



THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON NURSING: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The nursing profession demands that the nurse, in the process of care, has to interact with the patients, the medical fraternity and the health care workers constantly. Hence, "Nurse-Patient Interaction" is the pulse of the nursing practice. This interaction is not just conversation. It is a complex process that involves nurse perception, understanding of the patient emotions and utilization of the perceptions to manage patient situations towards the goal of effective patient care. Emotional intelligence plays a major role in doing the same. Emotional Intelligence is a measure of an individual's capability and requires tools to assess this capability. Developing emotional intelligence requires that we unlearn old habits of thought, feeling, and action that are deeply ingrained, and grow new ones. Such a process takes motivation, effort, time, support, and sustained practice. The present study is focused on two major objectives namely: to study the significant impact of Emotional intelligence on behavior of nurses and to analyze the role of Emotional intelligence in work-related outcomes.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Nursing, Patient, Services.*

Introduction

Emotional competence: refers to a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work. Emotional intelligence: An ability to recognize the meanings of emotion and the relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them. Emotional intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of these emotions, and manage them. Emotional Intelligence in Healthcare

There is a growing trend in a movement toward a more humanistic and holistic system of care (Gold, 2004; Spiro, 1993; Watson, 1985). In the coming decade, this will become even more prevalent and necessary as the Baby Boomers continue to age and patients' expectations change. Patients are enabled to choose those providers that include the qualities that are associated with a humanistic and holistic healthcare system, making empathy and, ultimately,



emotional intelligence the cornerstone of the care provided. In addition to meeting patients' expectations, today's economy has increased the need for emotional intelligence, and is particularly relevant in healthcare.

Healthcare professionals are faced with several demands, such as those from patients, other staff members, payors, and regulators. Even more importantly, because patients' emotions are already heightened due to illness and issues related to their health, self-management and emotional competencies are even more necessary to cope with these potentially unhappy patients and their families (Lanser, 2000). Because of the increased difficulties in sustaining profitability, healthcare, as well as many other industries, is realizing the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace. More and more companies are seeing that encouraging emotional intelligence skills is a vital component of any organization's management philosophy.

Healthcare practitioners must possess both academic intelligence as well as emotional intelligence (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1995, 1998a; Schneller, 1997). This includes clinical knowledge and experience as well as the areas of emotional intelligence suggested by Steiner and Perry (1997). There are five skills to increase emotional intelligence: knowing your own feelings, having a sense of empathy, learning to manage emotions, repairing emotional damage, and putting it all together. Together, these constitute emotional intelligence, which enhances quality care as defined by patients' perceptions. These skills, coupled with technical skills and experience, complete the package of a competent healthcare practitioner. Each skill is equally important, yet none can exist without emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence in Nursing

The nursing profession demands that the nurse, in the process of care, has to interact with the patients, the medical fraternity and the health care workers constantly. Hence, "Nurse-Patient Interaction" is the pulse of the nursing practice. This interaction is not just conversation. It is a complex process that involves nurse perception, understanding of the patient emotions and utilization of the perceptions to manage patient situations towards the goal of effective patient care. This involves Emotional Intelligence. The concept of emotional intelligence has grown in popularity among nurses over the last two decades, generating interest both at a social and a professional level (Dawn Freshwater and Theodore Stickley, 2004).

Today, patient care not only includes quality medical care but also a care concept that encompasses respecting patient's goals, preferences and choices, obliging their emotional, social and spiritual needs using the strengths of interdisciplinary resources. Many patients suffer only when they do not receive adequate care for the symptoms accompanying their

serious illness. Thus, care cannot be confined to the physical ailment but also the psychological and spiritual needs. Hence, the role of Emotional Intelligence in the nursing profession should be viewed in two dimensions: 1) The Nurse's perception and understanding of the patient's emotions, and 2) The Nurse's utilization of these perceptions to achieve the goal of managing complex situations towards quality patient care.

