

Unitary Caring Science: Caritas Compassion Transpersonal Theory

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Abstract (written by editors)

This article presents a transformative perspective on contemporary nursing, emphasizing unity and interconnectedness in the post-Covid world. Prof. Jean Watson introduces "Unitary Caring Science" as a holistic approach to nursing, rooted in three ethical principles: The Ethic of Belonging, The Ethics of Face, and The Ethics of Hands. These principles guide the paradigm shift in nursing philosophy and practice.

Dr. Watson discusses the "Ten Caritas Processes®," a foundational language for understanding and practicing human care. She highlights the importance of "Transpersonal Caring Moments," where nurses' presence and authenticity influence patient experiences. The article aligns this approach with the American Nurses Association's new definition, emphasizing compassion and presence in nursing care, and advocates for a holistic, interconnected nursing approach to uphold human dignity and compassion.

Keywords

Ethics Nursing; Holistic Nursing; Nursing Care.

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Resumo (escrito pelos editores)

Este artigo apresenta uma perspectiva transformadora sobre a enfermagem contemporânea, enfatizando a unidade e a interligação no mundo pós-Covid. A Prof. Jean Watson apresenta a "Ciência Cuidadora Unitária" como uma abordagem holística para a enfermagem, fundamentada em três princípios éticos: A Ética da Pertença, A Ética do Rosto e A Ética das Mãos. Estes princípios orientam a mudança de paradigma na filosofia e prática da enfermagem.

A Dra. Watson discute os "Dez Processos Caritas®", uma linguagem fundamental para compreender e praticar o cuidado humano. Ela destaca a importância dos "Momentos de Cuidado Transpessoal", onde a presença e autenticidade das enfermeiras influenciam as experiências dos doentes.

O artigo alinha esta abordagem com a nova definição da Associação Americana de Enfermagem, enfatizando a compaixão e a presença no cuidado de enfermagem, e defende uma abordagem holística e interligada à enfermagem para preservar a dignidade e a compaixão humanas.

Palavras-chave

Ética em Enfermagem; Enfermagem Holística; Cuidado de Enfermagem.

Introduction

Tumultuous times in our world require a new/old unitary worldview; an evolving consciousness about converging ideas of nursing, because we dwell in the sacred circle of life and death and beyond. Post Covid has awakened us to the reality of oneness of all, encompassing a quantum leap for a new worldview, a worldview of unity and connectedness of all things.

In my writing I refer to this shift as unitary caring science for nursing, caring, healing and health care. We are faced with one world/ one humanity/ one Planet.^{1,2}

The framework of unitary caring science and transpersonal theory includes the following principles: The Ethic of Belonging; The Ethic of Face; and the Ethic of Hands. Each one of these informs the transformative unitary paradigm for Nursing and specifically my work in philosophy and science of caring as well as transpersonal caring theory.

The Ethic of Belonging

The Ethic of Belonging was posed by French philosopher Levinas in 1969³ and submitted that we all 'Belong to the Infinite Field of Universal Cosmic Love', before our Separate Being. This worldview of unity and oneness of all reflects a quantum universe of connectedness, which transcends our separate ego physical self. This ethic also represents the reality of the sacred circle of life and death to which we all belong, before birth and after death, awakening the sacred science of caring. Further, Levinas posed Ethic of Belonging as the first principle of science. Thus, it is a foundational starting point and worldview for unitary caring science and my most current theoretical philosophical perspective.

The Ethics of Face

The Ethics of Face, likewise was posited by Levinas³ as a core principle of human evolution and survival of humanity. His work on Ethics of Face acknowledged that humanity either evolves further as infinite evolution to higher consciousness – Or – we totalize our humanity and each other. The view is in spite of the paradox of virtual reality; in that “the only way we can survive as humans at this point in human history is through *the Face -to-Face* connection”. “When we look into the face of another person, we are looking into the mystery and infinity of human soul; when we look into the mystery and infinity of other, it mirrors back the infinity of our own soul. The Face to Face connection also reflects the Ethic of Belonging that unites us across time and space.

