



### **Evolving Holistic Scholarship and Praxis**

#### **Introduction**

The Global Academy of Holistic Nursing’s mission is to advance excellence in holistic praxes and global healthcare transformation through holistic nursing scholarship. Our worldview appreciates the unique expressions of wholeness and interconnections experienced by individuals, families, communities, and society in relation to the environment. Thus, holistic approaches are dynamic and interactive, with a focus on healing. Popoola stated, “to practice holistically, one must be willing to make a paradigmatic shift from the model of a cure-driven approach to healing” (p. 34). This introduction highlights the relationship between holistic scholarship and healing and how each of these advance holistic nursing and the transformation of healthcare.

“Healing is a ubiquitous cross-cultural phenomenon. The role of healing in health and well-being has been described in the literature and holds a central role” (Hanley, et al., 2017, p.370) in holistic nursing. The Theory of Healing articulated by Hanley et al., includes concepts and assumptions that inform our direction for holistic nursing scholarship, providing guidance for designing holistic caring processes as well as a scaffold for knowledge development and dissemination of holistic praxis.

#### **Shifting Paradigms: Curing to Healing**

According to AHNA (2019), Holistic Nurses are “...instruments of healing” (p. 2). Further, holistic nursing is defined as “all nursing practice that has healing the whole person as its goal” (AHNA, 1998 cited by ANA/AHNA, 2019, p.1). These definitions are consistent with the holistic paradigm articulated by Nightingale (1859), wherein the nurse’s role is to “put the patient in the best condition for nature to act upon him” (p. 28) through actions based on unique knowledge that facilitates the health and well-being of the individual.

#### **Holistic Praxis**

Holistic caring processes are based on a unique body of knowledge within the context of the holistic nursing paradigm. These processes integrate

conventional, integrative, and complementary nursing actions informed by the lived experience of those deeply engaged in holistic nursing practice (ANA/AHNA, 2019). In this liminal space where the synthesis of knowledge and action intersect, the praxis of the holistic nursing paradigm emerges. It is in this nexus between knowledge and action that we experience a synthesis of ways of knowing, the evolution of theories, and the discovery of new knowledge that further informs holistic nursing praxis.

## Healing

Throughout the holistic nursing literature, definitions of holism, holistic nurses and nursing, holistic practice, and the aims of holistic nursing focus on healing as a process and an outcome. AHNA defines healing “as multidimensional, can occur at any level of the human-energetic system and is creative, unfolding, and unpredictable” (2019, p. 13).

Several authors including Kunz (1995), Kritek (1997), Fenton (1997), Engebretson (1999), Cowling (2000), Quinn (2000 & 2013), Rosa (2011), and Hines et al. (2013) explored the process and nature of healing. Healing emerges through a compassionate relationship with self or other and occurs as a change in perception or emancipation from a particular moment, pattern, or experience (Hanley, 2015). While healing is considered both a process and a goal of holistic nursing, the relationship between holism and healing requires further explication. Nursing theories help in this respect.

Nursing theories organize concepts and facilitate the understanding of relationships among those concepts. Nurses well versed in nursing theory build curricula, practice, and discovery based in disciplinary knowledge framed by a specific paradigm. Numerous nursing theories support, explain, and advance holistic nursing. Examples of theories that apply to person-centered care include Peplau’s Theory of Interpersonal Relations, Leininger’s Cultural Care Theory of Diversity and Universality, Patterson and Zderad’s Humanistic Nursing Theory, Watson’s Theory of Human Caring and Caring Science and Erickson’s Modeling and Role Modeling Theory. These theories highlight the centrality of the relationship between nurse and client, honoring the individual’s worldview as necessary to co-create trusting relationships that facilitate healing.

Rogers’ Science of Unitary Human Beings shifted nursing’s paradigm toward greater complexity in line with quantum physics and provided the framework for several mid-range theories including Newman’s Health as Expanding Consciousness. Holistic theorists and theories evolved from describing

particular and reactive conceptual relationships to synergistic relationships that reflect simultaneity and articulate the emergent unitary-transformative landscape of holistic nursing. Krieger, in the late 1960s, developed the first clinical application of Rogers' Science, which actualized Rogers' worldview in nursing practice.

While these theories provide structure and illustrate modes of holistic nurse/patient relationships, they do not specifically address the role of healing and its potential contributions to holistic nursing.

### **A Theory of Healing**

Hanley, Coppa, and Shields articulated a practice-based Theory of Healing (2017) that evolved out of their work with a group of expert practitioners and teachers of Therapeutic Touch. Grounded within the holistic paradigm, the Theory of Healing provides a context for the relationships within which holistic nurses commit to support and facilitate the well-being of people and society.

The definition of healing in this theory reflects its emancipatory nature. "Healing is an inner experience, a human potential and function, expressed as a shift in consciousness in which the practitioner and healing partner experience transformation or change" (Hanley, et al., p. 374). The assumptions and major concepts of the Theory of Healing reflect both the process of healing and healing as an outcome.

The exploration of healing within the context of the Theory of Healing provides a unique focus for holistic nursing scholars today and in the future. Their scholarship, which includes the development of curriculum, the design of systems of practice, the discovery of unique manifestations of healing characteristics through reflective and systematic inquiry, and the articulating the role of healing relative to social justice and advocacy, is foundational to advancing holistic nursing and transforming health care around the globe.

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