

In the words of Plato "As you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without head, or head without the body, so neither" ought you attempt to cure the body without soul.... for the part can never be well unless the whole is well." Religious faith is very important in the personal life of an individual. It has been recognised as a powerful factor in physical healing and convalescence even though it can not be measured. A person is composed of body, mind and spirit. When the physical domain of an individual is compromised, the mind and the spirit are also involved.

Although health is defined as "state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." But, the modern system of health care looks after just the physical health care alone. While it is a step towards more humane care when a physician or Nurse offers comfort and consolation to distressed patient. So, spiritual care is often lost in the way medicine is practiced today. Changing culture of medicine itself, as it becomes more responsive to the imperative of business, is making spiritual care difficult to find.

There is a wide debate about placement of spiritual science within hierarchy of other sciences, spiritual science is not precisely measurable or empirically verifiable. But, at present there is a whole new breed of scientists documenting that spiritual intervention & mystical openness are valid, measurable and that

spiritual intervention also works effectively, for illness & disease. There is a mechanism by which faith, belief & imagination are unlocking the mysteries of healing.

In modern medical practice, we look for outside solutions. The doctor, the guru, the specialist the

SPIRITUAL NURSING

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scientist & so on along with chemicals and drugs. And, when they fail we turn to God as the ultimate healer. Much of the modern medicine involves correcting the chemical condition within the body.

Spirituality is a broad concept encompassing values & purposes. It is experienced when one turns inward & explores human capacities of honesty, love, care, wisdom, imagination & compassion. Spirituality can be described as a human need to search for the meaning and purpose of life. There is something in each of us that seeks spirituality. It is conscious seeking of light of the truth or connection with the source & this is the beginning point of those who quest to integrate spirituality into their nursing practice.

*During day to day care of patient the spirituality of patient is not always assessed or considered as part of their care. However, spirituality is very important aspect of client treatment. Meeting the spiritual needs of client has become a recognized part of nursing. Nursing care is not only to heal or prevent illness of the client, "but to help those, who are healthy or unwell to use the power within themselves as they evolve

towards the higher level of consciousness." Dennis

conducted one of the first empirical studies of Nurses' spirituality with the purpose to discover and describe the components of spiritual care by Nurses who provide such care. Data suggest that spiritual care is not a separate part of nursing care but, is an integral part. Nurses believe that human spirit is at the core of every client's existence

and power that heals. Their goal was to bring forth the inner powers and nourish subdued spirit. It is all about how to call forth the inner power and empower personality. Nurses and Doctors working in hospital setting need empowerment if this kind of care is to be given. One must be aware of their spirituality in order to assist other in fulfilling their spiritual needs.

Emerging nursing model (i.e. Newman Rogers, Travelbee and Watson) address spirituality directly in terms of human needs. Watson states that future of nursing belongs to caring more than curing and that entire profession is in the process of redefinition. We are emerging from a traditional practice of objective rational detachment into something far greater. Part of greatness includes in renaissance of a holistic approach. The human caring process has an energy field of its own, that exceeds the sum of each individual. We must remember that caring occurs in the metaphysical realm. We cannot see the realm, we can experience it.

Healing implies the restoration of all relationships. Total health depends upon how we relate to the universe. Being spiritual changes the internal physiological

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response to environment. Circumstances thereby allowing a more adaptive behavioural response to life pressure. It provides physiological and psychological rest, necessary for the body to replace chemical resources, depleted by fight or fear responses, excessive fear, anger and chronic distress. Thus, when the spiritual thoughts (meditation) of a person is added to traditional approaches in treatment of psychological and psychosomatic disease, be their behavioural, psychoanalytical or psychopharmacologic treatment, patient improves at the rate much faster than usual. Combination of spiritual belief with other therapeutic methods greatly enhance the rate of progress with many patients.

Such care also makes patients more satisfied with their medical treatment and care. In the emerging medical market place where patients often have the option to choose between competing health plans, satisfaction level will no doubt enter the equation of their very personal decision. A sour experience can lead patients to go elsewhere for care while pleasing ones translate into loyalty. There is an added medical value of an empathic physician or Nurses attuned to patients, able to listen and be heard. This means fostering "relationship-centered care" recognizing that the relationship between Nurse and patient is itself a factor of significance.

Individual in spiritual distress has defining characteristic; including anger against deity or question about the meaning of suffering being experienced. They have night-mares, cry, act hostile or in apathetic manner, express anger or resentment against

religious figure and sometime ceases to participate in religious practice.

What needs to be done for person with spiritual distress is that includes the client's ability to experience forgiveness, connection to religion or cultural ties, reaffirmation of faith or commitment to internal values, decrease feeling of guilt over past action and internal peace.

Patient in spiritual distress needs a medical professional to offer support through active listening to demonstrate concern and care and to be available and sensitive to expressed need. Helping the patient by encouraging expression of thoughts and feeling, talking about conflict and their causes, seeking source of strength and faith, encouraging the use of prayers and scriptures, directly participate with patient when patient expresses need without forcing own values, religious thoughts on to client, providing privacy to meet spiritual need, being open to the client without definition and judgment is just what is needed. Other thoughtful ways of meeting the need of the patient may be provided by spiritual advisor when requested, place a prayer book within reach, allow a place for religious rituals. Rearrange meal for fasting or special diet or allow food to be brought from home. Any means by which nursing care can allow the patient to continue to practice his faith should be used because it will speed up the healing process and shorten the time of convalescence.

Nurses are human beings also, with human value and perhaps spiritual belief. During day to day nursing care, the spirituality can be very important aspect of clients treatment. It is important to be

able to separate one's own belief from the beliefs of others so as not to impose one's own belief. It is important to be aware of one's own attitude so that our own attitude does not interfere with the responsibilities as a health care professional.

Having mentioned the word divinity which means the manifestation of God in all its perceptivity - when does God come into this picture of disease and its cure? As is said, man in form of a doctor has his power limited and it is for this reason we invoke the blessings of God to cure all ailments. To support us in this the vedas, upanishads and holy scriptures come to our aid. "When the body is diseased and about to perish, it is God who becomes healer and restores one's health. Being spiritual helps in attaining internal purity i.e., our soul is purified and thereby we are able to resist diseases.

It is time for medicine to take more methodical advantage of the link between spiritual and health. What is now the exception could and should be a part of mainstream so that a more caring medicine is available to of us. For some, it could even speed up the course of recovery. As nursing redefines, it will reincorporate some of the forgotten aspects of our heritage - the role of spirit.

References

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