Human Experience Across The Health-Illness Continuum

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The Health-Illness Continuum And Its Importance

Human health is not constant. Rather, it varies from time to time in response to internal and external conditions. The health-illness continuum presents these variances through a graphic representation. This continuum was first put forth by John W. Travis and is a portrayal of an individual's wellness. The continuum incorporates emotional and mental health and depicts well-being as more than just the absence of physical illness (Parida, 2021). Travis identified that the standard measure of wellness is insufficient to presume overall well-being, and a mere absence of symptoms or disease does not establish that an individual is healthy. The health-illness continuum ranges from premature death on the left to a high level of wellness on the right. It moves to high levels of health through awareness, education, and growth, while a decline in health is attributed to signs, symptoms, and disability. This continuum is essential to the development of human experiences in patients' care as it promotes preventive treatment and aims to improve well-being before the development of disease symptoms. It seeks to deter pathology and prevent premature death by educating people and raising awareness regarding various health-related risk factors (Archer, 2017).

Role Of The Continuum In Promoting Value And Dignity

It is imperative to consider the health-illness continuum for patient care. In terms of personal practice, the ultimate goal is to achieve the best health outcomes for patients, and this goal can be actualized through the incorporation of the continuum. As nurses, it is our responsibility to provide the patients with relevant inspiration and awareness. Appropriate education coupled with a suitable motivating factor can guide patients towards a path that would promote better health outcomes. Considering mental and emotional development as important elements of well-being makes this continuum an effective tool for patient care. Measurement of the scale on which well-being falls can help the nurses prevent disease and also gauge improvement effectively. As health care providers, it is our responsibility to promote value and dignity for patients as individuals and groups. This can be attained through the continuum, which promotes the planning of a healthier lifestyle and enables patients to visualize well-being goals and their achievements (Archer, 2017).

Reflection On Personal Health And Well-Being

Our daily lifestyle, such as consumption of a healthy diet, maintenance of a workout routine, and sustenance of mental health, is essential to personal wellness. Considering my health and well-being, I believe that my physical health is quite favourable as I do not suffer from any chronic illness. Although I suffer from occasional allergies, I have worked towards identifying the triggers and have coped well with them over the years. To maintain my physical and mental well-being, I practice yoga and meditation. I try to eat healthily and include fruits and vegetables in my diet. I can adapt easily, and I am satisfied with my ability to perform daily tasks. Since starting the practice of yoga, I have noticed a positive shift in my attitude, and I feel increasingly composed and centred. Reflecting on my emotional health a few years back and comparing it to today, I believe that I have been able to improve it by educating myself about its probable cause and means to effectively deal with it. Previously I was overweight and my BMI indicated that I am obese, however, identifying it as a problem led me to research a healthy lifestyle. I gained awareness about diet and nutrition, as well as the benefits of maintaining a workout routine. Presently, I have achieved a healthy weight, and I continue to work towards maintaining it. I believe that according to the health-illness continuum, I fall on the level where I have gained some awareness about wellness, and I continue to do so through research and consultation.

Options And Resources

To completely achieve awareness and move beyond it to education, growth, and a high level of wellness, several options and resources can be utilized. Although I have some awareness of my physical and emotional well-being, I believe becoming more objective in my approach to self-awareness can be increasingly effective. Apart from meditation, journaling is another option to record thoughts and emotions, which can later be analyzed to identify patterns and reflect on unhealthy approaches. The education stage comes after awareness. My current educational degree can be considered a step towards that direction. Apart from this formal degree, I can educate myself by augmenting my reading of resources and researching topics related to health and wellness. Discussion with experts, attending online and face-to-face symposiums, and taking up self-moderated courses can be effective in educating me not only about my health and well-being but also about others. Consolidating awareness and education can help me achieve the growth stage. Health literacy is extremely important to manage the symptoms of a chronic illness, recover from an occasional health concern, or achieve self-actualization. To effectively utilize health literacy, a range of skills are required. These include comprehension, access, communication, and evaluation of the relevant information, followed by taking action to ensure well-being (Poureslami, Nimmon, Rootman, & Fitzgerald, 2017). While awareness and education can be achieved through health literacy, self-actualization helps individuals realize their true potential. Continued efforts towards self-awareness and education can equip us with tools to gain self-actualization. An awareness of our core strengths, weaknesses, emotional triggers, etc., can assist us in designing personal development plans, moving

towards wellness and becoming self-actualized practitioners.

References

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