Methodology

The methodology of the study is based on both primary data as well as secondary data. The study depends mainly on primary data collected through well framed structured questionnaire to obtain the well considered opinions of the respondents. The simple random sampling method is adopted to obtain clear responses from the nursing staff.

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work related outcomes

Emotional among nurses motivate them to increase their inherent potentiality and organizational commitment. The measure of commitment is always exerted in the form of work related outcomes of facing obstacles, inter-personal relationship between patients and doctors, punctuality in finishing the assigned work, planning for attrition and individual and personal concentration on their work. In order to find the impact of emotional intelligence on work related outcomes Karl-Pearson's coefficient of correlation is applied. The total average score of emotional intelligence variable and work related (WR) 5 outcomes are inter-correlated through the statistical tool correlation. The following table presents the continuous relations.

Table 1.1 The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work Related Outcomes

		WRO1	WRO2	WRO4	WRO5
EI	Pearson Correlation	.259	.281	.225	.181
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.034	.021	.067	.142
	N	67	67	67	67

From the above table it is found that emotional intelligence among nursing staff is well correlated with facing obstacles ($r = 0.259$), get along with the people ($r = 0.281$) and completion of work in time ($r = 0.284$), at 5% level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that emotional intelligence among the nurses is useful for them to get rid of the obstacles they faced during their discharge of duties. It also helps them to cope up with work related outcomes and make them to prevail in the serene atmosphere.

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Patient Service Performance

Emotional intelligence among nurses enhances to increase the patient service performance. The measure of services render to patient is always known through the relationship between the patient and doctors and their dedication towards their work. The total average score of emotional variable and patient service performance are inter-correlated through the statistical tool correlation. The following table presents the continuous relations.

Table1.2 The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Patient Service Performance

		EI	PSP
EI	Pearson Correlation	1	.257
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.036
	N	67	67
PSP	Pearson Correlation	.257	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	-
	N	67	67

From the above table it is inferred that emotional intelligence among nursing staff is well correlated with knowing the patients emotions through behavior and not frustrated giving my best when patients are restless and think clearly and stayed focused under pressure($r = 0.257$), at 5% level of significance. Therefore it is concluded that emotional intelligence among the nurses is helpful to have a good relationship with the patient and giving the best service when the patient are also frustrated and restless. It is useful to think clearly and stayed focused toward the work pressure.

Findings

1. Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work related outcomes Emotional intelligence among nursing staff is well correlated with facing obstacles ($r = 0.259$), get along with the people ($r = 0.281$) and completion of work in time ($r = 0.284$), at 5% level of significance.
2. Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Patient Service Performance: Emotional intelligence among nursing staff is well correlated with knowing the patients emotions through behavior and not frustrated giving my best when patients are restless and think clearly and stayed focused under pressure($r = 0.257$), at 5% level of significance.

Recommendations for Nurses



Nurses should understand the situation and according to that they should react. Nursing staff should have empathy when dealing with age old patients. Nursing staff should concentrate on team work and stress reducing techniques like yoga, meditation, pranayama etc. Nursing staff should have a control of emotions to excel in the work and to grow in the career. Nurses should concentrate on the self motivation and service oriented mind to get involved in the work and to reach the expected goals in time. Nurses should have concern of patients at all points of time, because the degree of the recovery of a patient depends on the degree of nursing. Nursing staff should have some human values and fundamental ethics at work place.

Conclusion

It should be recognized that emotional competencies are not mere innate talents, but learned capabilities that must be developed to achieve outstanding performance Nursing empathy, the ability of the nurse to perceive and reason, as well as the capacity to interact are seen as core characteristics of a nurse to build relationship with the ill towards care. Emotional intelligence should be more realistically and appropriately integrated into the nursing profession by a model of transformatory learning for nurse education. Today, emotional intelligence is probed as an important characteristic for building successful nursing leadership enhancing nursing performance and reducing nurse burnout.

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