

Well-being



The psychosocial & spiritual aspects of well-being in people with far-advanced disease.

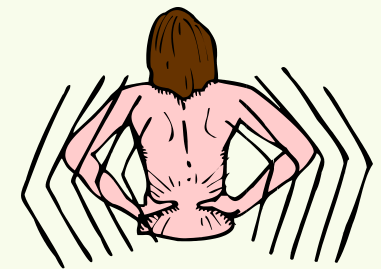
Suffering

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Describe the multiple causes of suffering and distinguish between suffering and pain.

Introduction

- Differences between Pain & Suffering:
 - Intertwining considerations of pain and suffering does violence to both pain and suffering.
- Example
 - Childbirth pain is not typically linked to suffering.
- Pain with Meaning vs. Meaningless Pain
 - Pain with meaning is pain associated with healing or with injury (i.e. the pain of contact with a hot stove).
 - Meaningless pain does not protect the individual and is often indicative of a degenerative process.



Assumptions

- Pain and suffering are NOT inextricably linked
- Suffering can be ameliorated – but not always



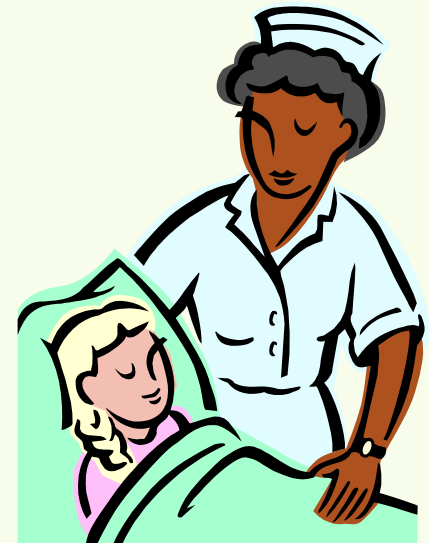
Definition of Terms

- Suffer & Suffering:
 - Often in definitions, verbs such as *undergo*, *endure*, and *be affected with*, are paired with nouns such as *grief*, *pain*, *injury*, and *loss*.
 - The archaic derivation of suffer emphasizes “endure.”
- Further synonyms:
 - suffer
 - tolerate
 - connive



Link Between Pain & Suffering

- The individual who has pain that is unrelieved is in distress
 - Distress is *magnified* if the individual is surrounded by health care providers who dismiss the pain.
 - Pain is accompanied by the sense of desolation and suffering ensues.
 - Distress is *alleviated* if individual is cared for by professionals committed to relieving the pain
 - The person is still in pain but is comforted by the knowledge that attempts at pain relief are being undertaken.



Distinction Between Pain & Suffering I

- Pain may occur without suffering
 - Such pain is often short-term.
- Pain associated with suffering is usually of longer duration
 - Pain may occur without suffering.
- Suffering may be experienced without physical precursors
 - Pain hurts physically whereas suffering may hurt physically but is accompanied by psychosocial and spiritual effects.

(Cassell, 1976)



Distinction Between Pain & Suffering II

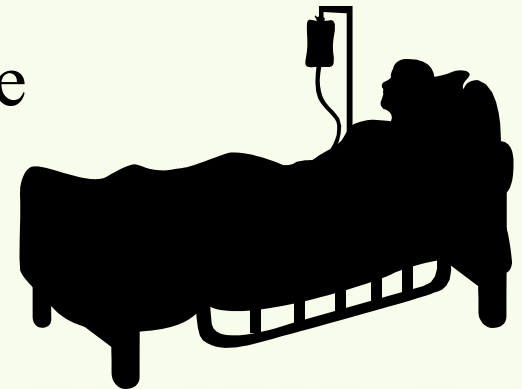
- Sickness and understanding suffering:
 - Sickness is in part a loss of connectedness.
 - The word “Hopeless” stands for disconnectedness.”
 - With serious illness the connection to the familiar self is threatened.
 - The person who is hopeless is disconnected from the familiar self and cast into a world where he or she is no longer in control.



Cassell, Eric J. *The Healer's Art – A New Approach to the Doctor-Patient Relationship*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976.

Suffering Absence Pain I

- The world of the sick (Cassell, 1976):
 - Loss of the sense of indestructibility and a loss of the sense of omnipotence.
 - Loss of the sense of indestructibility is kept at bay during times of wellness.
- Loss of control in other situations:
 - Individuals who are incarcerated are separated from what was their familiar environment.
- Those who have made peace with the world are not suffering.



Suffering Absence Pain II

- Loraine Day's story:
 - Loraine Day is thirty-year-old married mother of a four-year-old.
 - She insisted that no one speak negative thoughts in her presence.
 - She did not want to discuss her health status.
 - She put all her energy into staying alive. She told her husband 24 hours before she died: "I can't fight anymore."
 - Her suffering was enhanced by health care providers who did not respect Lorraine's struggle to live.



Amelioration of Suffering

- Approaches to suffering are not to be undertaken as a substitute for good pain management
 - There is no excuse for not relieving pain.
 - The inadequacy of medication prescription and provision by doctors and nurses contributes to the pain and suffering of patients
- Cassell's thoughts on suffering:
 - “Suffering is an affliction of the person, not the body.”



Conclusion

- The relief of suffering brings to bear a holistic approach to patient care.
 - This holistic approach acknowledges patient as person and caregiver as person.
 - The role of the caregiver as person is to be present and accompany the patient as person
 - The cure, if it occurs, will be of the social body.

