

Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory Use in Forensic Nursing Practice

Molly Mancini

Longwood University

"I have neither given nor received help on this work, nor am I aware of any infraction of the Honor Code."

Abstract

This paper explores the ways that the Self-Care Deficit Theory can be used to treat patients in forensic nursing practice. Articles and journals cited demonstrate the importance of the Self-Care Deficit Theory in this field of medicine as well as aids the reader in understanding how the theory applies to the patients found in the field of forensic nursing. The given examples found within the articles and journals help prove the need for the theory in forensic nursing. Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory can be utilized by forensic nurses to treat the victims of both physical and emotional trauma.

Keywords: Self-Care Deficit Theory, forensic nursing

Forensic nursing is one of the most difficult and heartbreaking areas of the nursing profession, due to the nature of the crimes investigated by the forensic nurse and the trauma caused to their patients. These victims do not always know how to care for themselves after surviving such physical traumas as rape, domestic abuse, or molestation. “Victims of violence and abuse” receive care from a medical professional who is “trained to treat the trauma associated with the wrong that has been done to them” including neglect, sexual violence, and abuse (What is Forensic, 2017). Forensic nurses “collect evidence and give testimony that can be used in a court of law to apprehend or prosecute perpetrators who commit violent and abusive acts” making them vital not only to the justice system, but also to the victims of these traumas (What is Forensic, 2017). Forensic nurses are also able to provide “specialized care and consultation” to help the victim of this trauma mentally move on with their lives (Shive, 2016). Forensic nurses “investigate real and potential causes of morbidity and mortality in a variety of settings; provide care to victims, the accused and perpetrators of crime” (Mageto, Omoni, Cabelus, & Inyega, 2017). By teaching the victims how to care for themselves and how to live after surviving the heinous acts committed to them, a nurse is able to lessen the chance that the victim will have to return to a medical facility to seek treatment.

Dorothea Orem

Dorothea Orem created her theory with the purpose of improving the quality of care provided by nursing staff and with the intention of teaching patients how to care for themselves after seeking medical attention. It was also intended to help nurses understand when a patient can no longer provide for themselves. Personally, I identify with Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory because it can be applied to every age of human life, varying from childhood into

adulthood, and can be applied to different fields of medicine. Rather than applying to one particular age division, Orem's theory applies to all ages of life. This theory is relevant for a five year old abuse victim as well as a fifty-five year old rape victim. It can be utilized to help victims who have experienced a variety of traumas, rather than just center around one particular trauma. This theory can be used not only to help patients in a medical facility, but also to educate members of the public so that they can provide their own self-care and possibly keep them from having to enter a medical institution at a later date. Many other nursing theories are unable to apply to certain fields of medicine, but Orem's theory can be used in a variety of nursing fields including oncology, neonatal, as well as forensics (Orem, 2001). Self-care is universal in the way that it applies so easily to other sections of nursing. After suffering a trauma, I think that the patient should learn how to cope with the problems they are facing in order to provide for themselves and move past their trauma in hopes that they can keep living their life to the best of their ability. Forensic nurses provide the victims of crimes with a sense of hope to live their lives again and be able to care for themselves, rather than having to rely on the medical care provided from others. I interpret Orem's theory as though the nurse is teaching the patient how to care for themselves and in the case of a forensic nurse, how to continue living after their trauma.

The Self-Care Deficit Theory

The Self-Care Deficit Theory was published in Orem's *Nursing: Concepts of Practice* in 1971. Orem's theory was designed with the intention "to restore the client's self-care capability to enable him or her to sustain structural reliability, performance, and growth through purposeful nursing intervention" (Cherry & Jacob, 2017, p. 85). As described in the theory, self-care is an action that is necessary for a person to live. It is a learned characteristic that must be maintained

throughout a person's lifetime in order for a person to remain healthy, both physically and mentally. Sufficient intake of air, food, and water is included in the necessities for human life and the maintenance of self-care. Also, taking care of one's mental stability is also important to the maintenance of self-care. Individuals perform self-care in a variety of ways depending on their environment, culture, and other factors impacting their lives. Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Theory has five major components. The first component says that people have to communicate effectively and make connections with others people in their environment. Secondly, Orem says that individuals have the power to identify their own problems and needs as well as the power to make adjustments to solve these problems as needed. Additionally, individuals are tasked with providing their own self-care when it is necessary and they should exercise their ability to develop, discover, and transmit their needs and ways to meet them. Finally, Orem says that groups of people in relationships allocate responsibilities for providing care other members of their group. Major concepts of her theory include her definition of nursing, of humans, the environment, health, and of self-care as a whole (Orem, 2001). Nursing is when a nurse provides "specialized assistance to persons with disabilities which makes more than ordinary assistance necessary to meet needs for self-care" (Wayne, 2016). As described by Orem, humans are the people treated by the nurses. The environment is the area in which a person lives, including the culture and family that a person comes from. Finally, health "is the ability to reflect on one's self, to symbolize experience, and to communicate with others" (Wayne, 2016). Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory focuses on the care provided by nurses and their ability to enable patients to care for themselves to keep them from repeatedly seeking medical attention.

Linking the Theory to My Future Career.

This theory directly relates to practicing nurses and patients all over the world, including forensic nurses. This theory is prevalent when discussing patients, nurses, and their interactions. It promotes a clear understanding of what the profession of nursing includes and clarifies what nursing is, while describing what a nurse is not, and what the profession could be. It provides structure, communication, and focus that provides clarity and outlines goals for nursing that describe ways to provide effective of nursing care and to help hold nurses to be accountable for their actions. Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory allows the nurse to give the best quality care they can, in the hopes that the patients will be able to provide for themselves.

In my own nursing practice, I will make sure to provide my patients with the best possible care until they are well enough to provide care for themselves. I will take the necessary steps to improve my patients' overall quality of life to enable them to care for themselves. The goal of my nursing practice will be to provide the right amount of care for my patients while teaching them to care for themselves.

In my own practice as a forensic nurse, I will use this theory to help the victims of sexual assault and abuse by providing them with specialized care, until they are able to care for themselves. With these patients it can take months, even years, to fully heal from their trauma. As a forensic nurse, I will teach the victims valuable skills to take care of themselves after their trauma while caring for them to the very best of my ability. I will provide the best care that I can to these patients to ensure that these patients are capable of caring for themselves. I will utilize Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory to provide care for patients as well as the victims of a crime.

Conclusion.

Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory is one of the most important theories that can be applied to the field of forensic nursing. A forensic nurse has to be able to identify what a victim of trauma needs to know in order to feel closure and heal. This theory aids in teaching the patient ways to care for themselves following a physical trauma including rape, molestation, and abuse. Once a victim comes into a medical institution and is helped by a forensic nurse, they receive care for their specific trauma and are given the care they need in order to move on with their life. By using this theory, nurses are able to show patients the correct ways to provide their own self-care and what measures to take in order to keep themselves from returning to a hospital.

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