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## **The Bridge of understanding-Mastering the gap between nurse students' initial understanding and the profounder understanding of patients' spiritual needs**

Author:

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### **Content:**

*Aim:* The main aim of this presentation is to describe how nurse students perceive patients' spiritual needs and how this can be met. Secondly, to explore if there are any differences between students who are in the beginning of their education and those who are at the end of their education concerning their understanding of patients' spiritual needs.

*Summary of the presentation:* The preliminary results from three focus-group interviews with nursing students in the beginning of their education show that they were open about patients' spiritual needs. They saw patients' need for having company, be listened to and having respect. The same time they could find it difficult, because spiritual needs are very personal, they had lack of knowledge and it was difficult to talk with nurses about it. It could be felt impossible to take conversations, because they feel uncomfortable and insecure. There is a gap between student's initial positive understanding of patients' spiritual needs and their understanding of on a deeper level. This gap can cause functional paralysis for students in their later daily praxis. There is need for a theoretical framework which can be the bridge to an ethical understanding for patients' spiritual needs, from an initial understanding to a deeper understanding. This may positively contribute to students' respond to patients' spiritual needs. For this ethical understanding is used Paul Tillich's theological idea of the power of love, the idea of "ultimate concern" and the idea of human beings' longing for God or an Idol.

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