A MODEL FOR NURSING: UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL OF NURSING

MARGARET A. CAMPBELL
MARY J. CRUISE
T. ROSE MURAKAMI

A model for nursing provides a framework for viewing the phenomena about which nursing is concerned: man and the ways in which nursing cares for man. Conceptual in nature, the model is drawn from reality and pertains to reality, but does not constitute reality (Johnson, 1969). As a conceptual framework, the model serves to give direction to nursing practice, research and curriculum development.

The purpose of this paper is to present and explain the model for nursing developed by the School of Nursing at the University of British Columbia*. Designed to view man as a behavioural system, the U.B.C. Model is formed by certain assumptions about man. Supporting these assumptions is a set of beliefs about nursing and its practice. The assumptions and statements of beliefs define nursing's unique function and identity why, when and how this function is carried out.

THE U.B.C. MODEL FOR NURSING

BELIEFS ABOUT NURSING AND ITS PRACTICE

1. Nursing is a member of the team of health professions whose ultimate goal is the optimal health of man.
2. Nursing makes a unique contribution to the goal of optimal health of man.
3. Nursing assumes responsibility for defining and delimiting its unique function.
4. Nursing's unique function is to nurture man during critical periods of his life cycle so that he may develop and utilize a range of coping behaviours which permit him to satisfy his basic human needs and thereby move toward optimal health.
5. The nurturing of man during the critical periods of his life cycle makes a significant difference in the way he copes with these periods.
6. Nursing also has both the privilege and responsibility to determine which of the shared and delegated tasks, traditionally assigned and accepted for a variety of reasons, it will assume, to maximize the quality of total health care provided to individuals.

*The model has been in the process of development since 1972. The contributions made by faculty members to its development are acknowledged.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MAN

1. Man has basic human needs* which he experiences as tensions.
2. Man constantly strives to satisfy each basic human need by using a range of coping behaviours.
3. Man constantly seeks harmony and balance as he strives to satisfy multiple and co-existing needs.
4. Man's coping behaviours are organized into repetitive, predictable patterns which become his characteristic way of meeting his needs.
5. Development of man's coping behaviours is dependent upon his growth, maturation, and life experiences.
6. When man encounters a critical period in his life cycle, his repertoire of coping behaviours may not allow him to satisfy one or more of his needs.
7. When coping behaviours do not permit satisfaction of basic human needs man experiences a threat to his survival or growth.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT MAN AS A BEHAVIOURAL SYSTEM

1. Man may be viewed as a behavioural system made up of nine subsystems.
2. Each subsystem is responsible for the satisfaction of one basic human need.
3. Each subsystem may be viewed as a life space.**
4. The structure of each subsystem consists of two parts:
   a) an inner-personal region representing a basic human need and abilities to meet that need,
   b) a psychological environment representing the need-satisfying goal and the forces influencing its attainment.
5. The function of each subsystem is to achieve its specific goal through the following behavioural process:
   a) perception of the need to be met by the subsystem,
   b) recognition of need, goal, abilities and forces,
   c) planning (selecting possible alternatives) to achieve the goal,
   d) action directed toward goal achievement.
6. Each subsystem is interacting and interdependent with every other subsystem.
7. The subsystems are in a balanced relationship with each other and the system is in a balanced relationship with its environment. (Behavioural system balance).
8. Behavioural system balance (steady state) is maintained by feedback mechanisms operating within the system and between the system and the environment.
9. Each subsystem has the potential to develop cognitive and executive abilities.
10. The behavioural system has the potential for growth through the orderly progression of maturation within each substyem.
11. The behavioural system is constantly experiencing tensions arising from internal and external sources.
12. The behavioural system uses tension-reducing responses to make both internal adjustments and adaptions to the environment.
13. Maturation influences the tension-reducing responses used at any given time.
14. When tension-reducing responses are inadequate to maintain behavioural system balance, imbalance results.

*Hereafter "need" refers to "basic human need".

**The concept of life space has been adapted from Lewin's field theory. See Bigge (1971) pp. 179-197.

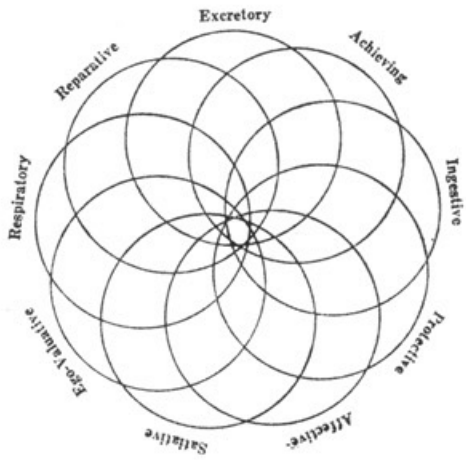

Fig. 1 — Behavioural system of man

EXPLANATION OF THE MODEL

Discussion will serve to clarify these assumptions and statements of beliefs. In the view of man as a behavioural system, each subsystem represents a basic human need. The structure of the system and the interacting and interdependent nature of its parts are shown in Figure 1.

