

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE - A TOOL FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

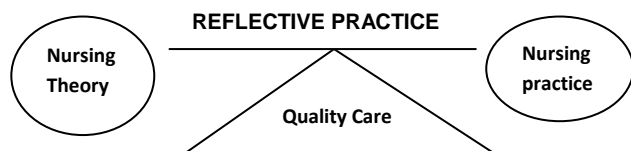
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INTRODUCTION

In the era of 21st century, Nursing is facing new developments & challenges in health care. The developments & Challenges need effective & consistent education to deal with them. The Continuing Nursing education is under pinned by Primary goal of nursing which is the provision of quality care to the clients. However, in order to achieve this, it is important to come up with new teaching ideas or developing an innovative learning tool

Reflective Practice is a valuable tool for professional development.

Implementing the theory into practice is a complex and Time consuming task. But, a refined form of reflective practice will be used to bring theory into practice in an easy way. Brook Field (1987) has described that, the reflective learning has a dimension of critical thinking. Bevis & Murray (1990) advocate the instilling of critical skills in nurses through emancipation and continuing education, as a way of empowering practitioners to transform some of the contradictory aspects of practice. Bout et al (1985) consider that, reflection in the context of learning is a generic form for the intellectual and affective, in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead new understandings. This topic focuses on the critical incident technique as a means of structured reflection.



The quality care rests on the reflective practice which bridges/connects the Nursing Practice and Nursing Theory for better clinical outcome.

REFLECTION

Reflection is the examination of personal thoughts & actions. For practitioners, this means focusing on how they interact with their colleagues and with the environment to obtain a clear picture of their own behavior. It is therefore, a process by which a Nurse practitioner can better understand themselves in order to build on existing strengths and take appropriate further action. The aim of reflection is to develop professional actions that are aligned with personal beliefs and values.

Reflective Practice is a formal process that helps Nurses to maintain their competence in today's rapidly changing health care environment.

Basic forms of Reflection Practices:

There are two fundamental forms of reflection practice namely,

1. Reflection on action.
2. Reflection in action.

Understanding the differences between these forms of reflections are important.

It will assist practitioners in discovering a range of techniques which can be used to develop their personal & professional competence.

Reflection on Action: (ROA- Reflection after the event/experience)

It is the most common form of Reflection. It involves carefully re-running in our mind events that has occurred in the past.

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The aim is to value their own strengths and to develop different number of effective ways to act in the future.

This is what we usually mean, when we refer to reflective practice. It is nothing but, reflecting the event after it occurs by , thinking through and discussing the incident with a colleague or Supervisor. It helps in Focus on identifying negative aspects of personal behavior with a view to improving professional competence.

Reflection in Action (RIA- Reflection during the event/experience)

Reflection in Action is the hall mark of the experienced professionals. It means examining our own behavior and that of others while in a situation (Schon-1995).

Reflection in Action is when we are working and being aware of what we are doing at the same time. This is the way, any confident, experienced nursing professionals will work. This also helps us to develop skills in following aspects;

- Thinking one step ahead.
- Being critical.
- Storing experience for the future.
- Analyzing.

BENEFITS OF REFLECTIVE NURSING PRACTICE

- ❖ The process of RIA will produce an effective practitioner, who can be able to define and redefine problems in practice, and do a more complex activity than merely problem solving.” A reflective Practice should be a key element in professional education.

- ❖ Developing reflective Practice enables the Nurses to respond to the unique challenges of practice (Atkins-1994). It also enables Nurses to understand the world in which they practice, by allowing them to make sense of themselves, what they experience and how they act.
- ❖ The importance of self awareness, among nurses is recognized not only during education and continuing clinical practice but also in doing research (Newell-1992).
- ❖ Reflection has been advocated as a method by which the Nurse enhances his/her research practices.
- ❖ Maeve (1994) discusses the “carrier bag theory of Nursing practice” and cogently describes development of reflective Practice to provide the Bridge between Theory And Practice.
- ❖ Brook & McGill suggest that reflection has a potential to facilitate learning in higher education.
- ❖ Nurses are responsible for providing care to the best of their ability to patients and their families.
- ❖ Reflective practice is a part of the requirement for nurses constantly to update professional skills. Annual reviews enable nurses to identify their strengths and areas of opportunity for future developments.
- ❖ Nurses should consider the ways in which, they interact and communicate with their colleagues. The profession depends upon a culture of mutual support. Nurses should aim to become self aware, self-directing and in touch with their environment.

