

Notes from Open Space Topic Convenors

What was your topic or question?

Sharing the experience of working with nurses in health care organizations using a structured program of self-care, holistic philosophy and theory, use of intentionality, healing presence, spirituality, and transformational leadership principles as a basis for healing self, others, and community.

What were major discussion points?

- ~ We begin with care of self as the foundation for caring for others.
- ~ Create space for nurses to open their hearts, and their healing process will begin.
- ~ What happens when you create space for nurses to open their hearts? Does it only facilitate further hurt and anger?
- ~ Nurses are hungry for this type of education and want to connect with their original reason for entering the profession: to serve in the role of healer.
- ~Through the healing process and the empowerment that nurses experience, they impact their work settings positively. They contribute to making a difference at the local level.
- ~Outcomes of teaching this work: it has resulted in greater nursing satisfaction and patient satisfaction using standard indicators.
- ~ How do we reach physicians to promote more acceptance of integrative modalities and holism?
- ~Technology has created more distance between patients and nurses. Why not use technology to support the relationship? (Example provided: Have nurse's notes dictated and transcribed, a use of technology that frees more time for nurses to be with patients.)
- ~ Integrative modalities can be introduced as "vehicles of connection," thereby further promoting the use of self and the deepening of the nurse patient relationship.

What did you learn?

- ~Nurses are expert at caring for others and novice at caring for self.
- ~Storytelling is a powerful healing tool in the nursing profession. As nurses tell their story, they begin to connect with each other. Barriers fall away, and they create more meaningful relationships with their co-workers, patients, families, and others.
- ~As nurses begin/continue their personal healing journey, they open up to their spiritual calling as healer (rooted in Florence Nightingale's experience). Nurses then can focus more effectively on learning the intentional use of self as a healing presence with others.
- ~Teaching nurses the principles of transformational leadership empowers them to make changes in their own behaviors, leading to the ripple effect within their workplace.
- ~Experiences in two other hospitals with similar concepts of caring for the caregiver and use of healing intentionality have shown that nurses respond well and identify and enact caring behaviors that change their workspace (using the concept of neighborhood to identify and promote behavior norms that support a healing environment).

Whom should we contact for more information?

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