NRSG 435: Spirituality in Health Care
Credits: 2 R/D
Semester Offered: F, Sp
Prerequisites: PSYX 100 and NRSG 115, or consent of instructor

Course Description

This course explores aspects of spirituality and the use of spiritually-based therapies in healthcare from various faith traditions. Spiritual assessment and spirituality-based strategies to promote health and wellness are emphasized. Although a multidisciplinary approach to spiritual care is presented, a nursing perspective is highlighted.

Course Objectives: The student will:

1. Explore aspects of spirituality and their implications to spiritual and biopsychosocial health.
2. Discuss strategies for supporting the use of various spiritual therapies.
3. Enhance spiritual self-awareness as it applies to implementing spirituality-based interventions.
4. Demonstrate responsibility and accountability reflecting professional values.

Recommended Content and Concepts:

1. Exploring Spirituality
   Definitions: spirituality, religion, morality, ethics, clients, suffering
   Levels of spiritual development:
   - Undifferentiated Faith
   - Intuitive-Projective Faith
   - Mythic-Literal Faith
   - Synthetic-Conventional Faith
   - Individuative-Reflective Faith
   - Conjunctive Faith
   - Universalizing Faith
   Cultural influences on spirituality:
   - Culture not ethnicity
   - Belief and ritual synthesis
   Historical overview of spirituality in health care:
   - Religious orders and early hospitals
   - Nightingale’s emphasis on spirituality
   - Health systems managed by religious denominations
   - Modern “despiritualization” of health care

Theories of spiritual health:
Whole person / holistic theories
Caring theories (Henderson, Neuman, Watson)
Theories of meaning (Frankl, Marris, Janoff-Bulman)
Stress theory (Lazarus)

Professional mandates:
JCAHO
Organization mission statements
Professional codes of ethics

Implications for healthcare providers:
Integration of theory and ethics
Reclaiming the obligation to provide spiritual care

Roles of the Interdisciplinary Team:
Nursing
Medicine
Chaplains
Social workers
Clergy
Parish nurses
Healers
Others

2. Spiritual Assessment and Diagnosis:
Spiritual self-awareness
Nouwen’s “The wounded healer”
Importance of self-awareness and self-exploration
Guidelines for improving spiritual self-awareness
Connecting/ Disconnecting
Journeying
Transforming
Skill acquisition
Washing away

3. Spiritual assessment of clients:
Foundations of spirituality (Model by Dossey)
Meaning/ Purpose
Inner strength
Interconnections
Other models (Maloney & Kloss; Pruyser; Fitchett)
Guidelines for conducting an assessment
Assessment strategies
Timing
Establishing rapport
Language
Non-verbal indicators
Family/ community assessment

Review of questionnaires
Assessment barriers
Lack of time
Discomfort of the person conducting the assessment
Listening barriers

4. Diagnosing spiritual distress:
   NANDA
   American Psychiatric Association
   Risk factors for spiritual distress

5. Harmful religiosity:
   Religious practices in conflict with healthcare practices
   Non-supportive actions from faith communities
   Proselytizing from healthcare providers
   Inappropriate provider self-disclosure

6. Provision of Spiritual Care:
   Planning for care
   Spiritual resources
   Establishment of goals
   Implementing care
   Communication strategies
   Presencing
   Reflecting a caring attitude
   Exploration through questioning
   Strategies to enhance meaning
   Encouraging resiliency
   Encouraging client self-disclosure
   Supporting spiritual health through rituals
   Prayer
   Meditation
   Cultural rituals
   Buddhism
   Christianity
   Hinduism
   Islam
   Judaism
   Native American Religiosity

Nurturing spirituality
   Engaging the spirit
   Storytelling
   Journal writing
   The arts
   Caring for the non-religious

Suggested Student Learning Activities:
   Readings
   Discussions
   Personal journaling
   Case study (popular novel detailing a client’s spiritual journey of health)
   Structured interview of clergy regarding health/illness
Observational experiences (parish nurse, chaplain)
Spiritual care planning
Spiritual self-awareness exercises

Approved by UAAC: February 1, 2010
Approved by Faculty: February 8, 2010