

Personal experience: a caring occurrence



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The purpose of this reflective paper is to reflect on a personal experience in which you cared for someone. Using John's model (Johns 2006), the reflection will explore how the personal experience reflected a caring occurrence. Reflection is the appearance of experiential knowledge and as nursing students; we should begin to use reflection as our experience in the nursing field accumulates. It is both justified and recommended that Carper's work be incorporated into reflective practice since it was a key figure in widening knowledge in nursing (Heath, 1998). Reflective practice incorporates Carper's (1978) ways of knowing – personal, ethical, aesthetical and empirical knowing into an individual's reflection. Reflection is a personal understanding of self and in the development of self, reflecting on relationships and interactions between two or more people. As a nurse, the relationship is between the nurse and the client, and sometimes involves the client's family as well.

The experience in which I cared for someone occurred in the fall of 2009. As part of my Gr. 12 Ethics and Morals Religion Class, it was required that for an eight week period, we spent a period of our time, once a week at a retirement home with our assigned "adoptive grandparent." The purpose of this assignment was to spend time with an older adult, engage in communication, participation, and enjoy the time spent with the older generation and learn from them. So once a week, I made my way to the retirement home and spent an hour and a half with my "adoptive grandparent" Blanche. I planned ahead of time activities that she might like to take part in such as a puzzle, a walk, a craft, or baking. Once I got there, I would ask her what she would like to do and we would go from there. Each

time I went there, she had a different story to tell me; her life as a young farm girl, her teenage years, and the love of her life, her career as a teacher, her family and journeys she had been on. Each story had its own personal meaning to her and I sat there attentively and listened, asked probing questions and comments. As her “ adopted grandchild,” it was my duty to entertain her, keep her spirits up and encourage her. The one week when I went there, she had physiotherapy so I could not spend much time with her on a personal level, but more of a team of caring individuals to support her, and encourage her through her therapy. Although this situation does not exactly relate to a medical need for caring for someone, I still managed to care for an individual on a personal, face-to-face encounter. This experience also helped me to learn how important the elderly patients are.

When I experienced this caring situation, I was feeling worried and nervous at first. I was unsure what to expect prior to meeting my “ adoptive grandparent.” I was worried about the fact that my “ grandparent” might not have liked me, or would be extremely quiet and held back. Since this was one of the first times I would be put in an experience like this, I just did not know what to expect. After the first two weeks, I became more comfortable in my surroundings and each week I would then look forward to my visits with Blanche. After I became comfortable, I was happy and opened up more towards Blanche. The purpose of this experience achieved a new found friendship with a member of the older generation. It gave me the opportunity to care for an individual at the retirement home who did not have many visitors, so I became her weekly visitor and spent quality time with her and card for her in a special way. This experience helped me achieve a better

respect for the elderly and enhanced my ability to relate to them on a personal level.

Knowledge that may have informed me would be the calling for a special person who cares for the spirituality of others. Nursing is a caring profession that is honoured as the spiritual, spirit-filled practice (Vance, 2003). A caring occasion becomes transpersonal when nurse and client together with their unique life histories and perception become a focal point, in which the moment is greater than the occasion itself (Watson, 2008). The experience shared between the two becomes a deeper pattern in life. The caring moment is being in the moment. Fully present, open to other people, compassion and connection. Reflection of practice allows the nurse to observe decisions made and bring to the open the knowledge that has formed from practicing skills. Nursing students can enhance multiple ways of knowing and their understanding of caring through the process of reflecting on caring encounters (Schaefer, 2002). The foundation of nurse care is the wisdom in knowing and understanding that lessons are learned by one another to become more human in learning the identity of ourselves with others.

When I cared for Blanche on a weekly basis, I acted for the best with the values that I had at the time. Although I had not dealt with many elderly patients prior to this experience, I still knew the values I had and gave Blanche my utmost respect. I treated her with the same respect that I would have liked to be treated if the positions were opposite. Caring as a nurse means the innermost of nursing, without prejudice and aims at prioritizing the patients suffering and needs (Gustafsson et al., 2007). Nursing care is <https://assignbuster.com/personal-experience-a-caring-occurrence/>

the process aimed at responding to patients' needs without reasoning.

