

Theory of Goal Attainment

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The theory of goal attainment was developed in 1960 by Imogene King. (Varghese, 2012) King was born in Iowa in 1923, and obtained her bachelors, masters and doctorate of science in nursing from 1945-1961. ("Goal attainment," 2011) King's theory of goal attainment's main focus is for the nurse and patient to have effective communication, set acceptable goals and work toward those goals together. (Varghese, 2012) The relationship between the nurse and patient can influence the goals that are set and how they are achieved. (Wisniewski, 2013) King defines the main purpose of her theory as: "Theory of Goal Attainment is a theory of nursing [that] deals with phenomena called process and outcomes. King "defines outcomes in the form of the goals to be attained" (Wisniewski, 2013) This paper will discuss the theory of goal attainment focusing on the major interacting systems, which covers personal, interpersonal and social concepts, the basic assumptions and propositions, the nursing metaparadigms which explores nursing, person, health, and environment, and finally it will cover the nursing process based on this theory.

The major interacting systems are broken down into three separate systems; personal, interpersonal and social, and all have their own concepts. ("Nursing theories," 2012) Personal systems are summarized by King as "An individual Perception of self, of body image, of time, of space influences the way he or she responds to object and events in his/her life. As individuals grow and develop through the lifespan, experiences with changes in structure and function of their bodies over time influence their perceptions of self" (Goal attainment theory, 2011) This helps the nurse to integrate the patient's goals. The concept for the personal systems are based on how the patient thinks, feels, and looks at themselves, and consist of perception, self, growth and development, body image, time, space, and learning. (Goal attainment theory, 2011) The concept of perception is an awareness of the patient's experiences by processing and organizing

memories to influence behavior and represent the patient's interpretation of their own reality.

(Goal attainment theory, 2011) The concept of self is based on the thoughts and feelings a patient has towards their individual existence. Self consists of a patient's inner world, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, ideas, experiences and commitments that distinguish them from another person. The patients 'self' defines who they are and what they are to themselves. (Gonzalo, 2011) The concept of growth and development is a lifelong process of physical, behavioral, emotional and cognitive maturity to ones-self, based on meaningful experiences. (Goal attainment theory, 2011) Body image is the concept of how a patient views themselves and their body image, and the reaction of others to their body image. (Gonzalo, 2011) The concept of time is the interval between one occurrence to the next, experienced solely by the patient. (Goal attainment theory, 2011) Space is the concept of the existence of a physical area expanding in all directions. (Gonzalo, 2011) The final concept of learning sums up the knowledge that is to be gained from the personal system. (Goal attainment theory, 2011)

Interpersonal systems are the interactions between individuals. Two people interacting are called a dyad, three people interacting are a triad and four people or more are called a group. The more people involved in the interaction the more complex it becomes. A dyad between nurse and patient shows how a nurse interacts with a patient, and the verbal or nonverbal communication the nurse uses with the patient. The nurse-patient relationship must collaborate in this system to obtain the goal. The concepts for the interpersonal system include; interaction, communication, transaction, role and stress. ("Nursing theories," 2012) The concept of interaction is the observation of non-verbal and verbal behavior in two or more individuals. (Gonzalo, 2011) The concept of communication is defined by King as "a process whereby information is given from one person to another either directly in face-to-face meeting or indirectly through telephone,

television, or the written word.” (Gonzalo, 2011) Transaction is the concept of an interaction between individuals and the environment where they communicate goals they want to achieve. (Goal attainment theory, 2011) Role is the concept of a patient’s behaviors, rights, and obligations in a certain social status. (Gonzalo, 2011) The final concept for the interpersonal system is stress. Stress compromises a transaction of information and energy between a patient and their environment to maintain a balance and regulation of emotional, mental and physical tension. (Gonzalo, 2011)

Social systems are the interactions between the nurse and another individual who all share the same values, interests, and goal. It is the foundation for development in relationships and interactions. ("Nursing practice," 2012) Social systems are the last of the interacting systems, of the theory of goal attainment. They are derived of; organization, authority, power, status and decision making. (Varghese, 2012) The concept of organization is a group of Individuals with defined roles, who accomplish both organization and personal goals by using resources available to them. (Goal attainment theory, 2011) The concept of authority is an organization of individuals whose values, perceptions and backgrounds are characterized by a transactional process of reciprocal relations that define, validate and accept the individual’s authority. (Goal attainment theory, 2011) Power is a group or individual influencing another individual in a situation. Power has the capability to achieve goals by using resources and environmental forces. (Gonzalo, 2011) The concept of status is the position of an individual in society. Status includes the individual’s rights, responsibilities and lifestyle within their organization. (Gonzalo, 2011) The last concept of social systems is decision making, this is the act of an individual or group coming to an agreement with a choice to attain a goal. (Goal attainment theory, 2011)

Of the three systems explained above the one with the most impact on the development of Kings Theory of goal attainment was the interpersonal system. Personal and social systems are important to the quality of care a patient receives, but the interpersonal system links two strangers, usually a nurse and patient, together to work towards a goal that maintains a state of health, while still defining the individual's roles. (Goal attainment theory, 2011)