Each subsystem is responsible for the satisfaction of one basic human need. Need satisfaction is determined in relation to goal achievement. The needs and goals are listed in Table 1.

The way in which man's needs are satisfied and goals achieved is dependent upon subsystem structure. This structure is shown in Figure 2.

Man is assumed to have tensions that are the concrete experiences of basic human needs requiring satisfaction. Tension-reduction is equated with need satisfaction. Man uses behaviours of all kinds: physical, physiological, psychological and sociological, to reduce tensions and thereby satisfy basic human needs. These tension-reducing behaviours are coping behaviours.

Coping behaviours are a reflection of both subsystem structure and function. Cognitive abilities or the capacity to know and executive abilities or the capacity to act, are essential determinants of coping behaviours. Forces influence coping behaviours and determine movement toward or away from a subsystem goal. Each subsystem uses problem-solving, that is, perceiving, recognizing, planning and acting to achieve its goal and satisfy the need. It is this last step of the problem-solving process — acting — which constitutes coping behaviours.

Table 1: Need and Goal of Each Subsystem

Subsystem	Need	Goal
Reparative	For balance between production and utilization of energy	Capacity for activity
Excretory	For collection and removal of accumulated wastes	Absence of accumulated waste
Achieving	For mastery	Feelings of accomplishment; satisfaction with accomplishments
Ingestive	For intake of food and fluid; nourishment	Nourishment; satisfaction of hunger and thirst
Protective	For safety and security	Integrity of the system
Affective	For love, belongingness and dependence	Feelings of love belongingness and dependence
Satiative	For stimulation of the system's senses (i.e. hearing, vision, smell, touch and taste.)	Sensory satisfaction
Ego-valuative	For respect of self by self and others	Self-Esteem
Respiratory	For intake of oxygen	Oxygenation; easy respirations

Thus far, the assumptions about man and man as a behavioural system have been presented and discussed. This aspect of the model provides part of the framework for viewing the phenomena with which nursing is concerned. The rest of the framework is provided by the statements of beliefs about nursing and its practice.

The model is based on the belief that nursing's unique function is to nurture man during critical periods of his life cycle so that he may develop and utilize a range of coping behaviours which permit him to satisfy his basic human needs and thereby move towards optimal health. This implies that the recipient of nursing care is any individual in a critical period, that is, a maturational stage or an unpredictable event. During this period in his life cycle, an individual encounters demands for modifying existent coping behaviours and/or for developing new ones in order to satisfy his needs. Nurturing activities, described as fostering, protecting, sustaining and teaching, are directed toward reducing negative forces, maintaining and strengthening positive forces and fostering the development of cognitive and executive abilities. As a result of nursing interventions, the individual develops coping behaviours to deal effectively with the critical period so that behavioural system balance is maintained.

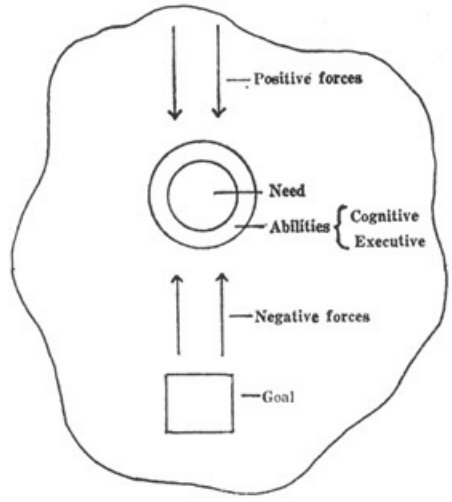

Fig. 2 — The structure of a subsystem

CONCLUSION

In the presentation of the U.B.C. Model for Nursing the beliefs and assumptions have been outlined and explained. From the discussion, it is evident that, when nursing views man as described in this model, system balance is the desired goal. Nursing's function is to nurture man, the behavioural system, threatened by or in a state of imbalance during critical periods of his life cycle. By reducing negative forces, maintaining and strengthening positive forces and by fostering the development of cognitive and executive abilities, nursing seeks to ensure the development and use of coping behaviours which promote man's movement toward optimal health.

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