, including body, mind emotion and spirit.
- Healing Touch is a relaxing, nurturing energy therapy, in which gentle touch assists in balancing the recipient’s physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.
- Healing Touch is based on a heart-centered, caring relationship in which the nurse and the client come together energetically to facilitate the client’s health and healing.

#Heart

# Advocating Peaceful Death with Dignity

- Not depression, not failure to thrive, just the end of a great and wonderful existence that does not need to be treated, but instead celebrated.
- It is always important for a nurse to try to incorporate all aspects of holistic nursing into the daily care of patients, but it seems particularly important at the end of life.
- It is at the end of life when we really just need to be present, to listen, and to lead with our heart.

# Therapeutic Massage

- Massage is used as preventive care, as well as for management of chronic health conditions.
- One of the major benefits of massage is the reduction of stress through the promotion of relaxation.

Conclusion

- One way to increase these experiences and provide better overall care to our patients is through holistic nursing care.
- Nurses should strive to always make the most of the short time they have with each patient. As nurses, we need to promote a patient’s psychological and emotional wellbeing in order to facilitate physical healing.
- When we do this, our relationship with the patient changes and grows into something more positive than before.
- This leads to better patient outcomes and can increase the happiness and purpose in our work as a nurse.

Conflict of Interest: None
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