Fall Prevention: Incorporating Jean Watson’s Human Caring Theory – An Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Approach
Emma B. Belisario, BSN, RN
Michael E. DeBakey VA Hospital
Michael Mistrick, Mary Anne Reese, Sheila Richey

Problem: Falls, a safety and cost issue for hospitalized surgical patients, increased on the step-down surgical unit in spite of implementing current fall prevention measures. Watson's Caring Theory, a component of the Professional Model of Care, guides this project to reduce the number of falls on a step-down surgical unit.

Evidence: Even with the implementation of fall prevention programs in acute care settings, falls continue to be a safety issue for hospitalized surgical patients. None of the reviewed fall studies incorporated Jean Watson's Caritas Processes.

Strategy/Practice Change: The initial step to implement change is for staff to identify, discuss, and recognize patient care issues that may be improved through evidence-based practice (Myers & Meccariello, 2006). The current C-A-T-C-H Program (Collaborative Interdisciplinary Practice, Active Leadership Engagement, Technology Support for Processes, Communication Strategy, Housewide Culture Change), along with Watson’s Caritas Processes were reviewed with the staff. Licensed and unlicensed staff will record the Caritas Processes used when providing bedside care during their shift. Fall education was reinforced with the staff nurses.

Evaluation: The theory of human caring preserves dignity, harmony, and a healing environment which helps to improve patient outcomes, patient satisfaction, and nurse satisfaction (Watson, 2008).

Results: Nurses identified Watson’s Caritas Processes used in interactions with Veterans. The most frequently used Process was practice of loving kindness and equanimity within context of caring consciousness (f =354, mean = 3.4) and the least common Process was creative use of self and all ways of knowing as part of the caring process; to engage in artistry of caring-healing practices (f = 117, mean = 3.1). The number of patient falls per 1,000 days decreased from 4 to 1 for a 3 month period.

Recommendations/Lessons Learned: Teamwork enhances the culture of safety for patients and staff. Staff should understand what patient’s value in care so they can apply that knowledge in practice. Staff nurses should embrace the Caritas Processes during patient-nurse interactions /teaching moments.

Bibliography:


