The 7 West Bear Hug Blog: A Reflective Caritas Tool for Pediatric Oncology Nurses

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Introduction: As with any modern day unit I have seen signs of burnout among my peers. I care about these incredible people and feel compelled to do something to celebrate and honor the incredible work they do and reflect on their experiences within the framework of Jean Watson's Caritas Processes™ (Watson, 2008).

Significance: Nurses are "searching for the way to care in a society that refuses to value caring, and a way to serve without being subservient" (Watson 1999, p. 35). There is a phenomenon labeled by Muff (1988 as cited in Watson, 1999) as 'Nightingalism' in which nurses are undervaluing themselves and overvaluing others. When nurses fall into this destructive vortex, we see vast numbers of nurses who become burned out and suffer from compassion fatigue (Potter, Deshields, Divanbeigi, Berger, Cipriano, Norris, and S. Olsen, 2010). According to the Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing (2010) "Cancer care providers tend to empathize with patients’ losses, resulting in a personal sense of futility or failure in their care" (p. 35). However, Perry (2008) learned that exemplary oncology nurses were able to avoid compassion fatigue by creating moments of connection and making those moments matter (Potter et al, 2010).

This blog is offered as a way to support the nurses and the special moments they create as they take care of this incredibly delicate patient population and honor and celebrate their unique and equally delicate humanity.

Purpose: The intention of this project is to use the blog as a place to celebrate successes and unpack the hardships that are experienced as a pediatric oncology nurse using the Caritas Processes™ and Jean Watson's caring theory as a frame of reference and a source of inspiration for the staff nurses (Watson, 2008).

Setting and Participants: The participants will be the nursing staff of the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders inpatient unit, approximately 100 nurses. This is a project that can be accessed from home or work, through the Internet. A printed copy will also be made available in a notebook that will be kept on the 7-West Inpatient Unit, The Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders.

Project Description/Process: The blog will highlight personal stories from the staff, framing them in Watson's Caritas Processes™ (Watson, 2008). The blog will be updated on a monthly basis. Staff will be invited and encouraged to leave comments on each post and submit their own entries in visual, musical or written format.

Project Projected Outcomes: It is projected that the blog will provide an avenue for nurses to tell their positive and negative stories in reflective practice as a method to celebrate their successes.
The blog will be a place in which they can celebrate their accomplishments as well as understand and unpack their experiences within the Caritas Processes™.

**Project Projected Evaluation:** The number of readers will be evaluated on a monthly basis with the goal of increasing readership by 2% at the end of six months. Contributions to the blog by staff members will also be tracked.

**Future Directions:** It is my hope that as nurses become more familiar with the blog they will become more inspired and begin to post their own thoughts and feelings so it becomes more interactive.

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**References:**