

HEALING CONCEPT IN NURSING AND THE RELATED THEORIES

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Abstract

Healing is a general and complex concept that depends on culture and society. The article organized the theoretical knowledge that nurses can play a major role in helping patients to heal through compassion, kindness and proper communication, and also emphasized Islamic views.

Keywords: concept, healthcare, nursing, disease, culture, analyzing, providing spiritual care, culture and community

Introduction

As a familiar yet abstract and vague concept for nurses, healing is affected by the cultural needs of different communities. The concept of healing is nowadays recommended in nursing theories, and its clarification can develop healing-based nursing care. The present study was conducted to objectify and clarify the concept of healing in nursing care.

The theoretical phase identified healing characteristics such as balancing and hope-making originated from mental and spiritual states. Analyzing the data in the fieldwork stage extracted five main themes, i.e. “comprehensive psychophysical health”, “cure, a small part of healing”, “healing, a spiritual recovery”, “an individual’s own role in healing” and “healing, an unexpected event”. During the patient care process, nurses can help patients heal by establishing appropriate communication and comprehensive understanding of the patients by designing and implementing appropriate interventions and integrating healing strategies into their comprehensive care measures.

The concept of healing in nursing care is a general and complex process, and different people can interpret it differently on their road to health. Properly understanding the concept of healing enables nurses to assist patients in achieving health and healing through proper communication, holistic care, empowering patients to perform self-care and providing spiritual care.

Healing is a familiar word in the healthcare delivery system; nevertheless, its culture-dependent nature has prevented features of healing from being elucidated. Healthcare workers therefore require obtaining a clear picture of healing and its applications. Despite continuous use of healing concept in nursing and the related theories, it is differently defined in different cultures and communities [1, 2]. Developing the original concept of healing and specifying all dimensions therefore require complete understanding of the mentioned concept. A concept can be better understood and then applied and even measured in the next steps in case its dimensions are identified.

Nurses help patients achieve health and healing [3]. Many theorists made suggestions; e.g. Watson defined the aim of nursing as helping with achieving a higher degree of coordination of mind, body and spirit by establishing different processes of self-awareness, self-respect, self-healing and self-care. Watson believed that both patients and caregivers are involved in self-healing [4].

The importance of healing turned caring-healing modalities into a core concept in Watson's theory, based on which holistic nurses who are aware of caregiving use caring-healing modalities such as music, therapeutic touch, aromatherapy and relaxation to promote recovery and help maintain a proper relationship. According to Watson's theory, nurses nowadays use therapeutic touch as a healing intervention to relieve pain and anxiety and accelerate wound healing, improve physical symptoms, reduce the side effects of chemotherapy and normalize blood pressure.

Healing is strongly influenced by culture and religion and affects the patients' decisions about their type of treatment and even the continuation or discontinuation of treatment and care. Rassool found the care models proposed in the west not to be well applicable to Islamic countries, and dominant care concepts in a nursing model to be sometimes totally incompatible with the concepts of the Islamic culture such as healing and spiritual dimensions of care. Addressing patients' culture, including their spiritual and religious beliefs is one of the requirements of holistic care because religious beliefs about health and disease affect patients' care decisions. The concept of patient healing has therefore been debated for long in different cultures, and the same debate can be applied to nursing. Therefore, nurses' understanding of the healing concept in different cultural spectra can help evaluate the reasons for patients' decisions and choices, and their approach to changes during the illness.

According to Islamic principles, nurses should lay the groundwork for healing in patients through comprehensively empowering them, and realize the potential for healing present in all humans through providing sympathetic care. Islam places great emphasis on the concept of healing. In the holy Quran, Verse 82 of Surah Al-Isra (And we send down of the Qur'an that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss), known as the healing verse, reflects this belief in Islamic texts. Healing in the Islamic culture is therefore regarded as an endogenous rather than marginal or exogenous dimension of patient recovery, and everybody seeks healing as soon as they get sick, and the nurse's job is to help patients achieve it.

Given the inadequate understanding of the concept of healing, its vague application in nursing, and nurses' general unwillingness to design healing-based care plans due to the lack of rational evidence for it, elucidating and analyzing this concept can help promote its clinical application in patients and improve the existing nursing theories.

The hybrid model of conceptualization developed by Schwartz-Barcott and Kim is appropriate for clarifying concepts such as healing that are influenced by cultural factors and conventional sciences and definitions, and the final definition shall also include these cultural factors.

Considering the different worldviews of the Islamic Uzbek culture on health, disease and death, the concept of healing needs to be defined within this culture as a widely-used concept that is influenced by culture in treatment and care programs. By gaining awareness about this concept, nurses can help patients recognize the internal and external forces affecting their health.

Given the varying perspectives and opinions on healing and its diverse definitions in different cultures, religions and beliefs, clarifying this concept can help improve its application in nursing. The hybrid model developed by Schwartz-Barcott and Kim was used to analyze the concept of healing because it is suitable for use in the intended context and since it can clarify ambiguous concepts in clinical practice. The hybrid model is a method for the conceptualization and

evolution of a concept in its context. This model consists of theoretical, fieldwork and final analysis phases.

