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The lived experience of holistic nurses who integrate complementary and alternative modalities of care in nursing practice

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Nursing theorists have throughout times conceptually embraced the multi-faceted nature of human beings, asserting that nursing should respond to the totality of patient needs. However, current nursing practice has become dominated by conventional medicine and its limitations in patient care, resulting in patient dissatisfaction with treatment and care, and increasing patient demand for Complementary and Alternative Modalities of Care (CAMC). Several recent studies reveal that 51-67% of nurses lack necessary knowledge and understanding of CAMC to guide patients, and are uncertain of their role in CAMC. Few studies examine the experience of nurses who are knowledgeable in CAMC and integrate CAMC in nursing practice. This study explored the lived experience of 10 holistic nurses who integrate CAMC in their daily nursing practice guided by Max van Manen's concept of hermeneutic phenomenology. Data analysis revealed four themes: transforming, revitalizing, balancing and empowering, with the subthemes of awakening, education, self-care and job satisfaction, respectively. The transforming process was stimulated and innately motivated by an awakening that compelled moving from professional frustration to developing a meaningful practice; revitalizing the nurse's career arrived through new person-oriented education; balancing invigorated an emphasis on healing and maintaining equilibrium through self-care and intentional patient care and; empowering evidenced in quality patient-centered care, job satisfaction and increased career longevity. This study adds to the body of literature that connects nurse participation in integrative care, which positively impacts self-care, patient-centered care, and transformation of nursing practice.

Biography

Nel Thomas is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at Adventist University of Health Sciences (ADU), Orlando, Florida for 6 years. She teaches Mental Health, Health Promotion and Wellness courses in the BSN program. She received the BSN and RN from Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan; MA in Family and Community Counseling from Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois; the MSN in Nursing Education from Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and the PhD in Nursing from Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida in 2015. Her professional experience includes being Medical-Surgical Nurse, Mental Health Nurse, Clinical Educator, College Counselor and Nursing Faculty.

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