The Nurse as Advocate: A Grounded Theory Perspective

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What is a Nurse Advocate?
In one sentence, describe the role of the nurse advocate.
Significance to Healthcare & Nursing

- Affordable Care Act (ACA) (2010)
- Professional entry standards for RNs
- Legal cases

*If the nurse advocate role is not clarified, how can the nurse be held responsible for it?*
Do nurses act as advocates and, if so, what form does that advocacy take?
To identify, examine and discover the advocacy process as it informs the role of the nurse advocate.
Findings Regarding Advocacy in the Literature

- Searched multiple terms, disciplines & theories from 1972 to 2012:
  - Poorly represented.
  - Concept frequently used, ill defined
  - Conflicting views
  - Minimal empirical research
  - Poor connection between literature & education
  - Lack of:
    - consensus among nurse leaders
    - standardized instruments
    - a plan of action
    - a comprehensive model
    - direct connection between advocacy for the patient, the profession, and health policy
Theoretical Definition of Advocacy

- “a dynamic process through which the nurse engages in a set of actions with broadly stated goals ultimately effecting a desired change at any level of patient care, health care systems and/or health policy” (Sessler Branden, 2012)
Methodology

- Corbin & Strauss Grounded Theory methodology was used

- Sampling:
  - Purposive sample of peer-identified nurse leaders/advocates from the FAAN Roster of June 2010
  - Nurse leaders from academia, research, administration, nursing organizations, policy work and clinical practice were represented
  - Saturation achieved with n = 13

- Data Collection & Analysis:
  - Telephone interviews were digitally recorded
  - Theoretical sampling used to avoid early concept closure thus allowing for saturation of each concept
  - Interview transcripts were coded using focused, open and axial coding techniques to determine concepts and sort them into categories
  - Additional data sources were researcher’s field notes, memos and participants’ CVs
The Paradigm Model

- The Paradigm Model is “an analytic strategy for integrating structure with process” (Corbin & Strauss, p. 87, 2008) that assists the researcher to think about relationships within the data in order to identify the context and to link it to the process.

- Initial GT Analyses of open axial coding led to Categories & Codes = 10 categories, 89 codes.

- Ultimately, the emerging info. was richer, deeper and more dynamic ➔ moved to a Conditional Matrix.
The Conditional Matrix

- The Conditional Matrix can be used to explain the complexity of a topic by enriching the analysis and helping the researcher sort through the range of conditions and consequences associated with location of and response to events (Corbin & Strauss (2008), p.91) especially as they can change in relation to the context.

- Refined Coding System = 6 categories, 55 codes*

- Final Coding System = 3 Main Categories, 8 Subcategories & 41 Codes
Theoretical Categories

- Higher level categories are derived from concepts emerging from the data and are the theoretical categories that comprise the theoretical model (Corbin & Strauss, 2008)

- Foundational Conditions: Internal characteristics, Environmental characteristics

- Component Actions:
  - Assessment Components: Identify and Strategize
  - Goal Components: Facilitate, Empower, Promote

- In the aggregate these components make up the advocacy process
- The complexity of the nurse advocate role is shown through the interrelationships of the components, with each action being tied to the other actions
The Sessler Branden Advocacy Theory (SBAT): a midrange, pragmatic nursing theory
Foundational Conditions

- Internal Characteristics
- Environmental Characteristics
Foundational Conditions lead to the Conditional Context
Conditional Context leads to the nurse’s Decision to Advocate or not
These lead to the main topic *To Advocate* which is made up of 5 Component Actions
Assessment Components:
-To Identify
-To Strategize
Goal Components are identified by the nurse after the early Assessment Components are complete.

- To Facilitate
- To Empower
- To Promote
The five Components within the large triangle form the main actions of the core phenomenon = To Advocate

PSB, SBAT, 2013
Levels of the SBAT Matrix in which the advocacy action occurs are seen in the concentric arcs above the advocacy triangle.
Intervening Conditions:
positive and negative occurrences that can change an advocacy action
This study has contributed to the extant knowledge of the nurse as advocate and has identified and explicated the role of the nurse advocate.

The Sessler Branden Advocacy Theory (SBAT), has bridged the existing knowledge with a substantive, pragmatic theory that can be applied and utilized by any nurse in any situation where advocacy is needed.
Implications for Nursing

- Practice
- Education
- Research
- Health Policy
• **Educators:**
  - Understand and become proficient in the nurse advocate role
  - Model the advocate role for students
  - Integrate the advocate role into:
    - Educational program essentials & levels
    - Program curricula
    - Program certification
    - Mentoring
    - Educational funding & grants
  - Ways to integrate specific to an institution’s mission:
    - Patient advocacy
    - Advocacy for student nurses’ groups/NSNA chapters
    - Advocacy for partnerships within the community
    - National advocacy for the underserved
    - Global community advocacy
References

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

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