

Care is... nursing student perceptions: A Heideggerian perspective

Cuidar é... percepções de estudantes de enfermagem: Um olhar heideggeriano
Cuidar es... percepciones de estudiantes de enfermería: Una visión heideggeriano

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To understand the perceptions of nursing students in terms of the care in Heidegger's perspective. **Methods:** This is a qualitative study of phenomenological approach, developed with 21 undergraduate students of the nursing course at the Federal University of Santa Catarina - Brazil who attended the course Fundamentals for Professional Care. Data were collected during class on care, through spontaneous written reports. **Results:** Care settings were built from the experiences of each academic denoting their way of life to the care and, when they shared their views they co-existed with the group, building an identity and revealing their way of being-with-the-other. Scholars realize that care is part of nursing worldliness which is the way of being a nurse. **Conclusion:** Care offers a universe of meanings in which human beings are involved in care situations and concerns with-the-other.

Keywords: Nursing care; Nursing students; Nursing education.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Desvelar as percepções dos acadêmicos de enfermagem sobre o cuidado na ótica heideggeriana. **Métodos:** Pesquisa qualitativa de abordagem fenomenológica, desenvolvida com 21 acadêmicos do curso de graduação em Enfermagem da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina que cursavam a disciplina de Fundamentos para o Cuidado Profissional. Os dados foram coletados durante aula sobre cuidado, por meio de relatos espontâneos escritos. **Resultados:** As definições de cuidado foram construídas a partir das experiências de cada acadêmico, denotando seu modo de ser para o cuidado e, quando compartilhavam suas opiniões, coexistiam com o grupo, construindo uma identidade e revelando seu modo de ser-com-o-outro. Os acadêmicos percebem que o cuidado faz parte da mundanidade da enfermagem, do modo de ser enfermeiro. **Conclusão:** O cuidado contempla um universo de significados nos quais os seres humanos estão envolvidos em situações de zelo e de preocupação com o outro.

Palavras-chave: Cuidados de enfermagem; Estudantes de enfermagem; Educação em enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Develar las percepciones de los académicos de enfermería sobre el cuidado desde la óptica heideggeriana. **Métodos:** Investigación cualitativa de abordaje fenomenológica, desarrollada con 21 estudiantes del pregrado de Enfermería de la Universidad Federal de Santa Catarina que cursaban la disciplina de Fundamentos para el Cuidado Profesional. Los datos fueron recolectados durante la clase sobre cuidado, por medio de relatos espontáneos escritos. **Resultados:** Las definiciones de cuidado fueron construidas a partir de las experiencias de cada estudiante, denotando su modo de ser para el cuidado y, cuando compartían sus opiniones, coexistían con el grupo, construyendo una identidad y relevando su modo de ser-con-el-otro. Los académicos perciben que el cuidado forma parte de la mundanidad de enfermería, del modo de ser de enfermero. **Conclusión:** El cuidado contempla un universo de significados en los cuales los seres humanos están envueltos en situaciones de cuidado y de preocupación con el otro.

Palabras clave: Cuidados de enfermería; Estudiantes de enfermería; Educación en enfermería.

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INTRODUCTION

Nursing is identified mainly by means of care. This is legitimized as an epistemological object; thus, educational institutions and the practice of professionals improve it, considering it the very essence of the profession. This knowledge domain gives it the power to take care of human beings in all dimensions of the process of living¹.

It is noted, however, that nursing care has been changing over time and went through specific stages in the development of knowledge corpus. The "come and go" of reflections on care is a theme in evidence in the science of care. It is a term that makes up the language of the area; it is understood as a way of being relational and contextual characterized as one of the very few truly independent actions in nursing².

