BUILDING ON RESPECT TOWARD A CARITAS CULTURE

Sally Raiden, RN
Winter Haven Hospital—Nursing

Introduction: In 2006, every employee at Winter Haven Hospital was asked to sign the Declaration of Interdependence. This document is based on a RESPECT Model of expected behaviors. New employees sign this document, and each component of the model is reviewed with staff every year. Leaders and staff expressed their readiness to expand the foundational RESPECT Model this year. Our long-standing relationship with Jean Watson made her Theory of Human Caring a logical vehicle for change.

Significance: Respect is a value necessary for caring practitioner relationships with self, patients, community, and other practitioners (PFR, pages 88-99). Our Respect Model supports the necessary overt services usually associated with health care. It has helped us improve outcomes in organizational commitments to safety, best practice, flow & efficiency, and customer satisfaction. However, the practitioner who practices with an open compassionate mind and heart creates a magnetic field of caring and healing where both practitioner and other are transformed. The Theory of Human Caring supports subtle services which can only be provided when spirit-to-spirit connections occur.
Caring Moments). Our hospital’s Magnet journey involved all departments (not just nursing). Every department designated a Magnet Champion, which increased organizational awareness that caring theory has been evolving in nursing practice. All employees/customers can benefit from caring.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to enhance the Caritas practices of nurses, and begin introducing the Theory of Human Caring to other departments/disciplines.

Setting and Participants: All activities took place at the hospital. Groups included Mary Jo Schreiber and others from Nursing Administration, Nurse Managers, Educators, Staff Nurses, Mary Rockwood Lane, and the Multidisciplinary Caring Culture Team (chaired by a Social Worker named Beth Koon, Q.I. Manager, Customer Engagement).

Project Description: Although we have embraced the Theory of Human Caring for our patients, we identified the need to deepen the nurses’ caring for self and each other. A series of Caritas Circles were led by Mary Rockwood Lane, Mary Jo Schreiber, and Sally Raiden to experience centering exercises and review more about the Caritas Processes. A Multidisciplinary Caring Culture Team has been meeting to identify and initiate strategies to teach, role model, and reward caring in all areas of our organization.

Project Outcomes: The Caritas Coach experience forced me to learn to center so I can help others learn to do this. It took several months to do this authentically and intentionally, but now I am able to do Caritas Circles with a small group of staff nurses. Mary Rockwood Lane gave an overview of Caritas and led a Caritas Circle in November. She gave an overview of Caritas I-Loving Kindness and led a Caritas Circle in December. Mary Jo led a Caritas Circle and we reviewed Caritas II. I presented copies and an overview of the De-Stress Kit by Doc Childre at Managers /Educators Meetings. The Caring Culture Team has begun several pilots. The Magnet Champions are going to meet again to address organization-wide Customer Service Standards with integration of the Caritas Processes. Vice Presidents are randomly rounding on patient units every week to interview patients and evaluate their perceptions of caring.

Project Evaluation: Finding my own “still point” has enhanced my personal and professional life. I have a much different understanding about how caring moments occur, and I am better able to nurture them. All Caritas Circles and reviews were well-received by participants who verbalized increased need to pause and reflect at this time of great stress in healthcare and society. The Vice Presidents who are making the caring rounds on patient units say it is the most meaningful activity of their work week. The Magnet Champions are honored to be asked to begin helping with the project this month.

Future Directions: Nurture the project activities toward a more caring culture. I hope to give many employees the opportunity to benefit from learning to center themselves.

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