The Ethics of Hands

The third principle of Unitary Caring Science is posited by Ethicist Logstrup,⁴ a Danish philosopher. His philosophy highlighted the metaphorical and literal reality that we hold another person's life in our hands. This ethic is core to nursing and human caring practices. In his words he noted: “*The life in our hands is a sovereign expression of life as given to us, before and beyond ego; with expressions of trust, love, honesty, forgiveness, gratitude - beyond feelings that are negative expressions of life...*”^{4(p18)} He referred to this view as an Ethical Demand, to take care of the life which is in our hands. Within caring science and the infinite energy of love, it is important to highlight that our hands are connected with our heart; the heart is the very source of love, caring, compassion and our inner truth. So the ethics of hands takes on important meaning for nursing and the use of our hands in healing.

10 Caritas Processes®

The Ten Caritas Processes of the transpersonal caring theory, provide core language of the universals of human caring, which nurses are offering every day. However, because Caring has not been named, it has been invisible, without acknowledging, naming, documenting, researching. Further caring language has not been used as the foundational ethical, philosophical guide to micro and macro caring practices, contributing to patient and nurse caring-healing and health outcomes. It must be acknowledged in this postmodern time, that any profession without its own language does not exist. It is also important to know that these 10 Caritas Processes are located within the larger unitary caring science paradigm, the most mature level for honoring nursing's phenomenon and vicissitudes of human experiences.

Transpersonal Caring Moment

The nurse-patient relation in any given moment is affected by the presence, intentionality, consciousness, authenticity of the nurse in a given moment. Each caring moment is informed by nurse's theory, philosophy, ethic and authentic use of self in a given moment. Unitary Caring Science is context for any and each transpersonal caring moment, guided by the professional nurse's evolution and consciousness. Such mature practice at micro and macro level can be framed as Caring Praxis, beyond usual practice of *Doing*, transformed toward a Relational Ontology of *Being*. The ten Caritas Processes provide the language and theoretical foundation and structure of nursing. However, where the theory lives is in a Caring Moment, which is transpersonal, in that each moment is unique and goes beyond two individuals; rather beyond ego of nurse or even ego of nursing profession; rather nurse being authentically

present, open and receptive to 'see', 'to hear' and to honor with dignity each individual.

Caritas Process 1: Embrace - Practice of Loving Kindness, Compassion and Equanimity, for Self-first: before one is able to offer another authentic caring. Professional theory-guided practice requires informed moral action, such as honoring each of the Caritas Processes as guide for self as well as other.

Caritas Process 2: Inspire - Faith and Hope, through authentic presence. Honoring the subjective beliefs and inner life world of other; appreciating sacred presence. Staying within other's frame of reference. There is so much research and knowledge about the role of faith and hope; the role of religion and one's inner belief system which affects outcomes. In this process the nurse honors the whole person and their inner world beliefs even if they differ from mainstream medicine. Here the nurse works strictly from patient/family beliefs, not judging or attempting to impose own beliefs; while inspiring and enabling patient/family practices.

Caritas Process 3: Trust - Transpersonal Self-being sensitive to self/ others-going beyond ego to transpersonal presence. Trust is immediately detected by the nurses' presence, intentionality, heart-centered awareness; holding space for pausing, listening, *hearing* beyond words. As soon as the nurse walks into a patient's room, the patient will know whether they can trust this nurse or not.

Caritas Process 4: Nurture - Relationship. Heart to heart authentic relation via trust and loving presence. Holding Caritas Consciousness in relation with other. Everything is in-relation and here the nurse moves beyond *Doing Nursing* to *Being* authentically presence. Caritas Process 3 and 4 go hand in hand.

Caritas Process 5: Forgive - All – Allow for expression of positive and negative feelings; non-judgmental acceptance, holding sacred space to listen to another's story. Listening to other's story may be the greatest healing gift – where for perhaps for the first time, they hear themselves beyond the usual inner script; Nurse is there holding sacred space allowing patient to hear self; result they often come up with new solutions and new options for self; for self-care; self-knowledge, even self-healing approaches.

Caritas Process 6: Deepen - Creative self; nurse and patient move beyond 'problems' to strengths and creative solutions; allow for creative emergence. Invite an Expanded epistemology – allowing for multiple and all ways of knowing to be considered, not just empirical data alone. It is unethical to limit our knowledge and ways of knowing to only one form of knowledge. Subjective meaning and inner life experiences also count as knowledge, as well as personal, intuitive, aesthetic, ethical, spiritual as well as empirical-scientific knowledge.

Caritas Process 7: Balance - Learning with authentic teaching; appreciating inner listening and subjective meaning for understanding one's inner life world, leading to heart-centered wisdom. This process results in 'coaching'

other in self-caring; self-knowledge; self-control; self-choices; and self-healing approaches. Without learning, there is no teaching. It requires realizing that information is not knowledge; knowledge alone is not understanding; understanding is not same as internalizing; internalizing leads to wisdom.

