**Comfort Theory: A Primer in 21st Century Nursing Practice**

**Introduction**

The 21st century nursing philosophy is based on care and value. These philosophies are very central to the comfort theory- a mid-range nursing theory for research, education and public health. Comfort for the patient, the nurse and the patient’s family are a major requirement for effective treatment. Kathrine Kolcaba proposed the comfort theory in the 90s. The theory places comfort at the forefront of healthcare. Kolcaba has over 20 years of experience in nursing and is presently a nursing professor at the University Of Akron College Of Nursing. This work finds foundation in Kolcaba’s seminal work *Comfort Theory and Practice: A Vision for Holistic Health Care and Research*. This document posit that comfort theory is the most applicable for the 21st century due to its inherent qualities. These merits will be highlighted throughout this work.

**Background of Theory**

The foundation of the comfort theory is based on Kolcaba concept analysis of comfort from several literary works on nursing, medicine, psychiatry, ergonomics, English and psychology. The theory basically follows a taxonomical structure from whence assessment, measurement and evaluation of a patient’s level of comfort is determined. Comfort theory was commissioned with the view that comfort for the patient and their families is of vital import during treatment (Kolcaba, Tilton and Drouin, 2006). According to its originator, strengthening facets of comfort was a critical factor in the effective treatment of a patient. Kolcaba highlighted three facets of comfort-ease, relief and transcendence. According to Kolcaba (1994), ease is the calmness a patient or their family experiences while under treatment while relief is the state of having explicit comfort needs fulfilled. Lastly, transcendence may be defined as the rising above problems and pain that persons suffering from maladies customarily encounter.  Kolcaba observed that conform can occur in the physical, environmental, psychospiritual and socialcultural realm (Meleis, 2011; Kolcaba, and DiMarco, 2005). For example, a patient who has just undergone surgery would experience relief if the nurse administered prescribed analgesia.

**Why Comfort Theory is Relevant in the 21st Century**

Comfort theory has a multitude of advantages and almost no disadvantages. These proposition makes it highly useful in 21st century nursing practice. One of its chief advantage is the fact that comfort theory makes use of universal language and concepts that are non-esoteric. Comfort theory may be comprehended by even lay individuals and professionals from an array of trades. Its simplicity makes it an important tool for virtually every personage involved in medical practice (Kolcaba, 2003). Another advantage of comfort theory is that its basis is formed from current action in healthcare and nursing practice. Comfort theory emphasizes on patient comfort and that of their families. Accordingly, said comfort must be holistic and a key aspect in hospital stays.  The theory additionally insists on the comfort of nursing practitioners. These factors are parallel with several best practice thus this makes the theory fairly relevant in 21st century healthcare.

According to Meleis (2001), one measure that is of vital import in measuring positive healthcare is comfort. Essentially, comfort is a proactive result of successful health seeking results according to this author. Positive institutional outcomes such as patient satisfaction have been known to have a causal link with comfort. From these prelude, it’s easy to see just how relevant the comfort theory is applicable in the current 21st century nursing underpinnings.

Quality improvement, evaluation performance, patient outcomes, institutional appraisal and research are a major factor in progress in the field of medicine. Comfort theory has been used repeatedly in furthering these goals. Through this theory, medical practitioners have been able to develop clinical guidelines and practice that inform best practice. Comfort not only in patients, but nurses, managers, CNOs, nurse executive are a major proponent of comfort theory. The theory appreciates that a comfortable nurse, is a productive healthcare professional. Nursing administration Standards and Scopes also forms a major proponent of the theory (McKenna & Slevin, 2011). From these overture, it’s easy to see just how relevant comfort theory is in 21st century healthcare.

**Conclusion**

This document makes an attempt at highlighting how comfort theory in relevant today. Essentially, the theory finds useful today since its foundation is based almost in its entirety on current nursing practice.  The work underlines several advantages of the theory and why it is applicable in 21st century nursing philosophy. In the end, comfort theory does not constitute the entirety of 21st century nursing practice; nevertheless this theory has a fairly extended advance on what nursing practice in the current age ascribes to.

**Reference**

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