THE USE OF A MEDITATION ROOM TO DECREASE THE STRESS OF THE EMERGENCY ROOM NURSE

Candace M. Leonard, RN, BSN, HNB-BC
Atlanticare Regional Medical Center
Atlantic City, NJ
cleonard@atlanticare.org

Introduction: Atlanticare adopted Jean Watson’s Theory of Human Caring, and we are always striving to provide optimum wellness for all whom we touch (Watson, 2008). I felt our Emergency Room Nurses could improve the health and well-being of our Patient by improving their own mind, body, and spirit by providing a sacred space, a Meditation Room for our Nurses to re-group, renew, and replenish themselves. If we take care of ourselves, as Jean Watson teaches us in self-care, we will be able to create the healing environment necessary to promote wellness in our patient community. A sacred space for the Nurses will help the Nurse to BE the healer our patient so need for their own mind, body and spirit. (Watson, 2005).

Significance: Jean Watson’s theory teaches the nurse to BE the healing environment, to provide loving kindness, to be present (Watson, 1999). In order to be the healer, we must be healed. We need to take care of ourselves so we can provide our patient with a healing environment. Patients are the center of everything at Atlanticare.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to provide a Meditation Room where the ER Staff can go and heal their inner soul, breathe in new life, meditate for 5 or 10 minutes and enjoy the benefits. Our study will be to determine whether meditation will be effective in reducing stress of the ER Team and increase patient satisfaction.

Setting and Participants: The setting is a stretcher storage room in our City Emergency Room. The participants are our Staff in the ER, doctors, nurses, techs, secretary, registrars, EVS, pharmacists, security, manager, educators. We enjoy it so much we want to invite everyone!!

Project Description/Process: We were provided with a stretcher storage room and made it what our ER Nurses now call the Zen Den. (we took a vote for name) It is a peaceful retreat with recliners (from our Atlanticare attic) soft music, beautiful quotes (Happiness dwells in the Soul), flickering candles, and sweet scents. As soon as you open the door you can feel the peace and tranquility. Our facilities department painted it a soft color of brown. Our room is just steps away from our busy ER, but it takes you to a quiet place of inner healing and peacefulness. There is a heart dish, which holds Jean Watson Caritas cards. Nurses enjoy reading the Caritas meanings. We have a journal where people have written positive experiences in the room. We also have laminated index cards beautifully decorated by our secretary and registrar which say “take 5” or “take 10”. When we see that a co-worker is a bit stressed, we can hand them a card, tell them we will take care of their patients and send them for some inner healing. We have had positive feedback from this already! We held a beautiful Dedication for our room where staff, administration, family, friends all came and shared with us. Our retired Chaplain, John, returned to say a few prayers with us and Bless our room, truly a beautiful scene!
**Project Projected Outcome:** We have had nothing but positive results and positive feedback about our healing space. Some of the nurses and doctors use it every work day, some during shift and some after work for 10 or 15 minutes. It is our hope that all our staff will take the time for their inner self to renew and refresh their mind, body and spirit. Our projected outcome is staff will feel honored to have their own healing space where they will leave with the positive energy to be authentically present for their patients, increasing patient satisfaction and allowing healing to begin.

**Project Projected Evaluation/ Future Directions:** We are planning a research project (awaiting approval) to evaluate how taking care of ourselves mind, body, spirit not only increases staff satisfaction but increases patient satisfaction. When we heal ourselves, we can help our Patient with their healing process. (Watson Theory)

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to extend my grateful heartfelt thanks to:

- Sandra Dietrich, my director, for believing in me! For making my dream come true! This was truly an instance of Caritas Process™ #10: Believe In Miracles!!
- Mary Stapleton, my manager, for not only finding our space but for standing by me through this and her excitement when it was complete!
- Kate Patrizzi, our Educator, for dealing with my persistent nagging and being happy with the consequences. Even taking a meditation course!!
- Doug Baker, my coworker, who was beside me through this whole journey, our persistence paid off!
- All my co-workers who have supported me on this journey and are now really enjoying our room!
- Atlanticare facilities department for painting our room and hanging all of our wall décor.
- Joe Leonard, my husband, who has supported and continues to support me on my journey of Caritas, I love you.
- My children, who have taken frantic calls from me, how does this sound or what happened to the computer.
- Ann Szapor, our AVP of Nursing, thrilled I spent the conference with you in Boulder. Thrilled you believed in our Room!!
- Anne Foss-Durant, for being my mentor and helping me develop and continue to develop into a Caring Caritas Coach!
- And, of course, Jean Watson, who taught us that our sacred work of caring in its simple and profound forms of knowing-being-doing, is the ultimate manifestation of Infinite Love of healing in the world, (Watson, 2008). As nurses, we have been given the greatest gift, compassion and Jean Watson has opened our eyes and our hearts and our minds to this. Blessings to you all!!

**References:**

