



Teaching Relationship Development to Nursing Students: A Concept Analysis

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Abstract

The concept of relationship development is more often used to emphasize the interaction between two or more people or professions. Relationship development is considered an important component for nursing and has been documented not only in nursing literature but also in other disciplines. The attributes that characterize the concept of relationship development are mutual exchange, fulfillment of promises, trust, and putting customers first, understanding the values and preferences of the patient. Although it is easy to build and develop relationships, there are still problems to apply this in practice. Nurse educators not only teaching relationship development to nursing students, but also to be a role model for the students how to create therapeutic relationship with client, another profession and also can synergy with the environment. This paper presents a concept analysis on relationship development, how nursing students, new nurses, and nurse practitioner build and develop relationships, with the goal that the nursing care will be improved through patient satisfaction.

Keywords: nurse-patient relationship; mutual exchange; fulfillment of promises; trust; putting customer first; understanding the value and preferences of the patient.

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1. Introduction

The nurse-patient relationship is viewed as central or foundational to the practice of nursing [7]. The relationship between nurse and patient is built on a series of interactions and develops over time. Differently with social relationship, relationship that develop between nurse and patients designed to meet the patients need. The nurse-patient relationship is professional and therapeutic. It ensures that the patient's needs are first and foremost. It exists to meet the needs of the patient, not the needs of the nurse. It is always the nurse who is responsible for establishing and maintaining boundaries with patients, regardless of how the patient behaves. The relationship is dynamic, not static, and there are interactions between cognitive and affective level.

The author in [3] used a grounded theory approach to explore the nurse patient relationship. Four types of nurse-patient relationships were identified: clinical, therapeutic, connected and over-involved. The relationship that emerged was dependent upon the duration of the contact between nurse and patient, needs of the patient, commitment of the nurse to the client and willingness to trust the nurse. There is a need to explore the nurse patient relationship in order to learn how to develop a trusting and therapeutic alliance between nurse and patient. There should be effective communication that enables patientsto experience the nurse as genuine, empathic, and warm. This emphasizes the need to teach good communication skills in nursing educational programs. It also points out the students need to practice those skills in the clinical or community settings.

Even though there is a nursing course that specifies and explains about communication in the nursing curriculum and also the ways to develop a trusting relationship with patients, it is still a problem in nursing clinical practice, especially in Indonesia. The other factors that affect the ability to establish a good relationship between nurse and client is the environment. A shortage of nurses in the hospital as well as too many patients can compromise the nurse's ability to take the time to communicate well with patients. Nurses are exhausted and overloaded with work, due to the limited staffing in Indonesia. In particular, nurses do not have time to appropriately mentor student nurses. There is little time or energy to role model good nurse-patient relationships and communication skills to the nursing students and new nurses. Orientation and mentoring is poor and can have a negative impact on nursing students and new nurses which then affect the quality of communication with patients.

The poor mentoring of students and new nurses will not provide adequate education or role modeling on how to develop relationships through good communication. Instead, the students will learn only to be task oriented. There will be the tendency to communicate poorly with clients, and the time with clientswill be of short duration. As a result, nurses will perceive themselves as not demonstrating adequate interactions with patients. Nursing student and new nurses need a good role model to learn to develop trusting relationships through communication with patients. The students not only need to develop their knowledge on relationship development in school, but they are in need of good clinical experiences that show them excellent communication skills being applied in practice. If experienced nurses can demonstrate therapeutic communications and development of trusting relationships with patients, the nursing care will improve. Nursing students will become better nurses for the future. There will be an improvement in the students' confidence as they develop therapeutic relationships with their patients. This will have a very positive impact on patient

satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is an important part of quality nursing care [16]. The quality of care will be improved and both the patient and the nurse, will believe that the nurse-patient relationship is important to the care provider [17].

The purpose of choosing this concept is to understand relationship development from a nursing perspective with a goal of improved patient satisfaction. Nursing students and new nurses will become the next generation of caregivers; they will experience quality nursing care, which is demonstrated by the nurses in the hospital if there is better understanding of the importance of relationship development. Nurses play a very important role in the well-being of patients. They can become role models to nursing students and new nurses to improve nursing care. Nursing students and new nurse will learn how to build and develop relationships with patients by not only doing or practicing this skill, but by experiencing it through other senior nurses' interactions with patients. For the purposes of this analysis the word "relationship" will be the focus of the analysis.

2. Methods

Reviewer search the literature using EBSCO, CINAHL and MEDLINE . These articles focus on relationship development published during 1994 to 2011 with 18 articles.

3. Result

3.1. *Relationship in Business/marketing*

The concept of relationship marketing has emerged within the fields of service marketing and industrial marketing. The phenomenon described by this concept is strongly supported by ongoing trends in modern business. The author in [5] defines the purpose of relationship marketing is to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of both parties involved are met. This is achieved by mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises. This promise concept is an integral element of the relationship marketing. Relationship can build by the firm that preoccupied with giving promises. Promises will attract new customers. Satisfaction and retention of the customer base will achieve by fulfilling promises. Another key element is trust [8]. A recent study defines trust as a willingness to rely on exchange with a partner in whom one has confidence. The first meaning is that there has to be belief in the other partner's trustworthiness that results from expertise, reliability, or intentionality of that partner. The second meaning views trust as a behavioral intention or behavior that reflects reliance on the partner and involves uncertainty and vulnerability on the part of the other. In many relationship marketing situations, it is not clear who is the trustor and trustee; for example in a simple two partner relationship, both partners are in equal positions. Also, the relationships are often more complex than mere relationship exchange. The companies should move from short-term transaction oriented goals to long term relationship goals.

