Nursing Philosophy: How Do I Interpret Nursing

Tayelor Lowe

Lakeview College of Nursing

N314: Introduction to Professional Nursing

Travis Whisman

September 22, 2024

Nursing Philosophy: How Do I Interpret Nursing

When asked what nursing means to anyone, everyone will give different answers. This is the simple truth. Their answers will depend on different experiences, whether personal or impersonal. The answer is clear yet complex. What makes up the nursing metaparadigm, or the concepts of nursing, are based on four things- person, environment, health, and nursing. Each concept brings another deeper layer and meaning of nursing. Understanding the true meaning behind it, helps everyone in different ways. It helps people to see and understand the life of a nurse while also helping nurses understand their jobs and responsibilities as a care giver.

The Nursing Metaparadigm

The Person

The first component to discuss is the person. Each person that walks into an exam room is unique. Everything from their physical, emotional, and personality traits are all vastly different from everyone else. Each person has different needs and courses of treatment that they want to receive based on their religion, culture, and their version of science. Jean Watson, a theorist and American nurse, exclaimed, “Each individual patient needs to be valued and understood, with the nurse always being authentically present and each patient deserves the right to have their dignity maintained and protected at all times” (Branch et al., 2016, p. 124). Regardless of how a nurse

feels about a patient's medical choices, it is still their responsibility to give them the best course of action that fits their desires, thus reflecting the person.

The nursing responsibilities do not end with physical treatments. As nursing students are taught in their first semester, they need to take a holistic approach. This means that they care for a patients mind, body, and soul (Branch et al., 2016). If nurses truly cares about the person, it makes a 100% difference than just treating them like they are a person on a piece of paper. It is important for nurses to be personable. Get to know them. Treat them like they are family without crossing a line of professionality. Be kind. These words and statements truly cover the person aspect of nursing.

The Environment

The second aspect of the nursing metaparadigm is the environment. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the word environment means "the circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded." Everyone at some point in their life has been sick before. Usually when this occurs, one will not go to work or school because they need to recover at home. Why? Because they are used to and comfortable with the environment that they have created at home. It makes everyone feel better knowing that they can turn the TV on, cuddle up on the couch with a soft, warm blanket, and sleep. The same principle is applied in regards to those in the hospital. In order for an individual to heal or be at peace with the last moments of their life, they must be comfortable. The Journal of Nursing research wrote and released an article covering the ideas and thoughts of the people. They had quite a bit to say regarding the environment of hospital settings. For their physical environment, they agreed that it should be well-lit and painted in calming colors. For the psychological and social environment, they agreed

that the nurses need to be patient, kind, and friendly. Sitting in a room for days on end can be isolating. Be the nurse that is willing to go the extra mile for a patient, whether that be painting their nails or playing a game of cards (Deliktas, 2019). In addition, the noise levels should be kept at a minimum. Privacy is a must. It is even suggested that patients have access to nature and natural light (Branch et al., 2016). This way, they can walk around, get some natural air, and help them not feel like they are trapped.

Give patients the best environment possible. They are humans to trying to either recover or pass in comfort. These cannot be done without a calm environment. They deserve it.

The Health

The third aspect is health. Someone's health is much more than just curing and moving on. This encompasses the entire body. Watson stated, "…that in order for healing to be effective, that there needs to be a complete balance of person's physical, cognitive, and spiritual-self" (Branch et al., 2016, p. 124). These components need to be equal and working in order for someone's health to be in the best condition. Nurses can achieve this level of health for their patients through health assessments. Just because a patient may look fine on the outside, this does not mean that they have great internal health. A nurses job would be to assess their mental state as well as helping to prevent illnesses as well (Branch et al., 2016). Some ways to do this would be through immunizations, yearly physicals, or mammograms.

Another way that nurses can help take care of a patients health is through cleanliness on both sides. This means that a nurse needs to use gloves, personal protective equipment, and proper hygiene. The patients need to make sure that they brush their teeth and bathe daily. These two factors help with the overall health as well.

The Nursing

The last nursing metaparadigm is nursing. In reference to the *Journal of Nursing Research,* participants agreed on the three main characteristics of nursing. They were humanism, being influential, and having a professional identity. Humanism is a way of thinking that tries to put the needs of other ahead of their own. One participant in the study reasoned that "Humanism is basically loving and understanding people…my duty is to ensure that my patients' lives take a humans course to the last moment. I believe that the secret of success in nursing lies in humanism" (Deliktas, 2019, p. 7). In order for one to become a true nurse, they need to keep the patient as the center. They also need to be educators because they need to be able to teach those who need taught, whether its how to give someone insulin or how to change an ostomy bag. Second, nurses need to be influential. One participant said that they not only should touch the body of a patient, but they should also touch a patient's heart (Deliktas, 2019). For some, going to the hospital is either their first or last day and the best or the worst day. A nurse's job is multi-faceted. Be a mom, an aunt, a friend. Be the first person a baby sees or the last person someone sees. Be able to fit the role of so many to touch the lives of all.

