

Caritas

“You have to know the past to understand the present” -Carl Sagan

To understand what influence Caritas has had on me, I need to reflect on where I was at the beginning of this RN to BSN journey. To outline this reflection, I will utilize four main patterns of knowing as described by Carper (1978). Before this program I had sporadically heard about Jean Watson and her Caritas processes from nursing leadership as well as other BSN RNs. The importance of these guiding processes was not discovered until my mindset towards nursing was challenged on day one of this program. Nursing to me was a job that I was good at, and I enjoyed. I felt great satisfaction at the end of a shift knowing I was doing good for others. However, I always felt like I could do “more”. I wasn’t sure what this “more” was, but I was hopeful that my journey to becoming a BSN RN would soon yield a more defined direction towards enlightenment.

Empirics: Caritas process number three describes the theoretic aspects of nursing which serve as a foundation for development of transpersonal relationships. Caritas process number four pronounces the importance of creating and sustaining trust, which I have come to realize is extremely invaluable. The “science of nursing” before this program was simply the information gleaned from an anatomy, microbiology, or other core class book. Now the “science of nursing” describes and motivates my “why” I am a nurse. Applying this knowledge now gives me a new perspective on nursing, and the impact we have on others. Rather than simply caring for a patient by passing meds or other basic interventions, I now view nursing with a wholistic approach.

Esthetics: Caritas six, seven, nine, and ten are continually defining the “art of nursing” for me. Being less task oriented and more healing oriented has rejuvenated my love for being a

nurse. This BSN perspective of transpersonal nursing with a focus on Caritas processes has changed my whole bedside manner. I am less stressed about time schedules and more focused on increasing the quality of my care. Being involved in many committees and pursuing my staff nurse four has presented many challenges as well as opportunities to help shape the dynamic field of nursing.

Personal Knowledge: Caritas process one and two describe my interactions with my patients. I now place higher value the stories and advice my patient's share with me at the bedside. Before, I viewed these stories as a distraction and an obstacle to my time management that I had to overcome. Whereas now, establishing these authentic relationships has become enjoyable and a personal goal to connect with each patient. These compassion-based interactions are bi-directional yielding satisfaction for both my patients as well as for myself. Caritas process number eight flourishes from my interactions as a nurse, a caretaker, and more importantly a human seeking connection with others. I willingly pursue having a meaningful discussion rather than simply completing the task and moving on.

Ethical: Practicing nursing with integrity, builds trust which fosters the right environment for healing. My patients feel they can depend on me. Not only to complete the tasks which facilitates their healing, but also the notion that I have their best interest as the paramount guiding principle of my care. Since enrolling in this BSN program, I feel more empowered as a nurse, I place more worth on being an advocate for the patient even in cases where no one else will. My manager and other coworkers have told me recently that I should apply for leadership positions as I demonstrate many characteristics of a leader on the unit. This program has positively refined my moral code reshaping my encounters with ethical issues concerning patients, families, and co-workers.

Early in the program Jean Watson and her Caritas processes as well as Carpers ways of knowing were introduced to my nursing praxis. I now realize these theorists coupled with other knowledge I have gained from this program has helped define the “more” that I had been searching for.

Reference

Carper, B. A. (1978). Fundamental patterns of knowing in nursing. *ANS Advances in Nursing Science (1)* 1, 13-23.