Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
An Exploration of the Nature of Therapeutic Nursing in a General Rehabilitation Team

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Nursing at Massey University

Eileen Price

1997
Abstract

The role of the nurse in the rehabilitation specialty has been defined in terms of the tasks and functions which nurses perform. Whilst the therapeutic contribution of other disciplines is more clearly understood, the extent to which nursing activities are therapeutic is not clear. Therapy is defined as activity which brings about healing or an improved outcome for the customer and is arguably the raison d'être of the rehabilitation specialty.

The purpose of this study was to explore the concept of therapeutic nursing in a rehabilitation context from the perspective of the nurse and the customer. The purpose was not to explore all aspects of nursing activity. This was neither within the scope of the study nor necessarily consistent with the research question.

The aim was to make more transparent to nurses and to their colleagues just what constitutes the therapeutic work of nursing in rehabilitation, enabling nurses to focus specifically on activity which is of a therapeutic nature and consequently offer nursing which is specifically rehabilitative.

The investigator was the Team Leader of a General Rehabilitation Team in a rehabilitation unit located in a major city in New Zealand. The study design used the Focus Group method to collect data from nurse participants in the team. Thematic analysis applied to the data generated nurse-validated categories of therapeutic activity. Also, during the study discharged customer participants were invited to answer a questionnaire about their perceptions of the nature of therapeutic nursing activity. The responses facilitated a comparison between nurse and customer perceptions of therapeutic nursing. Major themes were extracted from the data and there was congruency between nurse and customer data. Together these themes created a profile of the nurse as a coach. This role constitutes a leadership role in the team, with the customer and with the family. Coaching activity supports the
customer through the rehabilitation programme, assists in overcoming barriers to progress and creates opportunities to develop independence.

A new model for rehabilitation nursing practice is proposed, and recommendations for practice, research and education are described.
Acknowledgements

This thesis was conducted under the academic supervision of

Dr. Gillian Eyres White
Senior Lecturer
Department of Nursing and Midwifery
Massey University

Her continued guidance and support throughout the course of this research is gratefully acknowledged.

The author is indebted to the following people for their support and assistance in the conduction of this study:

- Dr. Rod Watts, Manager, Rehab Plus for his permission to conduct the study at Rehab Plus.
- Christine Clements, Clinical Nurse Advisor, Rehab Plus without whose support, energy and commitment in recruiting participants this study could not have been conducted.
- The study participants for their time, commitment and most importantly, their stories of practice.

This study is dedicated to my husband whose patience and love made the solitary business of study possible, and to nurses in the General Rehab Team who provide coaching, often in the face of many difficulties.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.
He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalm 18:6
# Table of Contents

| Abstract | ii-iii |
| Acknowledgements | iv |
| Table of Contents | v-vii |
| List of Tables and Figures | viii |

## Chapter One: Introduction

1-7

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

8-31

- Role of the nurse in rehabilitation 8-11
- Defining therapeutics and healing 11-12
- Conceptual models of therapeutic nursing 12-16
- Primary nursing 16-18
- Case management 19
- Therapeutic relationships 19-21
- Caring as therapy 21-23
- Classification of therapeutic nursing practice 23-27
- Testing nursing interventions and research-based practice 27-28
- Therapeutic touch and non-traditional therapies in nursing 28-30

## Chapter Three: Method and Study Design

32-61

### Part One: Focus group method

- Focus group method 32-35
- Validity, reliability and trustworthiness in focus group method 35-37
- Methodological strengths and limitations 38-39
- Application of the method 39-44
- Data recording 45
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>45-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison with other methods</td>
<td>49-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Two: Focus group method and the therapeutic nursing study</strong></td>
<td>53-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study</td>
<td>53-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data recording and transcription</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>58-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting the data</td>
<td>59-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer feedback</td>
<td>60-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four: Data analysis</strong></td>
<td>62-108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part One: Focus group data</strong></td>
<td>63-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the team</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth Operations</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to the team</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the individual</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention to people</td>
<td>74-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling others to act</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing out the best</td>
<td>85-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the family</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making room for others to contribute</td>
<td>92-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsoring</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Two: Customer data analysis</strong></td>
<td>94-108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the team</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to the team</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth Operations</td>
<td>96-98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the individual</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying attention to people</td>
<td>100-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling others to act</td>
<td>103-104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing out the best</td>
<td>104-105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>106-108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Five: Discussion

Study design and method: strengths and limitations
Trustworthiness, validity and reliability
Discussion of findings
Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the team
  Teamwork
  Nursing leadership
  Collaboration
Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the individual
  Trust, control, self-awareness and respect for the individual
Coaching: face-to-face leadership with the family
Summary
  Leadership and management: the nurse: coach
  Coaching in the sports context
  Teaching: the nurse: coach
  Relationship: the nurse:coach
Development of a model of therapeutic nursing practice
in the rehabilitation specialty

Chapter Six: Study findings and conceptual models

Chapter Seven: Conclusion
  Implications for practice, education and further research

Appendices

References
List of Tables

Table 1:1  Tasks and functions of the nurse in the rehabilitation setting
Table 1:2  Healing or caretaking - which will it be? 14-15
Table 4:1  Summary of categories from nursing focus group data
Table 4:2  Summary of categories from customer questionnaire data
Table 5:1  Coaching: face-to-face with the individual. Nurse and customer categories
Table 5:2  Family: nursing and customer categories 131
Table 5:3  Role of the coach in relation to performance and relationship
Table 5:4  Role of the coach in relation to performance and relationship (the study)

List of Figures

Figure 5:1  The Nurse:Coach Model: Face-to-face Leadership 145
Figure 5:2  Essential constituents of the nurse:coach role 146