

A grounded theory of courage in nursing – a complex, multi layered phenomenon

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Background

The nursing strategy Compassion in practice, lists courage as one of the 6 C's embedded into everything nurses do in (Cummings and Bennett 2012). The 6C's are also the value base for the framework 'Leading change, adding value' (NHS England 2016). These key nursing publications affirm the need for courage.

Nurses are directed to have courage – *“to speak up when we have concerns and to have personal strength and vision”* (Compassion in practice pg 13 2012)

However, research on courage in nursing is sparse and how courage is realised has not been explored.

Charmazian Grounded theory

- Social constructionist GT approach
- Purposive sampling
 - 12 initial unstructured interviews
- Theoretical sampling
 - 4 semi-structured interviews
- Constant comparative analysis
- Clarification of categories
- Development of an emergent co-constructed theory

(Charmaz 2014)



Emergent themes

Prerequisites to courage

Realising courage in nursing

Courage and its consequences





Prerequisites to courage

- Personal
 - Gender, self esteem, age, life experience, personality, moral values
- Professional
 - Traditional role, the nurse persona, game playing, resilience, team trust, support and encouragement
- Learning about courage
 - Innate or developed? Knowledge, experience and education



Realising courage in nursing


- Psychological aspects
Personal view, like a lion, risk taking, doing it for you
- Socialization
Impact of gender and the hierarchy
- Morality
Doing the right thing, saying no, speaking to patients and families, telling the truth
- Professional aspects
Doing my job, being brave, practical action, finding your voice, advocacy, whistleblowing

Consequences

- Psychological
Rewards, positive regard, emotional toll, bearing discomfort
- Social
Ostracized, negative labelling
- Organizational
Perceived loss of role or job



The consequences have potential to impact on nursing retention (Barchard et al 2017)



An evolving theory - Realising courage

Prerequisites contribute to realizing courage

Courage may be realised, stifled or disabled

There are consequences (positive and negative) to realizing courage

These have a cyclical impact on realizing, stifling or disabling courage



Conclusions

Courage is a complex phenomenon

The emergent theory of courage in nursing, suggests nursing as a profession continues to be constrained by its history, as a socially constructed, gendered female, caring occupation.



Conclusions

Nurses need more than directing to use courage. This study found the following are influential in the realization of courage:

- Socialization
- Education
- Support
- Organisation culture

Thanks for
listening

Any
Questions





References

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