BRIDGING THE GAP: INTEGRATING CARING PRACTICES WITH CLINICAL NURSING ROTATION

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Introduction: Nursing students in clinical rotations are challenged with fitting into the differences in practice and environments as they move from unit to unit. This project will help students adjust to the Medical-Surgical/Orthopedic and Telemetry unit’s caring practices, which are based on Caring Science and Jean Watson’s Theory of Human Caring (Watson, 2008). Nursing students will be introduced to how Caritas literacy and caring consciousness help to create a healing environment (Watson, 2005).

Traditionally nursing education has focused on the medical model and technical skills and tasks, with very little focus on the carative nursing model (Watson, 2008). This project will introduce nursing students to the philosophy of caring when they arrive on the 24-bed Medical-Surgical/Orthopedic and Telemetry units. It is very important for students to create authentic caring/healing relationships with each patient to promote a biogenic healing environment and to preserve human dignity (Watson, 2008).

Significance: The significance of this project is to help nursing students integrate Caring Science into their clinical practice by helping them to learn how to practice using the Caritas Processes™. This information will compliment what they learn in school and help them to be more successful on the unit.

Purpose: The main purpose of this project is to engage and familiarize nursing students with the concepts and principles behind the Medical Center Professional nursing practice model of Caring Science (Watson, 2008). A second purpose of this project is to engage nursing students in learning how to form caring/healing relationships with self and others by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to foster those relationships.

Setting and Participants: Kaiser Fremont Medical Center is a 120-bed community hospital located in Fremont, California. This project will involve the nursing students during their clinical rotations, in collaboration with their clinical instructor and medical center clinical educator. Other nursing staff will also be invited to participate to orient students to the unit, hospital environment, and theory-based practice. A preliminary information session with our existing nursing students was conducted prior to this project to obtain tangible feedback about their experiences and explore their suggestions for what might help other students.

Project Description: The project will be presented in two 30-minute interactive sessions for all the students during their Medical-Surgical and Telemetry unit clinical rotations. The first session will be a 30-minute information session offered to the nursing students during their hospital orientation and will include the basic principles and concepts of Caring Science (Watson, 2008). During the first session, the students will be given an overview of the theory and introduced to
techniques that can be used to achieve transpersonal caring relationships and a biogenic healing environment (Watson, 2008). These techniques will include: centering moments, meditation, art therapy, reflective writing, and journaling. Sessions will also include information on the expanded views of self and person (transpersonal mind/body/spirit), caring consciousness, intentionality and the three major conceptual elements of Watson Caring theory: Caritas Processes™, Caring Moment/occasion and Transpersonal caring relationship as ways of “being-in-right relationship” with self and others (Watson, 2008). The second session will be at the end of the clinical rotation to evaluate the students’ care experience during their rotations.

**Projected Outcomes:** This project is currently in the initial phase. The intended outcomes will be an increased understanding of Caring Science and the ways of being-in relationship with self and others through self-awareness and Caritas consciousness (Watson, 2008). Another outcome will be a greater satisfaction with the clinical experience for students, staff, and patients.

**Projected Evaluation:** The evaluation plan for this project will include a discussion and an evaluation of student’s experience with staff and patients during their rotation at the medical center, including feedback from patients and staff on care experience focusing on the students’ integration of Caritas consciousness, intention, centering moments, healing arts as methods of creating caring healing relationships with self and others; as ways to develop and create caring/healing environment for self and others.

**Future Direction:** Future plans are to develop and expand this project as part of the ongoing hospital orientation for new nursing students to Kaiser Permanente.

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**References:**