

Dignity has become  
an important concept  
especially in health  
care practices



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Dignity has become an important concept especially in health care practices. It is totally related to the human life, and is associated with the internal and external respect of the person which is related to culture and social aspects (Anderberg 2007). Dignity is an identification of the person and respect of the individual. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the concept in relation to nursing practice. Moreover, this piece of work will be focused to understand the concept of dignity with its meaning and characteristics along with literature support. Further, the scope of dignity and obstacles of this concept in nursing practice will also be discussed in this assignment.

## **DEFINITION**

In daily life the use of term dignity or dignified is common. There have been many attempts made to define dignity in different aspect of our life by the researchers. But, the meaning of this concept remains complex and unclear (Jacokson, 2002). The word dignity originated from two Latin words ‘dignitus’ which means ‘morit’ and dignus meaning worth (Hofman 2002) . So, it is the concept used for giving worthiness and respect to an individual

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and others.. According to Widang and Fridlund (2003) dignity is related to a person' autonomy or practical self determination and integrity, while categories dignity as being a component of integrity, alone with self respect and confidents. The term is connected with independence of an individual to give respect to others as well as self respect. Dignity is related to one's identity as a person and is related to self respect and concepts such as integrity (Diana Lee 2008). Dignity exists when an individual is capable of exerting control over his or her behavior surrounding and the way in which he or she is treated by other. He or she should be capable of understanding information and making decision (Mairis 1994). Dignity is maintained only when an individual control his behavior in different situation. A person dignity represents his or her true worth and ability, Moreover, it is a reflection of the choices that individuals make for themselves their values, ideals, conduct and lifestyle (Jonson 1990). Therefore, from the above context the characteristics of dignity are individual identity and their moral values are interrelated each other. Gallagher (2008) concluded that the dignity is a quality, an excellence or moral virtue of the person, a quality that contributes to human flourishing or happiness and one in which one can err in terms of excess or deficiency . Dignity is the virtue of an individual which helps him to remain in happiness. According to Raz (2001) dignity is concerned with how people feel, think and behave in relation to the worth or value of themselves and others. To treat someone with dignity is to treat them as being of worth, in a way that is respectful of them as valued individuals. When dignity is present people feel control, valued, confident, comfortable and able to make decisions for them selves. When dignity is absent people feel devalued, and lacking in control and comfort. They may <https://assignbuster.com/dignity-has-become-an-important-concept-especially-in-health-care-practices/>

lack confidence and be unable to make decisions for themselves. They may feel humiliated, embarrassed or ashamed. Dignity applies equally to those who have capacity and to those who lack it. Everyone has equal worth as human beings and must be treated as if they are able to feel, think and behave in relation to their own worth or value. Therefore, nurses should treat all people in all settings and of any health status with dignity, and dignified care should continue after death. Anderberg, (2007). affirmed that ' dignity is a concept that relates to basic humanity. It consists of inherent and external dimensions, which are common for all humans and at the same time are unique for each person, relating to social and culture aspects. Dignity in terms of unconditional and relative values that can change over time and are related to over culture and society. Haddock (1996) stated that dignity is the ability to feel important and valuable in relation to other, communicate this to others, and be treated as such others, in contexts which are perceived as threatening. According to Edlund. (2002) Dignity can be considered both subjectively and objectively with regard to basic human rights. It is a dynamic subjective belief but also has a shared meaning among humanity. According to Street Broadent (2005) identified dignity as being embodied and socially constructed over time, as well as being a subjective, multidimensional, situational and contextual concept.

## **Relevance of dignity in nursing practice**

The concept dignity has great influence on care provision. As nurses deal with patients with health challenges, the dignity of the clients should be the utmost concern. Moreover, nurses can ensure necessary steps to nurture, preserve and protect client's values and respect . Raz (2001) concluded that

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the nurse who delivers care to the patient and their relatives including cares, needs acknowledgement for preserving and recognition of their intrinsic worth as human beings and of their individual identity. Matiti(2002) stated that dignity can apply equally applied in persons those who lack and have, and everyone has equal importance as human being and must be stated as equal. If they are able to feel and work in relation to their own merit.

Moreover, while providing care to the patient, nurse can maintain dignity through the effective relationship, encouraging the health status and should continuous after death. According to Seedhouse (2000) dignity is a fundamental right for all, it is used to make a person well being in society. Thus, dignity helps to make a self respect between persons. In this context, dignity is concerned with paying attention to the needs of the patient's especially geriatric people. Moreover, maintaining dignity in people can enhance the societal values. Every person has different achievement with regards for their own dignity and these perceptions may change in relation to the level of health. Walsh and Kowanko's (2002) concluded that patients feel that privacy is involved in the promotion of dignity. It helps to maintaining the innate and internal respect of the patient. Understanding the emotional feeling of the patient helps a nurse to deliver quality of care to a patient. Chochinov et. al, (2002) suggested that dignity in relation to terminally ill people as a resilient construct that requires end of life care that promotes dignity in various way. Dignity of an individual can therefore be considered as of particular relevance when it comes to elderly people in vulnerable situations. According to Kowanko (2002) many nurses started that the patient should not be seen as an object or body alone, all patients are embodied beings. The nurses has to preserve the right of a patient as well as

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treat them with dignity in all circumstances whether the patient is conscious and unconscious. In nursing practice, maintenance of dignity is affected by certain situations. According to Gallagher (2008) inherent in nursing is respect for human being rights, including cultural rights, the rights to life and choice, to dignity and to be treated with respect. There is, then, agreement within nursing codes that respect for dignity is important more so and that nurses have obligations to respect the dignity of patients. However, what this requires is not made explicit and there is no agreement that dignity is a necessary element in nursing practice. In dignity concept nurses should be good listener and give respect to other human rights. et al (2009) dignity is a therapy means psychotherapy the aim of dignity to reduce the spiritual distress and psychological distress to patients and their families. This therapy can be given at the bedside to help both patients and their families. Moreover, it usually gives to old people in home, but nurse has to understand the feeling, moral and understand the problem of patient and give spiritual support to the patient. Cynthia et al(2004) identified providing dignified care to the patient is achieved through teamwork of health professional. Sometimes this teamwork chain may break due to poor communication with each other. Without an effective effort of a multidisciplinary team a dignified care environment cannot be sustained. Secondly, nurses have to inform and has to give explanation about the interventions or else the relationship between nurse and patients can diminish. Moreover, whenever delivering care to the patient such as catheterization and assisting in personal care, nurses have to provide privacy because lack of privacy can bring negative experience for both nurse and patient. Therefore, the identified barriers of dignity can be addressed by <https://assignbuster.com/dignity-has-become-an-important-concept-especially-in-health-care-practices/>

using effective communication and efficient nursing skills to promote dignity. Furthermore, understanding the meaning of dignity and its relevance in nursing practice can help nurses and all health care staff to promote dignity amongst them as well as towards others which ensures a positive outcome in patient care

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, different perspectives of dignity with its meaning and characteristics have been analyzed in this assignment. This assignment was helpful to understand the concept of dignity and respects ideas of the patients and their values. The concept of dignity was therefore considered as most significant tool in maintaining and promoting good interpersonal relationship. This piece of work was also helpful to understand how to provide dignity in order to give quality care in nursing practice. Furthermore, this insight will provide the foundation for novel and compassionate approach to support the people in health care practices.