Quality care is the element to caring. When a nurse is caring for someone, it is best that they are not bias towards the patient, nurses should treat all patients equally, meaning not giving certain patients more attention, unless their critical situation demands it of them.

This situation connects with a previous experience in which I worked at a retirement home for a few weeks in the summer. This position mainly had me as house cleaning but in the evening when everything was done, it allowed me to interact with the residents. I talked to them, played games and took them for a stroll outside. The experience in which I cared for Blanche was more connected and personal in terms of the one-on-one time I was able to spend with her. The idea of reflection is caring science learning, learning and developing a personal knowledge of caring as an art (Gustafsson et al., 2007). This helps to establish the substance and quality of caring in regards to the patient.

Factors that constrain my responding in new ways is my personal confidence level, with a variation of the knowledge of my experience, which I will hope to gain from working side-by-side with experience nurse practitioners. This also relates to my level of involvement, if I increase the questions I ask if I am in doubt, I will gain more knowledge of the situation. This will also offer clarification and a deeper level of thought in regards to the situation. When I was caring for Blanche, at first I was not very confident and a little hesitant to introducing myself to a complete stranger and spending time with her once a week. After participating in this learning of a life lesson, I gained so much from it. I have more confidence in my ability to communicate with

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strangers; I have stepped outside the box I built up around myself and have become a more confident, strong, communicative leader. Although I may still be a little hesitant about situations, that is normal. A fear of the unknown or hesitation is another constraint to responding in new ways. This unknowing is an awareness that as a nurse does not and cannot know or understand the client when they first meet (Heath, 1998). Knowing the client's information or background prior to meeting with the patient will help make the situation a little more comfortable. Mixed groups may possibly enhance the development of skills of reflection (Heath, 1998). Working together as a team will help form and ensure actions are for the best. As a team, all sides are valued and reflection is more in-depth and has different vantage points.

As a student nurse, insights that I have gained from this reflection is that my experience will grow and I can begin to understand the details of what experienced nurses know. It may only be a small portion, but I can build an understanding for the knowledge expert nurses have and benefit from it. A powerful insight is recognizing the unknown, and as a nurse, I can learn to remain alert to the client's individual viewpoint of the situation. This can best be done by listening to the client and establishing a truthful, open, working relationship, without the state of unknowing. Nurses need to be aware of the lack of empirical knowledge (Heath, 1998). This will promote an awareness to learn, research and increase practical skills. Guided reflection is a journey of self-inquiry and transformation (Johns, 2006). Reflection helps one realize their ability to care, learn and gain experience on past situations, learn from mistakes so they do not happen again. Reflection is awakening of the self (Johns, 2006).

Did I act or be the best I could be with Blanche? I personally feel that I did the best job I could with the knowledge I had at the time. After learning about nurse- client therapeutic communication, I feel that maybe now, if I were to go back and relive the experience, I would be have a better relationship with her and gain more knowledge and become an even better “ adopted grandchild.” I would ensure that the relationship would be more purposeful and contain a position of trust and a unique responsibility to maintain a therapeutic relationship. What would I have done differently if I was able to relive this experience to improve and make the most of this experience for both myself and Blanche? If I were to relive this experience, I would change the direction of advancing the best outcome and interest for Blanche. I would give her more attention, make more time in my schedule to spend time with her and take pleasure in the time spent together. Just because I may understand something, does not mean that I could change the outcome, it just means I am on my way to changing and becoming a more determined nurse. Understanding something is the first step towards changing.

As John (2006) states, usually negative feelings such as anger, guilt, frustration and sadness draw our attention to the experience. These negative feelings draw specific attention because they seem disturbed and usual taken-for-granted awareness for feelings. In my situation while I was caring for my “ adopted grandparent”, this was not the case. If anything, it was the opposite. The feelings that drew my attention to this caring situation were happiness, thoughtfulness, joy, and understanding. The smile I saw every time I walked into Blanche’s room and glow in her eyes every time she saw

us. Our weekly visits to her brightened her days and made her feel young again. I appreciated being with her, giving her my time, my attention and my skill as a person of today's generation. It takes practice first and then reflection (Johns, 2006). It is best to practice the skills needed first, make sure they are understood and demonstrated them properly and then reflect on the occasion and what went right and what went wrong and improve the situation for the next time.