

CREATING A QUIET SPACE

Mary Jo Griffith, RN Kaiser Permanente San Rafael Medical Center Mary.J.Griffith@kp.org

Introduction: In May of 2010 Kaiser San Rafael Medical Center began the journey of integrating Watson's Theory of Human Caring into nursing practice (Watson 2008). Kaiser San Rafael consists of a 119-bed acute care hospital and two medical office buildings. The Medical-Surgical-Telemetry Unit is a very busy and stressful unit. There has been a need for a quiet space for the staff, a place to reflect, relax and renew oneself. The practice of Caritas ProcessTM 8 embraces a healing environment at all levels; physical as well as non-physical (Watson 2008).

Significance: Jean Watson's theory states to practice loving-kindness towards others one must first be loving and kind to oneself. A quiet space in which to practice self-healing allows one the time to take care of oneself to be able to go forth and practice with renewed intentions.

Purpose: The purpose of this project was to create a space for healing the body, mind, and spirit. To come away with reduced stress in one's life and work by taking if just a brief moment to relax in the quiet and stillness.

Settings and Participants: The setting was a previous supply room. Participants were to be the fourth floor staff; nurses, doctors, patient-care technicians, unit clerks and EVS. It soon became obvious that this space was needed throughout our hospital community. Therefore we welcomed all our members: staff, patients and their family, and visitors.

Project Description/Process: Initially there were three nurses involved in the project which began by searching for a room. Once the room was found, permission was needed to convert the supply room. It was soon transformed by removing cupboards and painting the walls a combination of soft blue and green. No budget was provided, but two chairs and two tables were located from the hospital warehouse. This was an exciting start towards creating a healing space.

Staff members were given an opportunity to give input on what would be important to include in a quiet room. To obtain this information, they were asked for suggestions at staff meetings, in shift-huddles and in everyday conversations. The items most mentioned were music, candles, a sound machine, comfortable seating, essences and a fountain.

Upon entering the room one sees the words "faith, hope and love" stenciled on the far wall. Below this is a bulletin board with pictures of over fifty staff members displayed in the shape of a heart; the heart being significant to caritas nursing in making the space heart-centered.

On another wall is a small poster picturing flowers and the words, "the best is yet to be." Beneath this poster, there are three-dimensional butterflies in flight. A table nearby has a CD player, CDs of soft music and meditation, a sound machine, and a battery-operated candle.

There are also blank cards available that are suggested to be used as cards of gratitude, which can be addressed to a co-worker and pinned on the bulletin board to be retrieved. A journal is at hand for anyone who wishes to share their thoughts, poems or drawings.

One chair has a massage pad on it which massages and heats the back. There is also a yoga mat with a laminated sheet of examples of stretches.

Project Outcome: No formal evaluation has been completed on the quiet room, but staff members have commented on how positive it has been for them. "It's spiritual and relaxing" and "I feel at peace in the room". The journal has been used by staff and patients' families. There are drawings, poems and words of gratitude towards our care-giving practice.

Project Evaluation/Future Directions: Mary Jo Griffith has been promoting the use of the quiet room at staff meetings, Caring Advisory Council Committee meetings, Palliative Care meetings, shift huddles and the monthly *PCS Dispatch* newsletter. An evaluation tool to assess the effect that the quiet room has on reducing stress is being developed and Mary Jo is working with the staff to name the room so a placard can be made and placed next to the door.

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References: Watson, J. (2008). *Nursing: The philosophy and science of caring* (revised ed). Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado.