

Worldview Spirituality in Clinical Practice

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Clinical experiences can have a profound impact on nurse's life. The nursing profession includes caring for patients by addressing their physical, spiritual, mental and emotional needs. As a nursing student, I often get to work with very ill patients and some experiences can be emotionally and spiritually challenging. Last month, I had the privilege to work with a dementia patient in my last day of clinical. It was a very challenging and positive experience that brought spiritual growth and maturity in my life. This assignment will describe my clinical experience with this patient diagnosed with dementia, while reflecting on the spiritual transformation it brought in my life and on the way it impacts my nursing care to my clients.

Description of my personal clinical experience

My last day of clinical was an emotional and transformative experience. I was assigned to a 40 year-old male patient with an early onset of dementia. Based on his family history, his mother also suffered from dementia. His wife dropped him at the hospital because she said she could not handle it anymore even though she tried. However, she comes by very often to see her husband. The situation was too overwhelming for her, per consequent, she needed to seek help from the hospital. The nurse in charge of him told me that Mr. P was a healthy young man, an active member of his church, but sadly he is now diagnosed with dementia. and therefore He is incapable to participate in church activities like he used to. When I read his chart, I discovered that he has been in the hospital for approximately 3 months waiting to be transferred to another facility. Mr. P seemed to be a wonderful, cheerful man. A charming guy with a smile on his lips every time he saw one of us entering the room. However, he had difficulty recognizing us and struggled to perform daily activities such as dressing, eating, bathing and walking. He also had

difficulty speaking and was confused and disoriented. My patient was experiencing a progressive cognitive decline that impacts his memory, language, thinking, and decision making. A few times during my shift, Mr. P was agitated, he also sometime shout out a few words then laughed right after. When I tried to calm him down, he gave me a funny look as he was trying to make fun of me. From this, I was able to recognize that he was naturally a pleasant and entertaining person even before he had dementia.

Reflection on the clinical experience

As I reflect on the experience, I realized that caring for a patient with dementia demands patience and understanding because the person might at any time become very agitated, confused and even aggressive. Because it was difficult for me to communicate with my patient, since he was not verbal and oriented, it became a challenge for me to figure out his needs. I felt like it was my duty to know what he wanted, and to provide it to him. This patient won my heart somehow but I was very sad about his condition. Dealing with dementia is not easy and this made me think a lot about everything that we are working hard for in life. As human being, we go above and beyond to achieve our goal. As students, we work hard, spend sleepless night studying, doing homework just to obtain a degree and we are not even certain that we will use it one day. It is possible to forget everything that we learned at school. Working with Mr. P made me reevaluate many aspects of my life. At some point, I questioned my career and asked myself why am I even doing all this since there is a possibility for me to die or suffer from a disease that will stop me from practicing my profession. Then, I immediately concluded that whenever we get the chance to do good while we still have time, we should seize the opportunity to do it. This made me understand that nothing will last forever in this earth. The overall caring for a patient with

dementia requires patience, love, compassion, and willingness to adapt to their mood swings. I really enjoyed caring for him but his situation raised a lot of questions in my mind.

Spiritual meaning and spiritual transformation

As I am still thinking about the experience, I noticed a spiritual growth and transformation in my life. Firstly, I became more grateful of the privilege of being mentally and physically healthy. Health is something that no one can buy no matter how wealthy we can be. Therefore, being able to perform my daily activities and respond to my needs is a grace and I am entirely grateful towards God for this gift. Secondly, through the experience, I gained a deeper understanding of the will of God. I understood that our plan is not God's plan. Perhaps Mr. P had his whole life figured out already but little did he know, dementia would stop him along the way. From this, I acquired wisdom because I came to realized that we do not know our future and we have no control over it. For that reason, now I pray for God's plan and purpose to be fulfilled in my life regardless of my desire. Thirdly, I also do more good when I have the opportunity to do so. As Proverbs 3:27 (NIV) says " Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act." This verse ordered us to treat our brothers and sisters fairly when we have the authority to do it. As a future nurse, I will make sure I treat my patients as God commanded me to do. Fourthly, when I think about sickness, I came to understand that nothing really matters in this world except for our souls. When we read in Ecclesiastes 1:2 (NIV), " Vanity of vanities, says the preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity." In this verse, Salomon emphasized on the fleeting and temporary nature of earthly pleasures and accomplishment but also on the pursuit of possession or material things in this world which is meaningless. It's best to live according to God's will and follow his command.

Impact on my nursing care to my clients

Furthermore, the experience also impact my nursing care for my patients. It made me humble, wise, fair, compassionate and loving. Not only I mature spiritually , I also matured professionally. As patients can be rude and arrogant sometimes , my wisdom helps me understand their frustration and helps me stay quiet instead of having a reaction. I humble myself because I know that I do not know everything and I am also aware that I can lose all the knowledge one day. I try to do good and be fair to all my patients without playing favoritism in order to please God. I always thought that I was always providing care with love and compassion but it now love and compassion has a different meaning when I am with my clients.

In conclusion, this clinical experience with Mr. P who was diagnosed with an early onset of dementia impacted my life spiritually in a positive and challenging way. I enjoyed this clinical experience and I will never forget about it. From it, I developed a deeper understanding of spirituality, health, suffering, vanity and even death. I also acquired wisdom, humility and I understood the meaning of being a fair, compassionate and loving nurse. By reflecting on this experience, I can deduce that this clinical experience helped me growth and brought spiritual transformation in my life. As a nursing student, I believe these changes will help me succeed in my career as a future Christian nurse.