Components of a healing hospital

A healing physical environment, a culture of radical loving care and integration of technology are all key components of a healing hospital. These three very important factors must be taken into consideration for a healing hospital to be successful. Instituting these three components and integrating them into a hospital can be very challenging at best with many barriers which need to be overcome. In this paper, a discussion of the three components and investigation of the challenges and barriers that healing hospitals must conquer will be presented.

One component of a healing hospital is creating a healing physical environment. This means a quiet environment so patients can sleep which enables their cells to regenerate much faster and accelerates the healing process (Eberst, 2006). To promote a quiet environment, physical changes in the hospital may need to occur if they are not already in place. A few examples of physical changes are carpeted patient care areas, putting a silencer on cleaning machines and instituting a policy of no overhead paging unless there is an emergent situation (Eberst, 2006). The quiet environment also has a secondary advantage of creating a stress free environment for patients, families, employees and all other health care personnel (Eberst, 2006).

Another component is fostering a culture of radical loving care which is considered the most important of the three. Radical loving care occurs when all employees join together and commit to creating an environment of caring focused on each and every patient (Chapman, 2003). For example, a patient turns on their call light and the administrator or a maintenance employee is walking down the hallway, the administrator or maintenance employee sees

the light and immediately, without hesitation, goes into the patients room to see what the patients needs are. This is the true concept of radical loving care where each patient is everyone's patient. This approach encompasses the healing of patients by not only meeting their physical needs but also their spiritual and emotional needs (Eberst, 2006).

The last component is integrating technology into the hospital. First, it is important that we find ways to provide patients with more privacy and security (Eberst, 2006). This will allow them the preservation of their dignity during their hospitalization which can be a very stressful time for some patients (Eberst, 2006). Also, it is beneficial to provide patients with some in-room entertainment such as offering educational materials related to their specific problem, music and other activities (Eberst, 2006). Furthermore, having technologically advanced equipment is advantageous to the patients as it can speed up the process when getting test results in areas such as radiology, lab and so on which in turn helps to decrease the patients anxiety (Eberst, 2006).

Instituting the components needed for a healing hospital can be challenging with many barriers that will need to be overcome. First, there is the challenge of bringing the physicians, nurses and all other staff on board with the philosophy of a healing hospital (Ananth, 2009). It is imperative that there be open lines of communication between all staff members and that all staff view each patient as theirs, not hers or his (Ananth, 2009). Furthermore, when hiring employees, it is essential to look for people who are willing to go above and beyond for their patient's and peers as well as having the appropriate skills necessary for the position in which they are

applying (Eberst, 2006). Building a team who supports the philosophy of a healing hospital is imperative. when creating a culture encompassing radical loving care. Developing this culture will take the healthcare workers back to why they became healthcare workers in the first place (Eberst, 2006). This culture is based on a holistic approach to healing which involves meeting the patient's physical, spiritual and emotional needs (Eberst, 2006). The employees need to understand that they are invited into the lives of their patients during an extremely stressful time in their patient's lives and that they can make a difference with each encounter they have with that patient or the patient's family (Eberst, 2006).

Furthermore, there is the challenge of creating a healing physical environment which presents a financial barrier for most hospitals to overcome. To promote healing, it is important that the hospital is able to provide a quiet environment. There are several ways a hospital can accomplish this such as having all hallways carpeted, putting silencers on cleaning machines and allowing no overhead pages except in cases of emergencies (Eberst, 2006). However, these interventions can be costly if the hospital does not already have carpeted hallways, silencers on their machines or alternative methods of communication already in place for the staff as they would not be doing over head paging (Eberst, 2006). The benefits of a quiet environment not only creates and promotes an optimal healing environment for patient's but also provides a calmer, stress free environment for employees (Eberst, 2006).

Lastly, it is important for the healing hospital to integrate work design and technology into their hospitals for employees and patients. It is important to

find ways for staff to work more efficiently, provide additional privacy and security for patients as well as providing technologically advanced equipment that expedite test results (Eberst, 2006). For the staff, implementing an electronic medical record system will allow more efficient access to the patient's medical record. By providing additional privacy and security for patient's, this preserves the patient's dignity (Eberst, 2006). As for the technologically advanced equipment, it enables quicker test results which will decrease the patient's anxiety that often occurs with long wait times for results (Eberst, 2006). There are many other things that can be done in this area but it is important to remember that the costs of these changes are a huge barrier to most hospitals.

There is a bible verse that fits with the philosophy of a healing hospital, Jeremiah 33: 6. This passage is about health and healing of the people to enable them to enjoy abundant peace and security in their lives. The healing hospital supports the aspects of this passage. Care providers facilitate the healing of patients patient's physically, emotionally and spiritually which gives them a sense of security and peace Jeremiah 33: 6 (King James).

In conclusion, for a healing hospital to truly be successful all three components must be instituted and the barriers and challenges over come. Healing hospitals focus on all aspects of the patients needs and create an environment that is conducive to optimal healing. Every employee has a unique opportunity and the ability to have a role in the healing of all patients. The healing hospitals philosophy is centered on the holistic aspects of care and promotes care not only for the patient but also encompasses the family. All hospitals should consider instituting the philosophy of the healing

hospital as it provides compassionate care to patients and excellence in the services they provide as well as increased staff satisfaction.