

# Two vulnerable populations and two nursing theories



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From a healthcare perspective we see vulnerability as a person's susceptibility to disease, whether that disease is from a mental, physical, or sociological standpoint. De Chesnay & Anderson (2012) explain the idea of an entire population being vulnerable as " a public health concept that refers to vulnerability by virtue of status: that is, some groups are at risk at any given point in time relative to other individuals or groups. The chronically mentally ill and the elderly go under this definition of vulnerable populations and could be helped by two conceptual models of nursing. Because those with mental illness usually have increased risked for being unable to identify, manage, or find ways to maintain health I felt that Roger's Science of Unitary Beings may be of help to this vulnerable population. The elderly over time have a greater risk of being unable maintain a healthy way of life, because of increased risk of developing self-care deficits that occur due to the aging process.

Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory focuses on assisting the patient to overcome any lack in ability to the best of that individual's capacity. Roger's Science of Unitary Human Being's was created by Martha Roger's whose view of human beings were that they " are dynamic energy fields who are integral with the environment and who are continuously evolving" (Creasia & Friberg 2011) This theory puts forth the idea that illness arises because an individual or groups' patterns of living are no longer in harmony with the environment's patterns.

A chronically mentally ill person may not take the best actions for themselves and other's because of an altered view of reality that clashes not only sociologically with others, but could be of harm to their physical health

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through lack of being unable to recognize that which will keep or make them healthy. Different holistic environments and treatments could be created to promote a mental pattern that would be more in tune with a healthier way of being.

Many different types of therapies exist to help an individual create a healthier mental pattern to live in their environment: art therapy, music therapy, relaxation therapy, color therapy, hypnotherapy, reiki healing therapy, dance and movement therapy, addressing diet and nutrition, lifestyle management classes, and exercise therapy. These therapies have the possibility to help chronically mentally ill patients to find ways to achieve and maintain a harmony with their environment that would promote their physical and social health.

Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory views every individual as practicing " self-care, a set of learned behaviors, to sustain life, maintain or restore functioning, and bring about a condition of well-being. " (Creasia & Friberg 2011) The nurse uses her/his abilities to assist the patient to overcome current self-care deficits and help the patient achieve her/his best level of self-care. As time passes many of the elderly need more assistance with the activities of daily living.

Taking care of themselves physically becomes more difficult, sometimes there is decreased mental acuity, as well as a loss in social contact. In every one of these areas the nurse assists the patient to achieve her/his highest level of self-care. This includes diet, eating, elimination, activity, social interaction, education, awareness of obligations, and the promotion of

health. Where possible the nurse will help the patient achieve self-care.

Since there are no true cures to the aging process the nurse will be needed more and more to accommodate the growing number of self-deficits that the elderly patient has.

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