

Empowerment in health promotion

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Patient empowerment within the health care setting has been constantly characterized by the autonomous self-regulation of individuals to maximize their potential for improved health and wellbeing. The empowerment of these users also involves seeking information and learning that can be applied to their own health conditions and allow them to become actively involved in making decisions for treatment. Because empowerment has been associated with the promotion of equality with regards to health as well as decisions that can affect health, attempts in allowing patients to exercise power cannot be avoided in most cases. Empowerment allows patients to identify their own health concerns and determine possible solutions to these; therefore, avoiding these occurrences may not be possible as patients will always assert their rights and capabilities for meeting their needs, solving their problems, and utilizing all available resources for them to have control over their lives. The role of nurses has always been associated with patient empowerment with which nurses have always been expected to have a shared responsibility with their patients. Over the years, patients were expected to strictly comply with the directives of health care professionals; moreover, when a treatment plan does not succeed, most often, it is the patient's fault for such occurrence. Manipulation and persuasion were also common strategies to communicate with patients and enable them to manage their conditions. Because these strategies have not been viewed as effective or reliable, particularly for those who have chronic diseases, the promotion of current models of patient empowerment cannot be avoided. Rather it will continually be carried out in order for health care professionals to provide assistance to their patients in making decisions that are

meaningful to the patients themselves. Shared information and collaboration is also exemplified through patient empowerment; because these acts have been associated with improved patient outcomes, the use of patient empowerment should continually be exercised in various medical settings. Nurses can play an important role during the empowerment process for patients, particularly through training and support. The attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by nurses also contribute to the empowering of patients, such as their attitudes with information. Informing patients with regards to the nature of their health condition, the available options for treatment, possible risks, and the recommendations of health care professionals is an important act during the empowerment process. It has been a critical issue that patients have encountered difficulties when it comes to acquiring important information that they can use to address their needs. Thus, nurses can generally improve this process by providing detailed explanations about the condition and possible outcomes with or without the use of treatment. Nurses also have the responsibility to provide the materials that can positively contribute to the involvement of patients when it comes to treatment decisions. A mutual approach to decision making can be exhibited in information that has been made simple yet reliable for patients; this way, they can have the opportunity to ask questions, take in considerations, and discuss such matters with their family members. Nurses can also empower their patients by encouraging them to manage their personal health care, such as through prevention or making important lifestyle changes. This can consequently result to increased participation and long-term satisfaction. Nurses have also been expected to assist patients in

identifying their abilities to identify risks and manage their health experiences to hamper the development of their condition and prevent further medical predicaments. Providing learning for patients with regards to safety practices, for instance, the knowledge of medication, can significantly contribute to patient safety. On the whole, nurses are can help improve patient empowerment by enhancing their partnership with patients and reinforcing knowledge, self-responsibility, and behavioral abilities.