HOW TO BE REFLECTIVE?

There are many tools that can assist us in the development of vital skills of reflection. The

following are the few ideas, tips and activities that will enrich our experience of reflection.

- *Feedback*

Feedback comes from other people in many different forms, both verbal and non-verbal forms. We receive feedback from others about our behavior, our skills, our values, and the way we relate to others and about our identity. It can be argued that, what are we? and who we are? it is because of the feedback we receive from others. So feedback is central of the process of reflection.

We encourage people to take responsibility for gathering feedback about them. For example, we could ask, "May I know something about, how I spoke to that patient."

- *What have I learnt?*

Another invaluable approach to reflection is to ask self regularly, "What have I learnt today? This is a positive approach of processing information and can be an event that might have been upsetting. It's another way in which we can work together with others to develop our reflective skills.

- *Valuing personal strengths*

The literature of reflection often focuses on an individual or group identifying their weakness and using reflection to address 'areas of opportunity as managers. We should never overlook our many positive accomplishments. Take time regularly to review the many satisfying things that you have achieved in recent past.

- *Viewing experience Objectively*

To view an objective of a picture as much as possible by our self, we should try the following exercise. Recall an incident from the recent past, one which involved us and another person or other persons. Practicing this way of looking back on our, can help us upon

developing reflection in our action skills. Being a participant, observer of our own experience is a sophisticated skill and can enable us to analyze the underlying element of our personal experience.

- *Empathy*

A useful way of reflecting of an interaction, through one that has involved you in conflict of some kind, try to adopt an empathic position to see, hear and feel what the other person might have experienced. This can rather be a strange, but, potentially enlightening exercise. It can add new perspective to the analysis of our experience.

- *Keeping a journal*

We Can Keep a private journal to log our own reflections. we can choose a book with unlined pages so that we can record our thoughts in a variety of forms-like, drawing, notes, pictures which connect with our thoughts and feelings. Use variety of writing instruments- coloured pens, pencils, crayon & high lighter pens. Another way of recording our thoughts are to give brief description of the best things and the worst things that happened during the day.

- *Exploring the Images*

If we write freely, we are very likely to contradict our self. This is natural. Value the contradictions and diary entries which easily reflect the complexity of our own personalities.

Diaries can be very enlightening when re-read at a later date. We can see how we have developed since the time we wrote the words. We may be able to identify how limiting beliefs served us poorly. The element of critical reflection is the vital component of reflective practitioner.

- *What do you do with all this material*

Our next task is to make connections. Having written, drama or tape recorded our thoughts and feelings over a period of time

which could be for a few days, a few weeks or even months, try and see if there are any emerging patterns.

- *Planning for the future*

Planning future action is part of the learning and reflective process. Having made connections, identified pattern and made sense of reflections, we are likely to be excellent in planning and implementing the changes for the future. Don't be over ambitious.

- *Creating our own future*

A vital part of the reflective process is to plan for changes in our behavior. One way to tackle is to adopt the creative thinking strategy devised by Walt Disney. He had 3 stages. His strategies are based on different characters, each of which surfaced at appropriate points in the process of creating new projects. These 3 characters are;

The Dreamer, The realist & The Critic.

The Dreamer - looked towards ideas for the future,,I wish,, What if..,

The realist - This action oriented, looking at how the dream can be turned into a practical workable plan ..., How can I.. Have I time to..,

The Critic - This is very logical and looks for the whys and why not to a given situation....., That's not going to work because.., what happens? when?..,

Effective planning of personal learning is a synthesis of these different processes. The dreamer is needed in order to have new ideas and goals. The realistic is necessary as a means of transforming these ideas into concrete

expressions. The critic is necessary as a filter for refining ideas and avoiding possible problems.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of reflection as a learning tool has been explored by Educationist to use reflection as a component of learning through experience and helping the students to integrate the Theory & Practice. The Use of Reflective practice as a tool for enhancing Nurse's and Student nurses' ability to deal with death and dying. Working on personal and Professional development need not be chored if we have access to varied and informative techniques.

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