**Philosophy of Nursing**

As a first year nursing student, at Longwood University, it is hard to say exactly what my philosophy is going to be as a nurse. However, I do believe everyone has some form of a philosophy whether they are new to a profession, or have been in their profession for years. A nurses philosophy consists of the values that he/she possesses, and therefore affects the choices he or she makes. After doing some research, a theorist whom I relate to in terms of my philosophy, and personal beliefs is Karen Kolcaba. Karen Kolcaba created the Theory of Comfort. The theory explains how comfort exists in three different states. These states are: relief, ease, and transcendence. The main idea behind Kolcaba’s theory is that the main goal of the nurse is to get his/her patient back to healthy through following these three stages. I believe my philosophy is rooted in the importance of providing the very best care for the patient while at the same time being mindful of developing a professional having a relationship with the patient’s family, and community.

**Brief History of Nursing**

 Nurses have worked years to develop a professional reputation that is considered to be one of the most hard working, trustworthy, and well-respected fields. As this field has developed over the years, many changes have transformed and shaped the areas of policy and practice. For example, there have been several key nurses such as Florence Nightingale who worked to revolutionize nursing through top-notch care and treatment. Florence Nightingale completely reformed sanitation standards not only in war, but also in hospitals all over the world. Florence took the first step in revolutionizing hospitals by acknowledging that human basic needs needed to be met. Some examples of these were: keeping the patients warm, well rested, clean, and well nourished (Cherry & Jacob, 2014). After Florence took the position as Superintendent of Nurses at the Institution for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in Distressed Circumstances in London, she was able to not only help in organizing and making administration efficient, but she was also able to cut the cost of patient care while also increasing the standard of care (Cherry & Jacob, 2014). Florence also founded the first school of nursing known as, The Florence Nightingale School for Nurses in London in 1860 (Holder, 2011). Another major contributor to the revolution in health care and the nursing profession was Clara Barton. She developed a humanitarian program where it met the needs of those who suffered from disaster (i.e. provided food, clothing, and or shelter). This humanitarian program came to be known as The American Red Cross. During the 20th century, the American Nurses Association began publishing the American Journal of Nursing designed to keep nurses and others up to date on current practices and new research findings. In addition, nursing skills began to develop during the 20th century, which allowed for nurses to take on more critical roles. The nursing skills that were developing during the 20th century greatly had to do with the nursing schools that began to increase dramatically. Currently, nurses find themselves playing a much larger role than taking care of physical and emotional needs of his/her patient. Today, nurses take on the role of staying up to date on trends, social issues, legislative amendments to the practice acts, and much more (Holder, 2011).

**Nursing Theorist**

 The theorist that I most identify with is Katharine Kolcaba. Katharine Kolcaba developed the Theory of Comfort. I identify with Kolcaba’s theory because this theory considers patients to be individuals, families, institutions, or communities who are in need of care. I believe when working with patients it is important to remember the patient, the family, and the community behind that patient. Also, I agree with Kolcaba that it is important to do everything in a nurse’s power to make the patient feel comforted while experiencing an uneasy time (Maharjan, 2014). Restoring one’s health is the main goal of a nurse, and Kolcaba addresses this as the optimal function of a nurse.

**Summary of Theory**

Kolcaba’s Theory of Comfort describes comfort existing in three forms: relief, ease, and transcendence (when patient can rise above challenges). Also, the four contexts in which comfort can occur are: physical, psychospiritual, environmental, and sociocultural. Health is the optimal point for this theory, and is the main goal of the acting nurse. The nurse strives to do everything in his/her ability to help get the patient back into good health. The model is described as a nurse assessing a patients needs, and then implementing an appropriate nursing care plan, and then finally evaluating the comfort level of the patient (Maharjan, 2014). The comfort level will then determine if the nurse needs to reevaluate the nursing care plan, or if the original plan is working effectively (Maharjan, 2014).

**My Career Linking to Theorist**

My decision to go into nursing was not planned, nor was it expected. Ever since I can remember I have wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to be a doctor because I thought that’s how I could help others, save lives, and care for patients. I delved into my passion with both feet discovering what the medical profession had to offer. What I discovered in my exploration of the medical field surprised me. I found that doctors were more preoccupied by numbers and test results than by the actual hands-on care of their patient. They were more concerned about prescribing medication then they were at understanding their patient as a person and understanding their unique needs. I am of course making broad-stroke generalizations, but non-the-less I was troubled by what I saw. I also observed that nurses seemed to hold the standard of care that I had once envisioned doctors to hold. I believe this was when I decided that nursing is how I would make an impact on other peoples lives. The most important thing as a nurse in my opinion is to make sure the patient’s needs are taken care of first. This is why my philosophy matches kindly to Kolcaba’s theory. Both Kolcaba and I agree that patient care is the most important aspect, and if a nurse wants to get the patient’s health back then creating a calm and supportive environment is extremely important. The more time I spent in the hospitals the more I saw that I was developing a passion for pediatrics. I believe a nurse’s job is to put a patient at ease (rid patient of any discomforts). This is a big part of working in pediatrics because children are not always fully aware of what is going on, and so they can be very uncomfortable and anxious. As nurses we also give our patients relief. This means whether it’s through explaining to them what is going on, or administering prescribed medicine, we are here to give our patients relief during a stressful time. Also, when certain discomforts are unavoidable such as an injection, or anything involving pain that the child may not be accustomed to it is our job as a nurse to help those children over come the discomfort through the process of transcendence (Kolcaba & DiMarco, 2005).

**Conclusion**

Nursing has come along way over the last 200 years. Two nurses who played a key role in revolutionizing the nursing profession were Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton. Through their knowledge and expertise, sanitation and standard of care for the patient increased drastically. As people began noticing the importance of the nursing role in the patients’ recovery, the push for well-educated nurses began. Once again, Karen Kolcaba’s Theory of Comfort is a theory that my philosophy coincides with. Kolcaba’s theory believes in putting the patients care above all else. In order for a patient to recover from his/her injury, or illness the nurse needs to put their needs first. Although I have preconceived ideas of my future-nursing career, as a freshman in the nursing program I am open to the many specialties within the field of nursing. As of today my plan is to go to graduate school to become a CRNA, or work in pediatrics. Regardless of the path I choose, I am excited to experience both professional and personal growth within the field of nursing.

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