

Spirituality in Clinical Practice

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My Reflection on Caring Experience

As a student nurse in my second semester in nursing, I have undertaken a clinical rotation and gained several experiences that have deeply shaped my perspective on spiritual life. The one experience that stands out during that nursing practice is what I reflect on in this manuscript. During my clinical rotation as a nursing student, I had the opportunity to provide care to a patient with acute pneumonia. The patient was an elderly individual admitted to the hospital for difficulty breathing and a persistent cough. As I cared for the patient, I realized the client was of immense faith and had a positive outlook on their life. This experience resonates with me the most as it helped me confirm Collier et al. (2021) findings that many patients facing breathing problems turn to religion and spirituality to help them overcome the distress that accompanies their condition. As a student nurse, I realized that providing spiritual care to a patient with acute pneumonia means discovering their relationships with relatives, friends, God, and their faith community (Collier et al., 2021).

During my interactions with the patient, I was initially impressed by their resilience and strong will. As I continued to care for them, I discovered that the client had a strong faith which was the source of their strength. The patient shared with me how their faith had sustained them throughout their life and continued to do so. This is in tandem with Neenan & Whelan's (2021) findings that life-threatening diseases compel victims to develop spiritual desires upon diagnosis. The patient believes that by being spiritual, they will experience positive impacts on their quality of life, drawing hope and meaning from their faith to cope with acute pneumonia (Neenan & Whelan, 2021). The clinical experience also helped me realize that my patient's spiritual well-being, which encompasses scopes of meaning, faith, meaning, and peace, significantly boosted their overall quality of life. According to the patient, their strong spiritual well-being helped

lower the severity of their breathing problems/coughs, reduced feelings of desperateness and decreased their desire for rushed death. As a student nurse, I now understand that caring for such patients requires an approach beyond merely tending to their physical needs. As Neenan & Whelan (2021) reiterate, nurses must assess their patients' spiritual and religious needs to formulate treatment plans tailored to their care needs.

Additionally, extensive research by Collier et al. (2021) has shown that these relationships significantly provide immense strength and support for many patients. Therefore, all aspiring nurses should strive to assist patients they care for to find meaning, deal with their identity worries, and recognize their existential anguish to survive their conditions (Collier et al., 2021). As I advance through my nursing education, I plan to focus on research about spirituality in clinical practice to better understand the spiritual experiences of acute pneumonia patients. I am confident that this knowledge will empower me to provide similar patients with the highest quality of spiritual care in the future.

During my clinical experience, I underwent a spiritual transformation as a nursing student. For instance, I began reflecting more on my life and the kind of legacy I would leave behind as a professional nurse. According to Hawthorne & Gordon (2020), spirituality is essential for a nurse to deliver top-notch patient care. Thus, this research affirmation has strengthened my resolve to assess the spiritual needs of my clients in future practice and to respond to those needs. Besides, the clinical experience was critical in inspiring me to seek advanced nursing education to be better prepared to offer spiritual care to my clients, as Hawthorne & Gordon (2020) advocated. I am deeply grateful for the experience, as it allowed me to discuss important topics such as forgiveness, love, and the significance of client relationships. Above all, I am grateful for my life and the people I have encountered. This

experience has shaped my spiritual growth and transformation, and I consider it a privilege to have been part of my client's journey during my clinical rotation.

My significant personal care experience has greatly influenced my nursing care approach toward my future clients. Notably, that experience deeply impacted me and led me to contemplate my spiritual beliefs and values as a student nurse. I started questioning the meaning of suffering and the purpose of life, which made me realize the importance of spirituality in nursing care. From this experience, I learned that holistic care involves physical, emotional, and spiritual care. Therefore, I will always advise my patients to strengthen their spiritual beliefs as they can provide better coping mechanisms and resilience in the face of breathing problems and coughs (Collier et al., 2021). As a nursing student, I acknowledge and respect the spiritual beliefs of my patients, and I am committed to supporting them on their spiritual journey.

In summary, the encounter I had with an acute pneumonic patient had a significant influence on both my spiritual life and nursing/clinical practice. I understood how integral spirituality is in providing my clients comprehensive nursing care. This experience reinforced my appreciation for the importance of spirituality, and I intend to apply the lessons learned throughout my career after graduating. I am grateful for this opportunity and its impact on me.

References

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