

# The concept analysis of dignity



The endeavor of this task is to discuss about the concept of dignity with its meaning and characteristics. Moreover, this task will also reveal the relevance of dignity and identify the obstacles of its application in nursing practice. The concept dignity has become a basic concern in health care practice as well as day to day life. In addition, dignity is one of the important virtues which nurse needs to acquire in providing quality patient care.

Nurses can achieve a positive relationship with patient by involving dignity in their working environment. So, it is significant to explore the term dignity in relation to nursing practice.

## **Defining the concept**

The concept of dignity has essential value in our life. There have been many attempts made by researchers to find out the meaning of dignity and its characteristics. The term dignity is a complex and has various aspects in human life. Haddock (1996) stated that there is no particular definition of dignity but it is used in differently in different situations of human life. The word dignity originated from two Latin word ‘dignitus’ which means ‘morit’ and dignus meaning worth (Hofman, 2002). Dignity is defined as the quality or state of being worthy, honored, or esteemed. It is a two-pronged professional value, respect for the dignity of others – other-regarding value and respect for one’s own dignity – self-directed value(Lam, 2007). It is the term used to give worthiness and value to others as well as self respect.

Moreover, according to Spiegelberg distinguished two uniqueness of dignity. They are intrinsic dignity and extrinsic dignity in which former is inner self-assessment of own worth and later is reaction bestowed by others. Mairis (1996) suggested that “dignity exists when an individual is capable of

exerting control over his or her behaviors; surroundings and the way in which he or she should be capable of understand the situation and making decision, Therefore, he or she should feel comfort with his or her physical and psychosocial status”. Dignity means one is able to make his/her own independent decisions. Further, self control has an important role to get respect as well as to be dignified. Dignity is concern with how people feel, think and behave in relation to the worth or value of themselves and others. Thus, everyone has unique and equal right as well as self respect, and dignity can be found when the people behave, speak, and show their standard. Raeve (1996) illustrated that dignity is based on respecting and preserving own moral identity. In this context, dignity is conserved only when an individual respect his/her own moral values. Therefore to maintain dignity a person needs to keep their moral identity. According to Gallagher (2004) explained that “ All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Dignity is a fundamental right of an individual. Haddock(1996) defined dignity is the ability to feel important and valuable in relation to other, communicate this to other, be treated as such by other, in context which are perceived as threatening, dignity is a dynamic subjective belief but also has a shared meaning among humanity. There are human dignity and social dignity. In this context, human dignity is the one that all people have in their life and social dignity is experienced through interaction and can be lost or gained, threatened, violated and promoted. Curtin (1997) Suggested that basic human right, freedom, control, and integrity are also necessary for healthy development, there basic right they aspect of dignity. Mairis (1994) identified

characteristics of dignity as the maintenances of self- respect, self-esteem, and abrasion of individual standards, which give little consideration unless one becomes vulnerable as anticipates their loss. Moreover, the concept of dignity is considered as a multidimensional concept which consists of mainly three components, dignity of identity, human rights and autonomy. This can be maintained and compromised by behavior of an individual and their environment. Furthermore it is interrelated with person's moral values. Therefore the notion is identified to be an important aspect in human life as well as health care professional's needs to maintain dignity in order to provide individualized care.

### **How to dignity relevance in nursing practice**

Respect for dignity appears as a central value within nursing practice. Therefore, nurses and other health care professionals are frequently encouraged to respect the dignity of patients and others. Thus, concept of dignity has significant role in care provision. When dignity is absent from care, patient feel devalued, lacking control and comfort. According to Gallagher (2004) proposed that dignity in nursing practice should be considered both objectively and subjectively. Dignity as an objective concept is the basis of human rights, where it is seen as a “ value”, which a person has purely because they are human, and is therefore stable and enduring. Whereas dignity as a subjective concept includes the idea that it can be experienced and allows for individual differences to be taken into account. In nursing profession nurses needs to give respect of patient rights, cultural rights, the right to life and choice. Respect in nursing profession means being kind and good to the clients. Patient dignity is promoted when nursing

staff provides privacy and use interactions with clients in which patient feel comfortable. Pokorny (1997) recognized how critically ill patient preserved dignity and found the attributes of dignity as privacy, control, independence, competence and caring the presence of the nurses was the key intervention which affected patient dignity. They may also lack confidence, they not able to make decisions for themselves, and feel humiliated, embarrassed and humiliated. Dignity is not seen by eyes but it is felt with individual behavior, stander, speech, body language. . Mairis (1994) stated that dignity can be promoted or diminished in care situations by the physical environment organizational culture the attitudes and behavior of nurses and other and the way in which care activities are carried out. This means that first nurses need to know what dignity means for the patient then asses them and maintain good relationship with patients. Dignity is a dynamic subjective belief but also has a shared meaning among humanity. Castledine (1996) illustrated that dignity as a respect and dignity can only be measured by knowing what these term mean to the patient, this requires nurses to give more thought to how they asses and communicate with elderly people it means is the ability to feel important and valuable in relation to other. According to Gallagher et al (2008) dignity in care provisions to the people identified that concern about dignity are related to four themes: the care environment, staff attitudes and behavior, the culture of care and specific care activates for example, personal care” Patient dignity is promoted when staff provide privacy and use interactions that help patients to feel comfortable and control and valued. Staff behavior has a major impact which can promote or diminish dignity in patients. Geyman(1983) listed dignity as one of the five basic requirements that must be satisfied in caring for dying

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patients. Therefore, the nurses have to give dignified care especially when they deliver care to the dying patient. There are numerous barriers which can hinder the maintenance of dignity in patient care. These hindrances includes the work load of the staff, lack of time and stress, situations or behaviors such as rude, impatience, angry, lack of privacy, diagnosis associated with disease condition(Lam, 2007). Furthermore, some hospital protocols also oppose the nurse to show dignity towards the patients. Therefore, it is discovered from above analysis that nurses owe same duties to self as others including responsibilities to preserve dignity in nursing practice in spite of its obstacles in nursing practice. In addition it also helps in promoting competence and to continue personal and professional growth.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the meaning, definitions and characteristics of dignity have been analysed with literature support in this assignment. In addition, the significant role of the concept dignity and dignity diminishing strategies in nursing practices were also identified in this piece of work. The above perspectives of different authors distinguished that the concept has utmost importance in care provision in order to maintain good interpersonal relationship between nurses and health care professionals. Therefore, respecting and giving worthiness to the patient assist a nurse to maintain dignity in health care practices. Moreover, recognizing its function in nursing practice also helps a nurse to deliver quality care to the patient.