In the quest for the improvement of discussions on care, Martin Heidegger, one of the philosophers of the twentieth century, stands out for his reflections on healing and the care nuances. Initially, the author used the Dasein expression for man's existence. He points to the way of saying that being is just something from the ways in which it reveals itself to the world in its existence, a general ontology that privileges the person as being-there. The changes the being suffers over time and their experiences open up new possibilities of coexistence as we continue to exist in time. From there, care manifests itself in the relations of the existence of Dasein. Care involves consideration and respect in the way of being, of proceeding. The concern and occupation are part of care, as move the being-with-another. Care can be understood as an act that occupies an ontic sense, or as possibilities, a sense that goes beyond the act, beyond what can be seen, occupying an ontological sense³.

Thus, the discussion in terms of care remains alive in the academic speeches as the foundation of nursing science, inching closer to the deepening of these issues. In the initial vocational training in nursing care becomes the core of the discussions. Therefore, thinking nursing education also means seeking to reflect on care, improving the teaching of care guided by the personal attention to every human being, aiming at their autonomy and wellness. Thus, it is essential to teach how care is present in the actions of health⁴.

Throughout the curriculum of the degree course in Nursing at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, the discussion on care is addressed in different disciplines. In the discipline Grounds for Professional Nursing Care (in the 3rd phase of the course), the subject is aimed at hospital care with the intention that, by introducing students in the practices, it brings together theoretical elements that support a type of care that is not limited to simple to technical activities. Reflecting on the subject allows the overcoming of the design, often simplistic and mechanistic, which is brought from students' own life experiences. In this sense, the challenge is to reframe this concept, and for this it is necessary to unveil the meaning of care for nursing students.

This text aims at unveiling the perceptions of academics regarding care, in the discipline Grounds for Professional Nursing Care of the undergraduate course in nursing at the Federal University of Santa Catarina.

METHODS

This is a qualitative research that uses Heidegger's phenomenological approach, developed with 21 nursing students of the third semester of the Nursing undergraduate course at the Federal University of Santa Catarina who enrolled in the discipline Grounds for Professional Care. The students were invited to participate in the study and were informed about the purpose of the study; those who wished to participate signed the Informed Consent.

The aforementioned discipline is organized from four foundations for care: technological and methodological, theoretical and philosophical, ethical and aesthetic; social, political and cultural. Among the various topics discussed are those related to the work process on the specifics of caring, managing and educating; care in the different theories of nursing; care methodology; semiology and semiotics; ethics and bioethics.

Data collection was carried out during the development of a class lasting four hours and the theme addressed was care methodology: importance for nursing practice and the of the care methodology steps in the different theories. For data collection a group dynamics was carried out, and it was based on three moments:

1st moment - Raising awareness: While listening to a song, the students should imagine a situation of care experience they had experienced. They were then encouraged to share their experience.

2nd moment - Individual construction of care definition: each academic received a colored paper, with the expression "Caring is...", and they should complete it.

3rd moment - Collective construction of care definition: the groups were formed according to the similarity of the colors of the papers to build collectively, from their concepts, a care definition. Finally, they shared the concepts built with the other groups.

After the establishment of the data from this study, the written reports in terms of the care definitions were set collectively and analyzed by means of a comprehensive analysis based on the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger; afterwards they were organized in units of meaning.

The project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, under Protocol 193/09, and the ethical principles concerning the Resolution 466/12 of the National Health Council/MS, which refers to research on human subjects, were observed. The students were invited to participate and were informed that they could desist at any time without damage. The identification of participants was given by the different colors of each group used in the dynamics.

RESULTS

The care definitions were built from the experiences of each academic; when they met to discuss care, they established an identity of the group itself. From the analysis of the data emerged the following meaning units: caring is being-with-the-other; caring is presence; caring is self-care; and caring is taking care of themselves.

Care means being-with-the-other

This unit of meaning, care is part of the family context learned and lived in the family, respecting the traditional and cultural values of the people; where worrying about the ways of being reflects the respect for others and their experiences in everyday life.

Caring is... to worry about the other, with their well-being. Similarly, when members of a family care about each other, they take care of one another. Professionally there should be this concern: putting yourself in another's place respecting their beliefs and values. (Yellow Group)

Caring is... to promote physical, mental and social well-being through actions such as affection, attention, empathy, love, guidance, and assistance. Care should be provided to everyone, including himself. Caring means prevention, maintenance and restoration of human well-being. (Rose Group)

Care means presence

For these groups, care goes beyond the technical dimension, as the scholars have mentioned that the needs presented by patients may be physical and/or emotional, and that comforting them increases the perspective of how care is supposed to be.

