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**Fostering Hope in Family Caregivers of Patients with Cancer**

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**Abstract Information**

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Abstract Categories:

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Introduction:

Family caregivers of cancer patients experience emotional highs and lows as they accompany their loved one on a journey of cancer diagnosis, treatment, remission, cure, recurrence, or death. Nurse practitioners (NPs) are instrumental in fostering hope for family caregivers and theoretical models of this process can guide NP practice. The purpose of this qualitative study was to create a theoretical model of fostering hope in family caregivers of cancer patients. The aims of this study were to identify methods used by a NP to foster hope in family caregivers, to explore outcomes associated with NP-led interventions, and to create a model to demonstrate the role of NPs in fostering hope for family caregivers.

Method(s):

Smith and Liehr's Story Theory guided the study and theory development process. Frankl's Theory of Meaning provided the conceptual framework for the interpretation of findings. One NP, who specialized in lymph-edema therapy for cancer patients, was interviewed. The interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. Analysis was performed to identify themes reflecting how the NP fostered hope and the outcomes she noticed.

Results:

The NP fostered hope in the wife of a cancer patient by: 1) creating an interpersonal connection with the caregiver, 2) engaging in attentive listening, and 3) seeking the meaning of the clinical experience to the caregiver. 4) Fear was allayed and hope fostered in the clinical encounter. A theoretical model was created to illuminate this process of fostering hope.

Discussion:

The model developed from the findings illuminates the process of fostering hope in family caregivers by a NP. Findings from this study have the potential to contribute to the development of Frankl's Theory of Meaning and Smith and Liehr's Story Theory. Implications for practice include guidance to help NPs promote the sharing of story in the office setting. Further research is needed with a larger sample size.

Research Completed: Yes

Abstract History: NA

Financial Disclosure: Have a financial arrangement or affiliation with commercial companies whose products may be mentioned in this material?

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