

Title:

Teaching Spiritual Care – A Grounded Theory Study among Undergrad Nursing Teachers

Author:

Pamela H Cone¹; Tove Giske, RN, PhD²

Content:

Aim. The study aim was to explore teachers' understanding of spirituality and how they prepare undergraduate nursing students to recognize spiritual cues and learn to provide spiritual care.

Background. Nursing education addresses patient care in all domains of the person. Systematic teaching and supervision of students to prepare them to assist patients spiritually is an important part of holistic care. However, limited teaching content and research addresses what or how teachers can best facilitate student learning.

Design & Method. Grounded Theory was used to identify teachers' main concern and develop a substantive theory. Data collected in 2008-2009 during semi-structured interviews at three Norwegian University Colleges in five focus groups with 19 undergraduate nursing teachers were analyzed through constant comparison of transcribed interviews until categories emerged and were saturated.

Results. The participants' main concern, 'How to help students recognize cues and learn ways of providing spiritual care', was resolved by 'Journeying with Students through their Maturation Process'. This basic social process has three iterative phases developing throughout the nursing program: 'Preparing Students to Recognize the Essence of Spirituality', 'Supporting Student Learning of Spiritual Care Strategies', and 'Developing Student Competencies in Spiritual Care'.

Conclusion. Nursing education must prepare students to recognize and act on spiritual cues. Making spiritual assessment and interventions more visible and explicit throughout nursing programs, in both classroom and clinical settings, will facilitate student maturation as they integrate theoretical learning into practice. Student and teacher dialogue about this theory will inform all concerned and enhance the practice of spiritual care.

¹ Azusa Pacific University, Nursing, pcone@apu.edu

² Associate Professor, Haraldsplass Deaconess University College and Haraldsplass Deaconess Hospital, Ulriksdal 10, 5009 Bergen, Norway, tove.giske@haraldsplass.no