Preparing Students as Nurse Leaders to ACT with Conviction for Social Justice

**WHY SOCIAL JUSTICE?**

Nursing has a social mandate to address health disparities.

Nursing has roots in public health and social activism.

The concept of social justice is complex, multifaceted, and changing in meaning and implications regarding fairness, impact on the vulnerable and marginalized, and relevance to rapidly expanding globalization.

Nurses as change agents can mobilize interdisciplinary healthcare teams to improve health outcomes for those who cannot speak or act for themselves, to give a voice to the voiceless, and to empower individuals, families, and communities from a capacity and strengths perspective.

**PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK**

The purpose of this concept analysis is to:

1. Utilize Rogers’ (2000) evolutionary method to clarify the concept of social justice.
2. Delineate attributes, antecedents, and consequences of the concept as relevant to nursing research and practice.
3. Provide a working definition of the concept of social justice.
4. Imply further implications for preparing students as nurse leaders to act with conviction for social justice.
5. Model Exemplar (Handout)

Rogers, B.L. (1989).

**DEFINITION**

Social justice can be defined as mutual choice to engage in collective action and capacity building for the common good, which promotes health equality of opportunity, outcomes, and treatment; supports respect for human dignity and well-being; and fosters self-determination and participation.

**ANTECEDENTS**

- Mutuality for reciprocal and purposeful action
- Capacity building
- Equality of opportunity, outcomes, and treatment
- Choice to engage in collective action for the common good
- Respect for human dignity and well-being
- Self-determination and participation for all stakeholders

**ATTRIBUTES**

- Awakened social consciousness through social critique, critical multiculturalism, and expanded social relatedness.
- Awareness of disparities and sensitivity to the causes and impact of health disparities and health inequities on the social, economic, moral, and political fabric of society.
- Skill in advocacy, coalition building, and policy change through social activism at micro social and macro social levels.
- Recognition of people and communities from a strengths perspective rather than a victims perspective.

**CONSEQUENCES**

- Development of positive social environments
- Empowerment and engagement of health professionals and community partners
- Decrease in health disparities and health inequities
- Formation of sustainable partnerships to share resources and meet mutual goals.
- Creation of diverse health systems which reflect a dynamic multicultural society

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Continual examination of:
- how nurses perceive and approach unjust societal structures
- how knowledge is socially constructed within the context of its creation
- how the concept of social justice will provide the basis for the development of frameworks to prepare nursing leaders, educators, researchers, and practitioners

**CHRISTINE BECK, PH.D., M.S.N./M.A., A.P.R.N.-B.C., C.T.N.**

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