The author in [9] define relationship marketing as an integrated effort to identity, maintain and build up a network with individual consumers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both sides through interactive, individualized, and value added contacts over a long period of time . The authors that cited in [18] professes a more strategic view of relationship marketing by putting the customer first and shifting

the role of marketing from manipulating the customer by telling and selling to genuine customer involvement by communicating and sharing the knowledge.

3.2. *Relationship in Medicine*

The concept of interactive relationship is developed in partnership with patients through an understanding of the patient's values and preferences. Patients are free to communicate their concerns about their problems as they see them. When that occurs, a greater understanding of the patient is achieved. The risks and benefits to any treatment should be discussed with the patient, so the physician can leave the patient with a feeling of involvement in decision making. This approach allows the patient to speak honestly about the illness and symptoms, as well as express concerns and fears on the basis of a trustworthy relationship [4].

Communication element become fundamentals to most of the clinician [12]. When clinician create and develop relationship, they should understand about patients perspective. Patient perspective could be asses when gather and share information, reach agreement on problems, along with plans ,and provide some closure . These elements emphasize caring and trust to create a relationship, where physicians and patients share ideas and decision making, and the meaning of the disease and illness and treatment options [11].Another medical article reported that doctors and patients must build and develop relationships, and trust plays an important role in the doctor-patient relationship [13]. If patient trust to the doctors, it will impact to patient satisfaction and improve doctors – patient relationship.

3.3. *Relationship in Nursing*

Theoretical work on the nurse patient relationship by Peplau is critical in the development of the idea that nursing practice encompasses more than physical care. Most often, nursing literature defines the relationship as an interaction between two people in which input from both participants contributes to a climate of healing, growth promotion, and or illness prevention. Develop therapeutic relationship will be crucial for caring, which is focus on communication in order to understand the patient's emotional responses to the experiences of being a patient [1]. Because of the depth or intensity of the nurse-patient' relationship, it makes nurse-patient relationship develop like a friendship [7]. However, unlike friendship, the relationship demands conscious use and interpretation of complex cognitive, affective and behavioral knowledge to enable nurses to communicate deliberately to achieve therapeutic goals.

Another nursing article reported that the nurse-patient interaction comprises the following four components. There is affective support that is achieved through good communication between nurse and patients, health information, decisional control, and professional or technical competencies. This study focuses on client – professional interactions, which are viewed as a major influence on client health behavior and defined as the therapeutic content and process that occurs between clinicians and patients [14].Patient satisfaction will be a result if this is included. Patient satisfaction leads to improved quality of nursing care [16].

A study that explores aspects of the nurse-patient relationship in the context of palliative care reports that trust is the goal of the patient and nurses interaction. Caring and reciprocity are important elements of nurse-patient

relationship in palliative care [7]. Upon reviewing the interaction literature, the author in [17] concluded research related to nurse-patient interactions contributes to the discipline's knowledge of how nurses communicate with the patients, as well as how patients perceive these interactions, and that patients believe the nurse patient relationship are important to their care.

4. Discussion

Building and developing relationships with patients or clients is a fundamental task in many disciplines, including business, nursing, and medicine. Developing relationships can increase client satisfaction and lead to building more long-term relationship. The primary attributes that are important to the concept of relationship development with clients or patients are mutual exchange, fulfillment of promises, trust, putting customers first, understanding the values and preferences of the patient.

Developing a good relationship does not start without mutual exchange. Mutual exchange includes therapeutic communication is essential, so patients and families can verbalize their fears and concern and get appropriate information, therefore care plans can be well developed. [2]. Mutual exchange and use of interpretation of complex cognitive, affective and behavioral knowledge includes verbal and non-verbal cues provided by the patient. One study found that physician that attempt to be a good listeners had the best relationship with the patient. Non verbal communication such as body language, eye contact, body position and tone of voice are influence patients perception [10].

The second attribute is fulfillment of promise. Fulfilling of promises is one of the ways to build a relationship. However, if the promises are not kept by the provider, a good relationship cannot be maintained. Fulfilling promises that have been given is equally important as means of achieving customer satisfaction, retention of customer base, and long term profitability.

The third attribute of mutual trust naturally follows. The authors in [8] defines trust as a willingness to rely on a partner in whom one has confidence. There has to be belief in the other partner's trustworthiness that results from expertise, reliability, or intentionality of that partner. Clients will feel confident when their promises or needs are met. Therefore, nurses should know what a client needs and what information should be obtained and shared. Nurses can provide as much information as possible, including alternative options with advantages and disadvantages. Clients will feel comfortable opening up when trust is established. The authors in [7] reported that there were four themes in development of a trusting and connected relationship:

- Understanding the patients' needs
- Displaying caring actions and caring attitudes
- Providing holistic care
- Acting as the patients advocate.

According to participants, nurses who developed a trusting relationship with patients demonstrated understanding of their needs and suffering.

The fourth attribute is understanding the values and preferences of patients. An interactive relationship is developed in partnership with patients through an understanding of the patient's values and preferences. When patients communicate their concern about their problem as they see it, a greater understanding of the patient is achieved. The risk and benefit to any proposed treatment can be discussed with the patient, leaving them with a feeling of involvement in the decision made.

The last attribute is putting the customer first. The involvement of customer, listening on the part of the nurse and following through in a timely manner are some of the ways of putting customers first through therapeutic communication and sharing the knowledge with the customer.

5. Conclusion

In nursing practice, relationship development is needed as a key to enhance the nursing care. The nursing research and literature have addressed the importance of relationship development. In order for nurses to improve the relationship that develop with clients, nurses not only must increase their skills or ethical competencies but the most important aspect is known and understanding that the human has uniqueness aspect. Nursing educators not only teaching relationship development to nursing students, but also to be a role model for the students how to create therapeutic relationship with client, another profession and also can synergy with the environment.

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