Lastly, nurses have a professional identity. They have ethics, goals, respect, diversity throughout them and with their patients. One participant said that "…there is a need for professional practice to maintain mutual respect between nurses and patients and their relatives and to provide quality care" (Deliktas, 2019, p. 7). Nurses do not show up to their job to give the bare minimum. They show up with the intent to truly help people. They take their jobs very seriously because they know that someones life is on the other end. Nurses love diversity-

culture, religion, race. These things do not matter. All that matters is providing the best care for the patient.

Professional Nurse

Personal Beliefs

For me, being a professional nurse can be broken down into one simple term- caring about others more than yourself. When this fundamental trait is broken down, it covers everything. If you care about someone more than yourself, you will treat them with the upmost dignity and respect. If you care about someone more than yourself, religion and race will not matter. You will still do everything in your power to help them. If you care about someone more than yourself, being an advocate for the innocent will be easy. If you care about someone more than yourself, honestly admitting to your mistakes will be essential, as it can help or save someone's life.

Obviously, you still need to love yourself and respect yourself. All this means though is that the moment you walk in through those hospital doors, it stops being about yourself- the decision, the lifestyles, everything. It all becomes about the patient. Every course of treatment, every nurse or doctor they want to see, will be in control of the patient, not the other way around.

The Overall View

Overall, I think nursing is a hard profession. The schooling, the long work hours, the losses will be difficult to manage. However, I think it will also be the most rewarding feeling ever knowing that I have the power and control to make someone's life easier. Even if I just sit

and talk with someone for five minutes or help deliver someone's first baby, I know that it will be worth it. Even if I get to be the last person that someone sees before they pass, it will be worth it.

My mom is a nurse, which has heavily impacted my life and career choices up until this moment. She works in Maternal Fetal Medicine. There are some days where she comes home, and she is tired. She does not really feel like talking to anyone because she is drained. However, if you ask her if she likes being a nurse, she will tell you "yes." It is often hard for her to explain why she likes it so much but it always boils down to the fact that she is making a difference in so many patients lives. Sure, there are sad days, like having the doctor tell their patient that there is something wrong with the baby. However, she takes those sad moments, and bring them to the good like educating the patient, helping them cope, and sitting and talking with them to explain that a diagnosis like Down Syndrome is really not that bad. She inspires me to see the good and to change the script in a way.

Values and Beliefs

My Identity

Because I have a lot of personal values and beliefs, this will impact the way that I am a nurse. I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses. This is a very big part of my life. It is what makes me, me. For one thing, as I am sure most people know, we do not accept blood transfusions. There are a lot of Bible scripture that has led me to believe it is wrong such as Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:14, and Acts 15:20. Because I know that my views are in the minority, I know what it feels like for others to have views that are not the "social norm." Because of this, if someone has personal religious beliefs or cultural standards that differ from mine, I am not one that will be

quick to judge. As someone that wants respect, I must also give respect. This is a great quality that I know will shape my nursing career for the better. This will allow me to treat everyone the same without having any type of prejudice towards others.

My next personal value and belief might seem either like a good one or a bad one depending on who is asked. I do have the belief that abortions are wrong. Do I hate people or judge those who get abortions? Absolutely not! That is their choice as it is mine to not get one. However, if I ever find myself in a situation where I need to give someone an abortion pill or aid in an in-clinic abortion, this will be something that I would not do. For me, it would bother my conscience knowing that I am giving or aiding in the help of someone killing their baby. Again, these are all my personal values, so I know some will want to argue on what is defined as a "baby." However, this is a view on mine that will not change. Such scriptures like Exodus 21: 22, 23 and Jeremiah 1:5 have led me to this decision. As discussed previously, I know this decision is going to be viewed differently by different people. Furthermore, I want to reiterate again that I do not hate those or judge those who have had an abortion. Judging someone does not belong to me. I will still treat my patients like they are my patients, without hostility or hate.

Future Career

2030

In the year 2030, I hope that my nursing career has advanced in some ways. As someone who wanted to be a doctor, I feel that the next best thing is a nurse practitioner. I have always thought about maybe becoming one. Either way, I would like to have my masters by 2030. For me, this would make me feel so proud and would be such a big accomplishment. My mom has her bachelors in nursing, but no one in my family has gotten their masters before. I would view it

as a wonderful accomplishment. By this time, I may still work in the ER. However, I may also work in pediatrics. This would be such a fulfilling role for me.

As someone who has been a natural born leader, I do hope that I find myself in a leadership role one day. As someone who wants things to be fair and has a very understanding attitude, all while being able to take the lead, I do feel that these traits would be essential for a boss and the environment. At this point, who truly knows what my life will look like in six years? I just hope that it is successful for me.

References

Branch, C., Deak, H., Hiner, C., & Holzwart, T. (2016). Four nursing metaparadigms. *IU South Bend Undergraduate Research Journal*, *16*, 123-132, https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/iusburj/article/view/22199.

Deliktas, A., Korukcu, O., Aydin, R., & Kabukcuoglu, K. (2019). Nursing students' perceptions of nursing metaparadigms: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Nursing Research*, *27*(5), doi: 10.1097/jnr.0000000000000311.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Environment. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved September 15, 2024, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/environment.