Madeleine Leininger’s Theory of Cultural Care Diversity and Universality

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Nursing theory is very important for nurses around the world to study as it helps to provide nurses with research that guides their practice (Cherry & Jacob, 2019). Furthermore, nursing theory has helped to explain, define, and explore many of the issues faced today. Many of the theories that have developed over the years can be used in everyday nursing practice. For example, the Theory of Cultural Care Diversity and Universality focuses on transcultural and caring nursing which is an important aspect of nursing care today (Cherry & Jacob, 2019).

**Intro to Theory**

The Theory of Cultural Care Diversity and Universality was written by Madeleine Leininger in 1977. This theory was written to explain the importance of providing efficient and effective care for a wide range of diverse cultures seen around the world (Cherry & Jacob, 2019). Leininger hoped to expand nursing knowledge on cultural diversity through many resources including education and providing nurses the ability to create a specific care plan that aligns with the patient’s beliefs and cultural expectations (Busher Betancourt, 2016). One of the most important aspects of providing care to patients is respecting individual’s beliefs, values, and background while providing essential care without judgement (Busher Betancourt, 2016). Although the Theory of Cultural Care Diversity and Universality was created in the 1970’s, it can be used throughout the nursing field today when caring for such a diverse population (Cherry & Jacob, 2019).

**Summary**

Leininger began to recognize caring as a major aspect of nursing while working as a nursing student and hospital staff nurse in the 1940’s (Nelson, 2006). However, she began to focus on the behavioral differences among children of different cultures during the 1950’s while working in a child guidance home (Busher Betancourt, 2016). Cultural differences had not been previously emphasized in nursing until Leininger decided to further nurse’s knowledge on this diversity among cultures through the Theory of Cultural Care Diversity and Universality (Busher Betancourt, 2016). This theory puts a major emphasis on the two concepts of caring and culture (Nelson, 2006). Furthermore, her theory argued that diversity, universality, worldview, and ethnohistory were essential aspects of care, caring, health, and nursing as a whole (Cherry & Jacob, 2019).

Leininger believed that the lack of knowledge about cultural centered care altered her ability to provide adequate care. For example, she stated that she felt helpless in providing care when children of different cultures expressed differing ways that they wanted care regarding their cultural beliefs and values (Nelson, 2006). Leininger found in many ethnonursing studies that although caring was universally present among all cultures, the method of caring and practices differed greatly (Nelson, 2006).

In the United States today, hospitals and health care facilities provide care to a diverse population of various cultural backgrounds with differing beliefs and values (Busher Betancourt, 2016). Providing nurses with knowledge about the diverse populations and transcultural nursing is a critical aspect in the profession of nursing that can be obtained through increased education. While remaining respectful in providing care, it is also increasingly important to recognize one’s culture and respect their personal values and wishes. Furthermore, remaining respectful regarding one’s culture can lead to positive outcomes, patient and family satisfaction, and a professional and trustworthy nurse-to-patient relationship. Nurses are the main caregivers to the patients, and it is important that they provide culturally congruent care to their patients that avoids possibly offensive practices (Busher Betancourt, 2016). An example of this would be palpation, or touch. In western cultures it seems appropriate to touch, however, in nonwestern cultures this could be offensive or disrespectful (Busher Betancourt, 2016). In order to reach this desired outcome of culturally congruent and competent care, it is essential to specifically develop and implement nursing strategies that are based on a cultural assessment of the patient (Nelson, 2006).

**Utilization in the Future**

The Theory of Cultural Diversity and Universality can be linked with my future career as a nurse while providing care for a diverse population of patients. I am aware that within the nursing profession I will be treating and caring for a variety of diverse individuals with different cultures from that of my own. Therefore, as a nurse, it will be my responsibility to educate myself on how to care for patients with different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, it is just as important for me to remain respectful of the patient’s beliefs, values, and practices when implementing a care plan. Although there are many different jobs that require nurses, after graduation, I am hoping to work with children. However, this may become difficult when assessing their cultural beliefs regarding the plan of care they wish to receive. Therefore, it is my responsibility to communicate with the parents and respect their choices in providing care to their child.

As a nurse, I will evaluate, treat, and provide care for a variety of patients from many cultural backgrounds. Utilizing the Theory of Cultural Diversity and Universality in my future career will help in developing my knowledge and discipline in providing patient-centered and culturally congruent care. Furthermore, using Leininger’s theory to influence my actions as a nurse will also help in maintaining a nurse-to-patient relationship, putting emphasis on remaining respectful to all patients, and provide for better satisfaction ratings (Busher Betancourt, 2016). For example, although many times the parents are responsible for the child’s care plan, it is also important that the child feel respected. Children who are in the hospital are often scared and need that reassurance and patient-nurse relationship to help reduce anxiety and maintain trust. A major aspect of caring that may seem appropriate in one culture may differ in another. It is important for the nurse to establish this before providing care to ensure respect and maintain the professionalism of the relationship (Busher Betancourt, 2016). As a nurse, I will utilize this theory when creating care plans and providing care for those of differing cultures to ensure I am providing culturally congruent, competent, respectful, and patient-centered care.

**Conclusion**

Madeleine Leininger’s Theory of Cultural Diversity and Universality was written to put an emphasis on the importance of providing respectful and culturally congruent care to a variety of patients (Busher Betancourt, 2016). The United States has a diverse population and nurses will provide care to many of those individuals. Therefore, utilizing Leininger’s theory can help nurses meet the expectations of their patients and provide competent, effective, and respectful care to the best of their knowledge and ability regarding the patient’s culture (Busher Betancourt, 2016).

References

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