Caritas Process 8: Co-create - Caritas Field; create healing environment, by 'being' the caritas field of loving-trusting, heart-to-heart connections. The Caritas Conscious nurse is the Healing environment. We can have the most beautiful physical environment, but if the humans in the field are not caring the environment can be toxic or biocidal for nurse as well as patients/families.

Caritas Process 9: Minister - Humanity and basic needs with reverence as sacred acts; sustaining human dignity; viewing bodyspirit as one. Helping another with basic human needs when they are unable to do for self, is one of greatest healing acts nurses offer to humanity. A Caritas Conscious Nurse knows they are not just touching the body, but also the mind, the heart and the soul of patient. Requiring a Caritas loving Consciousness to minister to another as a sacred gift.

Caritas Process 10: Open - To infinity and evolution of consciousness; allowing to spiritual existential unknowns, beyond conventional medical science, open to miracles and mystery of caring-healing and infinite possibilities. Conventional science and Western mindsets of medical science do not have all the answers to human health and healing. Nurses experience miracles and mystery in patient outcomes every day.⁵

Summary Note on Caritas Processes®

It is important to note that the Caritas Processes are not linear. They are a gestalt of the whole Caritas Consciousness in any given moment. It is like a hologram. The whole Caritas Consciousness is present in any given moment. Transpersonal caring moment represents any of the Caritas Processes which transcend time, space, and physicality. A transpersonal caring moment of any of the Caritas processes lasts with the patient and the nurse as long as they live, informing the next moments of their life. Thus, the Ethic of Belonging, the Ethic of Face and Ethic of Hand are present through Transpersonal Caritas in any given moment. This dynamic is a life-giving and life-receiving exemplar of Caritas Praxis.

As a transition from overview of Caring Science Caritas Processes and Transpersonal Moment it is helpful to examine the congruence between Unitary Caring Science/Caritas Processes and Transpersonal with the latest definition of Nursing from American Nurses Association (ANA).

Current Definition of Nursing: American Nurses Association ANA (2021-22)

Nursing integrates the *art and science of caring* and focuses on the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and *human functioning*; prevention of illness and injury; *facilitation of healing*; and *alleviation of suffering* through *compassionate presence*. Nursing is the diagnosis and treatment of human responses and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations *in recognition of the connection of all humanity*.

The highlighted areas with the latest ANA definition reflects a Unitary Caring Science Paradigm and Transpersonal Caring values as part of the evolved definition of nursing. It is the first time ANA has included caring in its definition; previously the definitions were medicalized-clinicalized views of nursing and humanity, e.g. diagnosis and treatment language.

Together Unitary Caring Science and Transpersonal Caring Theory provide a mature disciplinary foundation for Nursing for this time of change, so needed to sustain human caring and human dignity for both nurses and patients alike. Identifying the Ethics and Quantum Transformative thinking for Unitary Caring Science provide a universal timeless framework for nursing past, present and future.

In summary I have identified the essence and advantages of expanding Nursing and Unitary Caring Science Paradigm and Transpersonal Caritas as a way forward to sustain nursing's global covenant with humanity.

WATSON ESSENCE OF UNITARY CARING SCIENCE

- ❖ Brings infinity of LOVE back into Nursing and Health Care/ Science
- ❖ Provides Universal Nursing Language for Universals of Caring Phenomena
- ❖ Introduces Transpersonal - Metaphysical – Sacred
- ❖ Integrates ancient and contemporary Energetic Caring Healing Arts
- ❖ Provides a Full Circle of Caring Science evolution:

E.G. Unitary Philosophy - Ethic – Theory – Micro/macro Caritas Praxis/Education- Measurements and Research.

Final Summary

Unitary Caring Science: Transpersonal Human Caring provides a full circle of knowledge to guide the practice, research, education and leadership for Nursing's' future: The core Philosophy; the Ethical principles of Unitary Caring; Core Values that guide Caritas Processes as theoretical frame for micro and macro practices; combined with Measures and outcomes of Caring as essential to all healthcare. Philosophy/ Ethic/ Values/ Theory/ Practice/ Research-Measures/ Outcomes Without nursing advancing

within its own philosophical - ethical – theoretical framework, it is doomed to remain as very good technicians of a totally new quantum universe, required for caring healing and health for all.

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