Introduction  Since 2009, the Atlanta VA Medical Center has been on a journey to authentically integrate caring science into our daily nursing practice. According to Watson, 2002a, “the power of the teacher is critical to create the consciousness of a community”.  As a Nurse Educator, I play a vital role ensuring that there is a cultivation of caritas literacy/consciousness throughout the entire facility. This cultivation of a “caritas consciousness” can be accomplished through the integration of Caring Science into the Atlanta VAMC Nursing Education’s Model/Framework of Teaching (Watson, 2008).

Significance: According to Nursesource.org, “a nurse educator (NE) combines clinical expertise and a passion for teaching (Card). They serve as role models and provide the leadership needed to implement best practices.”  As a Nurse Educator and as a “future” Caritas Coach at the Atlanta VAMC, it is my responsibility to ensure that the nursing staff has a true understanding of the core concepts of Dr. Jean Watson’s Theory of Human Caring so each individual nurse develops a “Caring” consciousness and are empowered through giving language to their professional practice with a strong Caritas Literacy (Watson, 2008).

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to ensure the integration of Caring Science into the Atlanta VAMC teaching model through educating the nursing staff on the tenants of Watson’s Science of Human Caring. Each nurse will learn the value of self-care through creating specific practices to facilitate the adoption of Caritas Process™ #1 “the practice of loving kindness and equanimity with self and others.” As we create an increased caritas consciousness among the nursing staff we are creating a caring-healing environment for our patients.

Setting and Participants: Various settings and participants were utilized during this project. For instance, classes were conducted during nursing orientation in our nursing education classroom for new nursing staff members; during a Shared Governance retreat for staff nurses and various members of the nursing leadership team i.e. Nurse Managers and our Associate Director of Nursing services, and with New Graduates nurses enrolled in the Post Baccalaureate Residency Program.

Project Description: My goal is to incorporate Caring Science into the curriculum development for all future educational offerings, which I will present to nursing staff at the Atlanta VAMC. I will use these educational offerings as opportunities to educate the staff on the core aspects of the Theory of Human Caring and the 10 Caritas Processes™ (Watson, 2008). Those educational offerings which I have already incorporated caring science into the curriculum are as follows: An initial Caritas Literacy Session for all Nurse Residents enrolled in our Post Baccalaureate

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Residency Program at the beginning of their program. We are planning to conduct subsequent sessions to further caritas consciousness; we introduced the core Concepts of Caring Science to the New Employees in Nursing Orientation; During a Hospital wide Shared Governance Retreat, members of the various Shared Governance councils and leadership participated in various workshops that focused on communicating in a Healthy Work Environment. We facilitated an Authentic Listening Exercise during this retreat which demonstrated the concepts of Caritas Process™ #1- Practice Loving and Kindness; Caritas Process™ #4-- Develop helping and trusting relationships along with Caritas Process™ #5-- Promote and accept the expression of positive and negative feelings was facilitated during the retreat. We also facilitated a forgiveness exercise, which encouraged the participant to write a forgiveness affirmation on a piece of rice paper, and after writing the affirmation they placed the rice paper into a bowl of water.

**Project Outcome(s)/Projected Outcomes:** The impact of my Caritas Project has brought greater awareness to the staff of the core concepts of the Dr. Jean Watson’s theory of Human Caring. The goal is to continue to cultivate caritas literacy and a consciousness among the nursing staff through ongoing integration of the Science of Human Caring into all nursing educational efforts.

**Project Evaluation:** A quantitative evaluations were given after each educational offering using a Likert scale evaluation tool. The Post Baccalaureate Nurse Residents will be given quantitative evaluations to complete after each caritas literacy sessions and at 3 months and 6 months interval during their program to determine if the Nurse residents have an increased caritas consciousness.

**Future Direction:** My ultimate goal will be to mentor and encourage my fellow Nurse Educators at the Atlanta VAMC to integrate Caring Science into all of their curriculum development. With this integration in place it is my belief that this change in practice within the Nursing education department, we will see a true cultivation of caritas consciousness and caritas literacy among all nursing staff members.

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank my mentor, Esther Kearn-Frolich, RN, BSN, MPA/H.S.A. for all the encouragement and support she has given me on this journey. My fellow, Nurse educator, Aimee Manion, DNP, RN-BC, CMSRN, NEA-BC for her encouragement and support with the Post Baccalaureate Nurse Residency Program Regina Taylor, Atlanta VAMC Magnet Facilitator, who support helped me facilitate Caritas Consciousness on a hospital wide scale through the Shared Governance Retreat. My fellow Nurse educator, Joel Moorhead, MSN, RN, CMSRN, whose tenacity helped me to continue the effort to educate all new nurses who complete our Nursing Education Orientation. My fellow Atlanta VAMC Cohort 9 members for their encouragement and support. My family and friends whose love and support kept me encouraged throughout this journey.

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