How can a nurse improve and develop professional identity?

According to DeJong 2014, professionalism can be defined as the means of acting in an acceptable and appropriate way while adhering to a professional code of conduct. It also means completing given tasks and responsibilities on time. On the other hand a Professional identity can be described as a set of principles that define a person in their professional career. A professional identity can also be defined according to the attitudes, beliefs, experiences, ideals, professional involvement, need for advancement and codes of a given career. These virtues determine the kind of people we interact with in our lines of profession. These experiences and professional interactions tend to define one's professional identity.

In the line of nursing professionalism is significantly essential if nurses are expected to provide quality and effective services and care to their clients and to the population as a whole. In health care Professionalism is regarded as a bridge between the interests of the nurse and the needs of society. It is evident that better professionalism is associated with good medical care and better health outcomes in general. (DeJong et al 2014).

Nurses need to be able to develop and improve their imaginative and creative skills in order to attain and improve effective patient care. In a research by O'Brien, StrzyzewskiandSzpara2013, on nurses working in the surgical department it was found that by creating an organized process of educational projects to encourage, support and promote professionalism nurses were able to improve their professional identity and complete their practice successfully safely and effectively. In order to achieve the best results Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) and Educational Nurse Coordinators (ENCs) in the surgical unit developed meetings for nurses with the medical

librarians and unit leaders. Teaching was carried out by use of posters and oral presentations. Through this nurses were able to master effective ways of generating ideas and implementing them to complete projects. (O'Brien, StrzyzewskiandSzpara2013).

There are many factors that influence professional competence for nurses for example organization of work, personal characteristics, cognitive abilities and clinical knowledge. In order for a nurse to be able to undergo Professional growth they need to be committed to their work in order to able to fulfill their work tasks. Professional identity is usually accompanied by the workers' self-concept; self-respect, identity, essential nature, team spirit and values. Moreover for a nurse to improve their professional identity they need to be flexible and resilient in their field of work. This means that nurses need to believe in oneself and be willing to take risks. In addition to that they have a career insight in order to be able to establish realistic career goals by being aware of their strengths and weaknesses. (Tamm 2010).

There are some inevitable factors in the health sector that demand for professional growth and that has impact on the management, employers and the employees. First creation of new knowledge, there are changes in the scientific and technical knowledge every few years which demand nurses to update their education levels from time to time. Secondly technological innovations are taking place so rapidly that nurses have to be willing to sharpen their skills and change with the changing times. Lastly, the upcoming of more challenging tasks demands for professional development in order for nurses to be able to cope efficiently. (Willetts and Clarke 2012).

Development of professional identity according to Tamm 2010, starts with how individuals view their work roles and how good they manage their work life and related practices. Moreover professional identity is a process of becoming independent and having self-awareness through work. For a nurse to be able to develop and improve their identity they first have to have a professional self-concept and respect, in short they need to accept their roles as nurses. Nurses begin to build their professional identities during their study period and continue to develop all through their work life. Development of professional identity is a life course process comprising of different stages. Which range from novice to expert. (Tamm et al 2010).

In conclusion development is accompanied by professional maturity which is a nurse's preparedness to handle work tasks in different phases of their work. Nurses need to be cognitively prepared, this means that they need to have sufficient knowledge on principles of health care to be able to apply them in real life situations. In additional to that nurse need to have knowledge on the nature of the profession and the occupational sphere. (Willetts et al 2012).

In my opinion there are numerous number of factors that have effect on the development and improvement on a nursing professional identity. I have learnt a lot of new information from this assignment. It is a broad topic and I feel I still have a whole lot more to learn about developing my professional identity in the future.

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