Caring is... being attentive to the needs and look for the best way to meet them. It means to worry about the other, treat them with kindness, affection, in order to do good to others and to oneself. Being close to a person when he/she most needs, providing professional support or even talking about something that comforts him/her. (White Group)

Caring means... to be present, pay attention, give a hug, a kiss, a caress. Nursing is an art based on love; it is to observe and implement measures aimed at comfort, staying tuned to the needs of the other and doing your best so that these individuals are assisted in the best possible way, seeking safety and restoring the health of the patient. (Green group)

Care means selfcare, means to take care of the self

With these words, the group presents a characteristic which exceeds not only the direct care of each other, but the encouragement of self-care and the importance of self-care, in various everyday situations.

Caring means... paying attention to someone according to that person's needs, either by listening, performing some procedure, observing; always with the objective of promoting health to the person by means of prevention and encouragement of self-care. It is also important that caregivers do not forget to look after themselves. (Blue Group)

Caring means... understanding and being aware of the other's needs and assist them through the technical and humanistic knowledge in a patient, loving, respectful and ethical way in order to promote health. It should be understood as physical, emotional and social well-being of the being, affirming and also encouraging the importance of self-care. (Pink Group)

DISCUSSION

The concepts developed by scholars bring to light issues related to the beliefs and values present in care, revealing the way of being of the students in the exercise of care. They realize that this attention may determine and influence how care will be held. This attitude is important as it demonstrates the respect and understanding that the act of caring needs, considering the different views that the being-there has in the world, that is, the being-there is in the world and gets along with it; being-there is the world, there is an essence, there is something general and predetermined that makes the being-there what it is. The essence of the being-there is the existence itself, and it is its must-be³.

Care is related to daily life, to the place where events, demonstrations, details and situations relating to the size of the details that are part of life and relationships occur⁵; of which the most diverse affinities are observed and, among these, the family as a storehouse of many experiences. In this environment, the academic has the opportunity of presenting ways of being of things for care. The man and his relationship to the world, determined in the daily life by his way of being, therefore, the being-there states what the world is³.

It can be seen that the sensitivity related to care is expanded in the sense that care does not necessarily mean practicing procedures, but also the feeling that the care can be accomplished with attitudes of subjectivity and, by understanding that it is not linear, it seeks to adapt to different situations faced in everyday life.

It is important to listen to others, comprehend and disagree, understand and agree with what is truly put to the other and what the other exposes, not with the idea of an ultimate horizon to be reached, but as a possible and procedural horizon, reviewing and rethinking the obstacles in the interaction, in a reconstructive and good way⁶. Care cannot be the product of an exclusively instrumental knowledge provided of scientific and technological knowledge; otherwise, only part of the care dimension, which is the technical success, is obtained. If you want to achieve practical success to produce care it is necessary, in addition

to the instrumental dimension, the production of meetings and dialogues between subjects, health/services professional subjects, user subjects and population⁷.

It is essential to resume the concepts involving health care, rethinking the therapeutic encounter, which should not be moved exclusively by technique, but with the ethical challenge of not letting technique replace encounter, seeking the quality of this meeting⁸. Therefore, the exercise of coming and going is important in the discussion concerning care, and it needs to be revisited as an ontological issue so it can be disseminated and taught in its various ontic manners, without the risk of crystallizing the inauthentic mode of care, which, after the training, is still seen by egress through the eyes of the teacher².

In this context, care is revealed in the relations of the existence of people who care and are cared for. It involves consideration and respect in the way of being, of proceeding. Concern and occupation are part of care, since they move the being-with-the-other³.

Thus, care is fully enveloped in the actions of human beings and is part of human existence, such as manifestations of sharing, exchange, and reciprocity. In this sense, care in the health field is implied in the relationship between employee and user in that values and care modes are shared and built demonstrating and establishing negotiations aimed at care actions⁵.

