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IDEAS AND INFLUENCES

How an active learning initiative identified shared decision making as a key influence in patient care

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Introduction

In this short piece, we discuss how a surgical nursing team identified shared decision making from the Person-Centred Nursing Framework (McCormack and McCance, 2010) as an important influence for the care process within one team.

The Person-centred Nursing Framework articulates four constructs for how nurses can achieve person-centred care:

- Prerequisites
- Care environment
- Person-centred processes
- Expected outcomes

The framework highlights the relationships between the constructs and provides an acknowledgment that the attributes of the nurse (prerequisites) and care environment need to be explored in order to achieve person-centred care (McCormack and McCance, 2010).

Background

In 2012, teams involved with the Essentials of Care (EoC) programme, a New South Wales Health practice development based programme (NSW Health, 2009) sustained their interest with the programme over the festive period using a creative initiative (Drayton, 2013). Due to the success of that initiative, EoC programme facilitators requested a similar one the following year and the creative active learning initiative in 2013 was for teams to choose the care processes from the framework that best represented a strength on their ward/unit. The creative aspect was that this should be done through the decoration of either a star or wreath to demonstrate their chosen care process.

The Ambulatory Procedure Centre is a 44 bed day surgery unit in a tertiary teaching hospital in New South Wales. The centre's team has been involved with the EoC programme for four years and participated in the previous year's festive active learning initiative.

Identifying the care process

To engage staff in thinking about the care processes, EoC facilitators in the unit developed two key questions for their colleagues:

1. What 'inner petal' on the Person-Centred Nursing Framework best suits our practice?
2. What EoC projects have we completed that correlate with any of the care processes in the framework?

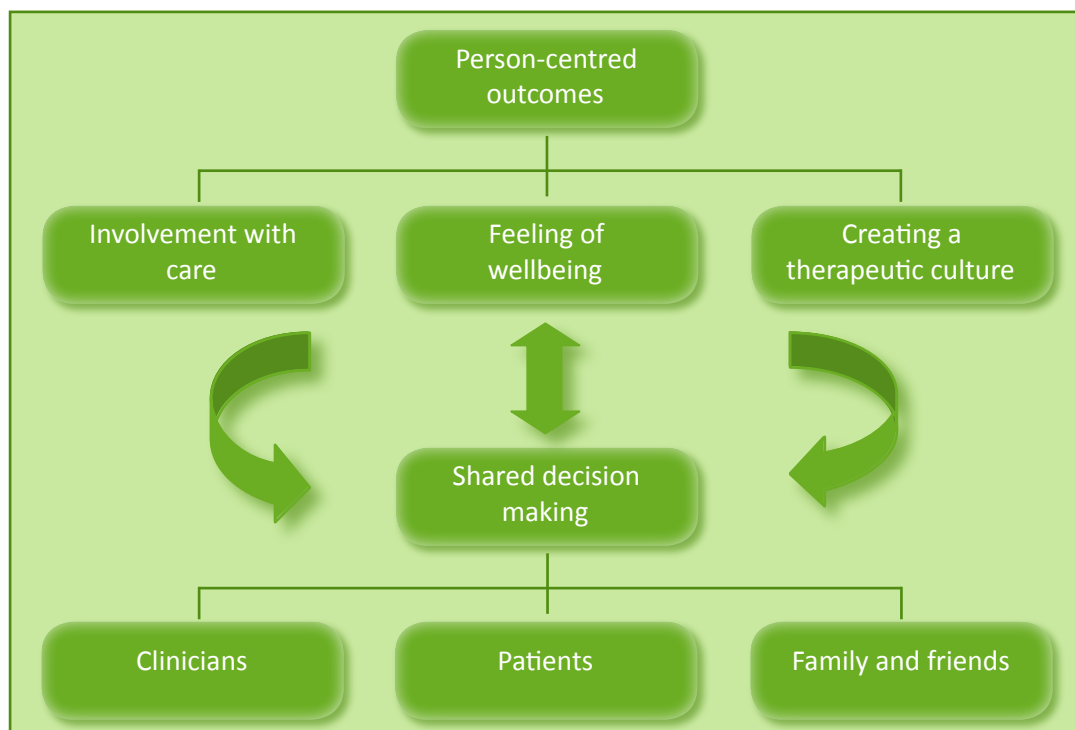
Claims, concerns and issues, reflection and critical conversations were the active learning methods used to guide the staff through the two questions. Thoughts, feelings and expressions were captured and displayed in the medication room so staff could add their suggestions. The facilitators felt a whole team approach to the initiative was fundamental (Dewing, 2010).

During one of the active learning sessions, it was identified that the unit's value statement had a strong emphasis on shared decision making. The team felt it would be helpful to develop a new shared value statement that defined their values about decision making:

'APC considers shared decision making as the integration of a patient's values, goals and concerns with the best available evidence about benefits, risks and uncertainties of treatment, in order to achieve appropriate healthcare decisions. In partnership with their clinician, patients are encouraged to consider available screening, treatment, or management options and the likely benefits and harms of each, to communicate their preferences and help select the course of action that best fits them.'

In addition to the values statement, the team developed a flowchart to represent the relationships between shared decision making and person-centered outcomes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Shared decision making flowchart



The challenge then was to decorate the festive wreath so that it clearly showed what the team valued. Creative methods discussed in a paper by McCormack et al. (2011) were used as a guide. The main objective was to have sufficient pictures, colours and succinct written information to ensure the audience of patients, visitors and staff understood the message.

The team identified three key design strategies:

- To use colour and texture to capture the feelings and emotions of the staff
- To ensure the creativity was as dynamic, outstanding and eye-catching as possible to draw in the audience
- To use words from the team's values to highlight the key message behind the design of the wreath

All 10 wards and units that entered the competition had their stars and wreaths displayed in the largest hospital foyer of the local health district during the week leading up to the Christmas/holiday period. Staff, patients and families were invited to vote for their favourite display. The Ambulatory Procedure Centre unit's wreath received 400 votes, making it the overall winner.

Figure 2. The Ambulatory Procedure Centre unit's wreath



When the creative activity began, the unit's nursing team had not foreseen that the competition would be a positive way of bringing the team together. However, while taking part in the competition, the team members reflected on aspects of their practice and redefined their values; thus they highlighted the importance of shared decision making as a key component of their core business. The challenge created excitement among the team and resulted in more people taking part and contributing, which also led to the team generating ideas for future projects.

'The organisation donated a hamper for the winners of the competition, which provided a great incentive for the team. It was fun competing with colleagues from other wards and units. A healthy challenge always helps in getting staff to drive and lead a project' (unit staff member).

Providing opportunities for staff to improve understanding of practice development theory is often a challenge for facilitators and co-ordinators of practice development based programmes. All staff that participated in the festive competition felt they gained a greater understanding of the Person-Centred Nursing Framework and how it relates to the EoC programme and patient care. The initiative also highlighted the importance of engaging staff through active learning approaches and critical thinking as an effective way to meet their learning needs.

In summary, the main idea was centred around the Person-Centred Nursing Framework, and the influence that emerged was shared decision making. Taking part in a creative challenge together enabled a fun element to further the team's understanding of the framework. With an increase in the number of teams entering the 'competition' from the previous year, the ongoing challenge for the festivities in 2014 will be thinking of a new and meaningful initiative.

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