

# The Perceived Language of Caring

A Research Study

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# It started with a conversation

What does caring practice look like?

What are the words and actions nurses use to display caring?

And how do patients request ‘the call to nurse’.

This study seeks to begin to understand these questions from the perspective of nursing students

# Why does it matter?

1. Current nursing theories that drive our practice stress nurse caring
2. NLN standards include caring as the first value
3. QSEN ..includes patient centered care, teamwork & collaboration

While, communicating caring in the nursing profession is achieved through the nurse's use of words, phrases, and actions...

What words, phrases, and actions are used by nurses is largely unknown

# Background

Today's healthcare environment struggles meeting regulatory compliance .

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) surveys include:

*How often did the nurse treat you with dignity and respect?*

*How often did the nurse listen carefully to you?*

Understanding how nurses and patients interpret nurse-patient interactions will give insight into

# What the literature tells us

Current research offers many insights into how to structure conversations with patients that will lead to high quality PCC and high quality outcomes. (Balek, Conway, Zipperer & Watson, 2011; Rosenzweig, Kuspinar, Daskaloppulou & Mayo, 2014; AHRQ, 2015; IHI, 2014).

Communication using language perceived as caring will lead to overall improvements in the patient experience (Norman, Rossillo, & Skelton, 2016).

# The Research Question

How do nursing students perceive the 'art of nursing' in caring for their patients?



# Methods

## Qualitative study design

hermeneutic phenomenological method used

## Recruitment and Sample size:

All undergraduate nursing students were invited to complete the online survey.

IRB approval obtained

# The study

The students were asked to reflect on and answer the following three questions:

1. List 5 words or phrases you would use in providing patient care that you feel display caring or kindness.
2. List 5 word or phrases when you hear them from your patient would signal a 'call to nurse'.
3. List 5 actions you do in providing care that show you care.

# Results

## Respondent Distribution by Program Type

Program Type	Frequency	Percent
Traditional BSN	41	64.1
Accelerated Second Degree	10	16.1
RN-BSN	11	17.2
Did not answer	2	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

# Results

Q1- words/phrases used in providing care that you feel display caring

- **Language of caring:** specific and consistent word choices; listening, understanding, empathy, compassion
- **Offering self:** 'I am here', 'I will help you through this' and 'Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable?'
- **Direct invitation:** 'what can I do to help you?', 'what can I do to help?'

# Results

Q2- words/phrases from your patient that would signal a ‘call to nurse?’”

- **Direct invitation:** ‘I need a ‘nurse’, ‘help me?’
- **Emotional interpretation:** ‘crying’, ‘ moaning’, nurse observing non-verbal behaviors

# Results

Q3- actions you do in providing care that show you care

**Relationship building:** 'getting to know the person as whole person', make genuine conversation'.

**Active listening:** listening intently, give undivided attention. Specifically the student nurses used the word 'listening' 31 times!

**Kind gestures:** 'providing warm blankets'



# Discussion

- Students consistently used words such as 'listening', 'kindness' and 'empathy,' to display caring in their practice.
- nursing does indeed have a language unique to aid in the formation of compassionate nurse-patient relationships.
- a recognition of the patient as a full partner in their care through *direct invitations* and *offering of self*, it can be seen that undergraduate nursing students place a strong emphasis on PCC.
- Students understand the need for direct listening and kind gestures in order to provide caring patient care.

# Conclusion

- This study revealed a consistent language used by student nurses to structure caring conversations.
- Nursing educators could conceivably incorporate and encourage the use of caring language into existing classroom, simulation, and clinical experiences.
- Hospitals can use this information to nurture newly licensed nurses abilities to communicate caring in a clinical setting.
- Developing caring communication has the potential to improve the patient experience and quality outcomes.

# Next Steps



Repeat this study for practicing nurses.  
research into the clinical environment.

With a goal to develop a universally  
understood set of words, language and  
behaviors to that would be universally used  
for caring relationships.



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# Questions?

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