Healthy Transitions: From Theory to Policy

Nurses play a pivotal role in providing quality home and community care and in influencing public policy as it affects home and community healthcare. The transitions theory is used to advance nursing knowledge about the experiences and the responses to the many transitions that individuals, families, communities, and organizations encounter that influences their health. It is also used as a framework to describe the experiences and the responses to transitions and the therapeutics that nurses use which could be translated to policy and evidence-based practice, leading to better quality care in the 21st century. I will discuss the development of the transitions theory and how this theory affects the planning and delivery of nursing home care, shapes policies, and drives the development of research programs.

“Transitions” is used as an example because I strongly believe that nursing could be best defined as a discipline that embodies the art and the science of facilitating patient, family, and community transitions toward such outcomes as a sense of well-being, optimum functioning and enhanced self-care. To achieve healthy transitions and outcomes, models of care for prevention and strategies for therapeutic intervention need to be developed, tested, and evaluated. I will discuss the following possible nursing interventions in home and community care: role supplementation, transitional care, debriefing, and concierge care.

I will also discuss resources and research programs that are needed in order to facilitate the transition to homecare and the maintenance of self-care at home. These include: University of Pennsylvania’s LIFE program, palliative care, hospice care and telehealth. These resources and research programs driven by a coherent theoretical framework are crucial for the wellbeing of seniors globally.

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