Long before holism became a popular medical buzzword, Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA) at Midwestern Regional Medical Center (Midwestern) in Zion, Illinois developed a truly holistic mission: to be the home of integrative and compassionate cancer care and to never stop searching for and providing powerful and innovative therapies to heal the whole person, improve quality of life, and restore hope.

This mission remains at the forefront of nursing practice at CTCA® at Midwestern. Jacklynn Lesniak, Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer explains, “As a Magnet®-recognized hospital, we are dedicated to fostering collaboration amongst care providers to provide the best possible experience for the patient. Holistic nursing is one demonstration of this collaboration.”

A Nursing Professional Practice Model that Embraces Holism

Nurses from CTCA at Midwestern provide exemplary care through a nursing professional practice model that supports holistic care and values the relationship with self, with colleagues, and with patients and families. Michelle Moore BSN, RN, HN-BC, Care Management, describes: “Nurses play an integral role in our healing environment. Holism is a way of being versus doing. It is about who we are when we interact with patients, co-workers, families and ourselves.”

This interaction directly connects CTCA at Midwestern nurses to the scope, standards and Core Values of holistic nursing practice. Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice calls for the holistic nurse to “use warmth, compassion, caring, authenticity, respect, trust, and relationship as instruments of healing in and of themselves, and as part of the healing environment” (AHNA & ANA, 2013, p. 7). Additionally, holistic nurses—through presence or “being with in the moment”—provide each individual with “an interpersonal encounter that is experienced as a connection with one who is giving undivided attention to that individual’s needs and concerns” (AHNA & ANA, 2013, p.15).

These connections between nurses and patients have led to improved patient satisfaction as measured by the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) surveys by Healthgrades. In 2013, CTCA at Midwestern outperformed the national average in all ten HCAHPS measures. For example, 87 percent of patients surveyed gave CTCA at Midwestern an overall rating of a 9 or 10 (with 10 being the highest
rejuvenated her spirit and sense of purpose in her work. This experience improved the patient care she provides and prepared her to sit for the holistic nursing certification exam.

Carlson attended courses at the BirchTree Center for Healthcare Transformation, a holistic Midwestern administration, which spoke to me." Carlson said. "This is something I had never considered as a 'sacred' presence with patients from a Christian perspective," Bourbonnais, Illinois. "The Master's program taught me to have a greater understanding of their condition, options and plans for treatment. This integrative, collaborative approach aligns CTCA at Midwestern with the Institute of Medicine's recommendation of utilizing well-functioning, interprofessional teams to advance nursing care (IOM, 2011).

As a result of this collaborative process, CTCA at Midwestern achieved the 2014 Healthgrades Outstanding Patient Experience Award™ for providing outstanding performance in the delivery of positive experiences for patients during their hospital stay. Of 3,582 hospitals considered for this award, 3,000 hospitals met additional clinical quality requirements to be considered for the distinction. The top 15 percent of this group, 447 hospitals, achieved the award. CTCA at Midwestern was one of 17 hospitals in Illinois to receive recognition (CTCA, 2014).

Commitment to Education and Certification
In 2011, Marcie J. Carlson MSN, RN, AHN-BC, Care Management, began her journey to become the first nurse from CTCA at Midwestern to be board certified in advanced holistic nursing. She became aware of holism in nursing while earning her Master’s Degree in nursing at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois. “The Master’s program taught me to have a ‘sacred’ presence with patients from a Christian perspective,” Carlson said. “This is something I had never considered as a nurse before, but it spoke to me.”

With support from nursing management and CTCA at Midwestern administration, Carlson attended courses at the BirchTree Center for Healthcare Transformation, a holistic health-training program based in Massachusetts, which prepared her to sit for the holistic nursing certification exam. This experience improved the patient care she provides and rejuvenated her spirit and sense of purpose in her work.

Twenty-one nurses from CTCA at Midwestern, including the Chief Nursing Officer, underwent holistic nursing training through BirchTree’s Integrative Healing Arts Program in 2013. Thus far, seven have earned national certification in holistic nursing. Several nurses in the cohort developed three posters on self-care that will be presented in Portland, Oregon at AHNA’s 34th Annual Conference in June 2014.

A Commitment to Growing Holistic Nursing
As the commitment to holistic care continues at CTCA, nurses at Midwestern recently formed a Holistic Nursing Council to increase awareness of holistic practice throughout the hospital. They also made the hospital home to the new Northeastern Illinois/Southeastern Wisconsin chapter of AHNA. Additionally, a second cohort of 22 nurses recently began holistic nursing training through the BirchTree Center.

CTCA at Midwestern nursing leadership has been exceedingly supportive of the nurses’ efforts to integrate holistic practices into daily patient care. Nursing leadership and direct care nurses have developed an exemplary collaborative relationship to ensure these practices take root and flourish.

With a holistic-driven mission, nursing professional practice model, and delivery of care model, CTCA at Midwestern clearly recognizes the body-mind-spirit connection and has demonstrated a true commitment to encourage its nurses to integrate self-care and self-responsibility into their own practices and their lives.

References


Cynthia Ingram BS, RN, HN-BC, COHN-S joined CTCA at Midwestern in 2004 as an oncology registered nurse case manager and also later as the occupational medicine employee health-wellness manager. Now, she serves as the animal therapy coordinator for the Animal-Assisted Therapy Program in the Mind-Body Medicine Department, and is trainer, handler and Pet Partner to Tori, an Australian Labradoodle and therapy dog. Together, they underwent intensive training, health screening, and a 22-part evaluation process to become registered Pet Partners by the Delta Society.
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