In this complex context of relations nursing professionals need to take care of themselves, understanding the uniqueness of the human being, empowering themselves and realizing their abilities and weaknesses, making the process of caring and healing. Nurses may be the professionals who are mostly in contact with patients or healthy individuals. They live with the suffering of others, and cannot fail to take care of themselves, because this is the only way they may be well with others and can take care of them⁹. The personal care of nursing professionals should not be forgotten and when it comes to who takes care of the other, and the way they look after themselves also needs to be considered and understood¹⁰. The working conditions of nurses may reflect on their health and the quality of assistance provided by them, and to minimize this problem, it is essential that professionals are united in achieving better quality of working life and recognize the importance of self-care¹¹. This theme can be discussed since graduation, with the aim of raising awareness among future professionals in terms of the importance of the subject.

Directing the gaze and acting beyond the visible, reflecting on teaching and on education in the undergraduate nursing course open the possibilities of qualification for nurses and can make them flexible and tolerant, and lead them to be healthier human beings and citizens; they can be more aware of themselves and others, with a greater ability to understand and love, with more potential for a complex care⁹.

The process of nursing training is marked by education, which is structured in a context involving the process of teaching and learning, the structure of the educational institution, the

teaching staff and the academic, which together form a network in constant motion. In this scenario, "nurses working in nursing education seek to reflect upon their practices in everyday teaching and learning, since driving new nurse practitioners to the labor market is a continuing challenge"^{12:158}.

Nursing teachers and students face constant challenges so that knowledge is incorporated into their experiences. It makes them think of innovative strategies implemented by the educational proposals and points to possibilities for building a participatory and inclusive society in which students are subjects and understand their learning path critically¹².

Building a process of teaching and learning that enables mutual and continuous reflection of students and nursing teachers is a challenge for education, given that this process involves different individuals and care that are complex themselves. Listening, speaking, and thinking about what to insert in the training process daily life are undoubtedly important skills in nursing care education, since "it is considered that listening is a way of examining the extensive human experience, that is, our values, the intensity of our emotions, and the standards of our thought processes"^{13:550}.

Therefore reflecting on the process of teaching care is a complex task; it is more than the development of skills. In this case the role of educators is to create possibilities involving relationship, respect, ethics, and acknowledgment of others and themselves in this scenario, for, "considering the health and education professionals we are, the possibility for making the relationship between care and education opens up, acknowledging this interdependence, because when we provide care we educate and when we educate we provide care"^{14:298}.

The challenge of teaching care for future nursing professionals means more than passing knowledge; it means providing students with the experience of care, of being cared for and taking care of yourself by setting up the preservation of the life cycle that takes place throughout the process of living of human beings. Thus, in order to exercise the competence to teach nursing, nursing teachers need to recognize it as such, and understand that being a nursing professor does not only mean imparting knowledge; rather get involved with this universe in which caring means learning to teach, and also teaching to learn, in the constant reflection in terms of their knowledge and doings in nursing, as well as their modes of being a nurse¹⁵.

CONCLUSION

The reports of the academics reveal their understanding in terms of care, taking into account that the construction of the care concept is a complex activity, given that it involves various dimensions, such as the contextual, anthropological, educational, philosophical and technological ones. Scholars realize that care is part of a complex world in which caring and caring for oneself are important for the performance of nursing activities and for their strengthening.

However, reflecting on a theme that is so often commented by nursing professional is not an easy task, as care goes beyond the implementation of nursing techniques and procedures. The care presented here comprises a universe of meanings in which human beings are wrapped in various situations in actions that go beyond the barriers of technicality.

The topic of discussion during the initial training process represents, for nursing, professionals with broad insight into the meaning of what is care in nursing, so that in their future exercise these professionals may engage in this activity with competence and sensitivity.

This discussion does not end, but that this study will encourage other professionals both in teaching and in nursing care to reflect upon the care they performed and thus improve the nursing profession.

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