

Compassion Energy

A Heideggerian Approach

In this innovative study, clinical care expert Dorothy Dunn explores what keeps nurses in the nursing profession by examining relational experiences between nurse and patient in the context of the nursing situation. Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology grounded Dr. Dunn's approach to this book and was the primary method used to interpret the meaning nurse participants attached to their everyday professional lives. Compassion Energy is a qualitative study based on the accounts of eight registered nurse participants who provided rich descriptive data from which four relational themes emerged: Practicing from Inner Core Beliefs, Understanding the Other from Within, Making a Difference, and Nursing as an Evolving Process. The Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology method draws from the philosophical concepts of Heidegger's Being and Time, including authenticity, care, choice, conscience, decision, everydayness, responsibility, and "being-there" or "existence" (Dasein), all of which were utilized in the analysis. The hermeneutical interpretative process guided Dr. Dunn to synthesize these themes into a constitutive pattern of meaning which the researcher has named "intentional compassion energy." In intentional caring consciousness, the nurse intentionally knows the patient as a whole. Compassion energy is the intersubjective gift of compassion that gives nurses the opportunity to communicate most effectively with their patients. It is composed of compassionate presence, patterned nurturance, and intentionally knowing the nursed and self as wholes. Intentional compassion energy is thus defined as the regeneration of the nurse's capacity to foster interconnectedness when the nurse activates the intent to nurse. Intentional compassion energy was discovered in the meaning of the nurse participants being in their everydayness of practice. The participants described the intention to care compassionately as the grounding of their practice, striving to understand the other, to make a difference while living their nursing careers as an evolving process. Compassion Energy provides an opening to discover what keeps nurses in nursing.

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