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Caring In the Hemodialysis Unit through Primary Nursing

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Jean Watson's Caritas (Caring) Science was implemented and caring practices were adapted across Patient Care Services. Staff were educated on the basic assumptions of the science of human caring which are: "caring can be effectively demonstrated and practiced interpersonally; caring consists of caritas processes that result in satisfaction of human needs; caring promotes health and individual or family growth; caring involves accepting individuals for who they are and for what they may become; a caring environment provides for the development of potential and for independent decision-making; caring is complementary to curing; caring is central to nursing".

In a primary nursing model of dialysis care, each registered nurse is assigned a number of patients for whom he or she assumes the responsibility of planning their care and evaluating patient outcomes on an ongoing basis. The primary nurse is responsible for establishing clear communication between the patient and family, the physician, and other health care team members. When the primary nurse is not present, the other members of the health care team follow the plan of care established and outlined by the primary nurse in the patient's kardex or care plan.

The Primary Nurse Monthly Summary (PNMS) serves both as a patient assessment guide and as an educational tool for primary nurses. This tool incorporates quality indicators and desired patient outcomes into monthly assessments. The (PNMS) provides the primary nurse a frame of reference in identifying problems and in evaluating patient interventions. It guides the primary nurse in providing care that is holistic and meets standards of practice. During the Life Care Meeting, which is a monthly multidisciplinary meeting consisting of primary nurse or primary nurse buddy, MD, charge nurse, social worker, dietitian, the primary nurse discusses his/her patient outcomes and plan of care.

Finally, primary nursing injects a caring perspective into a technical environment. Nurses focus on person-centered interactions thus meeting the holistic needs of dialysis patients in the presence of technology.

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