

Chapter 31

Parallels of the Nurse–Patient, Facilitator–Learner Trust Relationships as they Affect the National Economy

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the necessity of a clearer understanding of the vital element of trust. Trust is a strong common element in both education and healthcare with the possibility of influencing not only our personal lives but that of our national economy. A concept analysis including step by step construction for the analysis of the nurse-patient trust as it applies to willingness to seek healthcare and implications are presented in this chapter. The parallel of the nurse-patient and facilitator-learner relationship is identified along with implications on the national economy. The purpose in this chapter is to call attention to the elemental phenomenon of trust and encourage individual reflection, continued research, and implementation of trust into these two vital disciplines and in life itself.

INTRODUCTION

An item of current research in andragogy which indicates one thing that is common to and is the strongest element in education, learning, healthcare, person, relationship, team, family, organization, nation, economy, and civilization in the world; that if absent will destroy the most powerful government, successful business, thriving

economy, influential leadership, greatest friendship, strongest character, and the deepest love. However, if developed and leveraged, that one thing has the potential to create unparalleled success and prosperity in every dimension of life. Yet, it is the least understood, most neglected, and most underestimated possibility of our time. That one strong element is trust. Trust has numerous dimensions, impact and implication.

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The teaching and learning exchange is a foundational element in the nurse-patient relationship. Nurses are responsible for teaching varied health related subject matter to the general population and patients specifically; some of these include self-care behaviors, natural child birth classes, diabetic care, nutritional needs, wound dressing changes, and self-injections. All of these examples require the use of not only the teaching process, but the learning process, and a relationship of trust. A clear understanding of trust and the value of trust is important to both health care and life-long learning.

With a national focus on health care in the U. S. as evidenced by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (2009) the aim is on improving health care delivery and patient care. In order to improve patient care, patients must first seek care. A concept analysis of nurse-patient trust as it applies to willingness to seek health care will be presented and explained in the chapter. Willingness to seek health care not only effects the patients, but the national economy as well when consideration is given to the financial investment the government has made to the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (2009).

BACKGROUND

In health care providers use terms like bioethics and veracity, uncommon words with simple meanings; bioethical concepts are standards, or norms of right and wrong behaviors applied to how we treat each other, and especially how we treat our patients (Dossetor, 1997). Veracity means truth telling. There are more common terms heard every day, such as “doing the right thing,” and “trust.” Trust sounds so simple, we all do it, but what does it mean to health care, and nursing specifically? Trust is an abstract concept that is subjective in nature.

There has been much discourse within nursing and associated disciplines regarding “trust,” yet the concept of trust still remains elusive (Hupcey et al., 2001, p. 289). The unequal balance of power found in the nurse-patient relationship adds more dimension to this already complex concept. The concept of trust is found in other fields of study. Both psychology and sociology lay claim to the phenomenon of trust. Psychology describes trust as an attribute of an individual nature; whereas sociological descriptions tend to emphasize trust as some form of social contract (Sellman, 2007). The purpose of this concept analysis is to explore the concept of nurse-patient trust as it applies to patients’ willingness to seek health care.

In both psychology and sociology the concept of trust is a relationship between equal, rational and consenting adults. The nature of the nurse-patient relationship is not an equal partnership of power, and many times patients’ capacities are either compromised or diminished. The concept of trust is used in everyday nursing language, yet it is not well understood (Hupcey, 2001).

A concept is only a label given to an observable phenomenon. To help understand a concept an analysis is undertaken. A concept analysis explores the meaning of nurse-patient trust by identifying the definition of trust, critical attributes, antecedents and consequences of fostering trust in the nurse-patient relationship. An analysis of the concept of nurse-patient trust can not only help health care providers determine the effect of the nurse-patient relationship on the public’s perception of nurses, but on health care in general.

The nurse-patient relationship is parallel to that of the facilitator-learner. The following concept analysis can be applied to both relationships to gain increased understanding of a vital element in relationships and the emphasis and responsibility placed on those relationships, where trust is integral to the learning and decision making process.

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