Identifying all uses of the concept. Different texts introduce different definitions and applications for healing, some of which in dictionaries in general and in Islamic sources are as follows:

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines healing as “to make free from injury or disease”, “to make well again” and “to cause (an undesirable condition) to be overcome”. According to Cambridge Dictionary, “A bad or terrible emotional condition either ends or improves after healing”. Oxford Dictionary defines healing as “to become healthy again” and “to make something healthy again”. Dehkhoda Dictionary defines healing as “health and recovery from an illness”. Mo’in Encyclopedic Dictionary defines healing as “becoming well after an illness, recovery, health and cure”. Amid Dictionary defines healing as “making well, free someone from a disease, making healthy and recovery from an illness”. The Quran defines healing as salvation from material and spiritual decline and collapse, which involves both spiritual and physical treatment. Being healed by the Quran is equivalent to salvation from all evils, which is achieved in the absence of fear with hopes for a bright future and a gentle spirit and results in decent and reasonable conduct that brings psychophysical health. The Quran called itself healing rather than medicine given that medicine may temporarily treat a disease, whereas healing is a perfect treatment and health that eradicates the disease. Absolute recovery and health literally defined as healing is therefore emphasized in all aspects in Islam

Research on healing in Uzbek suggests that asking the Quran as a perfect healer for help, creating a lively environment, believing in God as the only healer, seeking health from God and getting help from Quran prayers and Prophet Mohammad’s manners are examples of seeking healing for patients. Nurses can lay the foundations for patients’ healing in a holistic manner by empathizing with and being kind and giving hope to them. The Uzbek culture defines healing as a comprehensive recovery process, although it emphasizes its spiritual dimension.

Findings of various studies showed that human beings do not spare any efforts to achieve health when they are sick and in pain. To restore their health, people seek help from health and medical staff, including physicians and nurses for their medical, surgical and care measures; furthermore, they try to achieve healing gradually via motivation with the help of others and using their inner forces and the spiritual forces they believe in. With holistic care, nurses can learn about patients’ culture and spiritual beliefs, and help them seek health and excellence through connecting to the main source of energy they believe so as to achieve a comprehensive balance and healing.

The final definition of the theoretical phase. Healing is a multifaceted process and focuses on the whole human being. During pain and suffering, patients receive a kind of positive energy by establishing a deep relationship with themselves and therapists, and try to achieve health and balance in all physical and non-physical dimensions. In the worldview of Muslim patients regarding health, the concept of disease is associated with patience, prayer and hope. In Uzbek Islamic culture, patients, in addition to benefiting from medical procedures, try to achieve health by following the Quranic instructions, seeking help from the divine verses of the Quran, asking the infinite divine power and appealing to the Prophet of Islam and his family, especially in hard-to-treat diseases. By recognizing this concept and understanding how this process is practiced,

nurses can help patients accelerate regaining health. In other words, familiarizing patients and nurses with this concept can improve nurses' professional performance.

Firth and Bellanti found healing as a holistic concept to constitute a restoration and recovery process in the mind, body and spirit causing positive changes and helping find meanings, move toward self-actualization and eradicate the physical symptoms of the disease. Gauthier states that healing frees the individual from suffering in general and changes their values. Ziebarth and McGlone ME also considered healing as coordination and balance in different dimensions of health and emphasized that healing is a concept that focuses on an individual as a whole. In line with the present study, this finding suggests the comprehensiveness of healing in all human dimensions. Due to cultural and religious differences in the communities examined in our study, the process of achieving healing with the help of religious sanctities played a prominent role.

Conclusion

Healing is a general and complex concept that depends on culture and community. Through empathy, kindness and proper communication with patients, nurses can play a major role in helping them achieve healing while considering this concept an endogenous force in providing care. Nurses need to consider this concept an endogenous force in providing care to patients in order to motivate and support them in determining solutions by supporting their choices and thus helping them achieve peace and health. Applying the concept of healing in the clinic involves two important aspects in the nursing practice. First, despite personal belief or disbelief in healing, nurses should be aware that they can use patients' inner healing power as one of the methods suggested to them. It is the patients' right to be informed of it and, if desired, to be provided with the means to use healing through traveling to their holy places and furnishing patients and their families with conditions for prayer away from personal judgments or prejudices. Second, in addition to addressing the physical and mental dimensions of patients in the care process, nurses should be aware that according to some cultures such as Islam, disease is an opportunity for inner transcendence and strengthening of human beings, and healing is the external manifestation of this transcendence in the body and soul of patients. Nurses can help patients in this regard only if they are aware of the nature and process of healing. To clarify all the dimensions of the concept of healing, further studies are recommended to be conducted in other areas of health sciences or on patients of different age groups using diverse data collection methods. Given concepts as the building blocks of a theory, the present findings can contribute to developing nursing models and theories, assist in producing and developing tools to investigate this phenomenon, and provide more opportunities to apply the concept in clinical research and theoretical, educational and managerial areas of nursing.

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