Kings theory of goal attainment has a number of propositions and assumptions pertaining to it. These predictive propositions according to Basavanthappa (2007, p.159) include;

- Transaction will occur in a nurse-patient interaction if communication skills are present
- Effective nursing and patient satisfaction are met when the goal is attained

More propositions relating to the theory of goal attainment according to Nursing theories (2012) are;

- Enhancement of growth and development occur when nurse-patient interactions consist of transactions
- If role performance and expectations are met by the nurse-patient relationship transaction can occur
- Conflict in a nurse-patient roles can cause stress in the relationship interaction
- Positive goal setting and attainment occurs when a nurse communicates appropriate knowledge to the patient

The assumptions pertaining to Kings theory of goal attainment are formed from her personal philosophy “that humans are open systems in transaction with the environment” and her philosophy of nursing “Nursing is an observable behavior found in the health care systems in society.” (Wisniewski, 2013) The assumptions being referred to according to Gonzalo (2011) are;

- Life situations are represented by transactions where each individual is an active participant in changing the outcome of the experience
- Individual behavior is social, attentive, reactionary, rational, purposeful, controlling, time and action orientated
- The nurse-patient relationship is influenced by the perception of the interaction, and both the nurse and patients goals, values, and needs can influence the interaction
- The patients have the right to; participate in their care plans, reject or accept care from the nurse, and any knowledge the nurse has about them
- Nursing uses many skills such as thinking, judging, relating, acting and perceiving to match with the behavior of the patient they are given
- Nurses care for and restore the health of patients, or if that is unattainable nurses help the patient have a dignified death

Kings theory of goal attainment discusses the four nursing metaparadigms in relation to her theory; human being, health, environment and nursing.

Kings theory assumes that human beings are rational and informed. She believes that individuals have the ability to think, choose, feel, set goals, perceive, make decisions and achieve goals.

("Nursing theories," 2012) She also believes all human beings have the same fundamental needs to be met, the need to seek care and prevent illness, the need for information on their health when it is needed, and the need for care when they are unable to do so themselves. ("Nursing theories," 2012)

Kings theory pertaining to health involves a patient's life experiences and ongoing assessments of internal and external environmental stressors through use of resources available for the patient to maximize their daily living potential. ("Goal attainment," 2011)

Environment based on Kings Theory is the atmosphere where human interaction takes place.

Internal environment involves the patient's inner coping skills to adjust with the external environments conditions. External environments involve the patient's surroundings such as the nurse. ("Goal attainment," 2011)

The final metaparadigms in relation to Kings Theory of goal attainment is nursing. King defines nursing as "a process of human interactions between nurse and client whereby each perceives the other and the situation, and through communication, they set goals, explore means, and agree on means to achieve goals." ("Nursing theories," 2012) The nurse's goal according to King is to help maintain the individual's health by; restoring, promoting caring for and interpreting information to process and evaluate a nursing care plan, the goal of this plan is to help the individual function in their day to day lives. ("Goal attainment," 2011)

King describes the nursing process thoroughly in her theory of goal attainment. The nursing process is characterized by; assessment, implementation, nursing diagnosis, planning and

evaluation. ("Goal attainment," 2011) Assessment starts during the interaction phase of the nurse-patient relationship. During the assessment process the patient shares their concerns, problems and self-knowledge, the nurse gathers knowledge and special skills while collecting data on the patient's growth and development, self-perception, health status and roles.

Communication skills must be excellent during the assessment process in order for transaction and verification of the patient's perception to occur. ("Nursing theories," 2012) Implementation is the actual activities done and the succession of transactions in the nursing process that are used to achieve the goal. ("Goal attainment," 2011) The nursing diagnosis process identifies the concerns, problems and disturbances while using data collected from the assessment to address the patient's needs. ("Nursing theories," 2012) The planning process occurs after the diagnosis and consists of creating interventions to solve the patients problems identified in the assessment process by mapping out a care plan. The patient is encouraged to participate in the goal setting while making decisions with the nurse based on the means agreed upon to achieve the goals. ("Goal attainment," 2011) The final phase of the nursing process is evaluation. This is where the nurse examines whether or not the goals have been met and the effectiveness of the care received by the patient. ("Goal attainment," 2011)

In conclusion The Theory of goal attainment focuses mainly on the nurse-patient relationship and how the nursing process is focused on mutual goal setting while relating to the major interaction systems. The nursing paradigms and nursing process describe how the goals are attained by the patient and the process that the nurse must work through with the patient to achieve these goals. The theory implies that individuals respond to their internal and external environments. Using communication to inform the patient the steps of the process and help them discuss problems and concerns affecting goal achievement, can help lessen their anxiety of their

internal environment making a safe relaxed outer environment. ("Goal attainment," 2011) Giving the patient information to control their personal, interpersonal and social systems is an important sign of communication and improves the quality of care the individual receives, while working together with the nurse to attain a goal that defines the patient's role and maintains the patients' health.

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