

Support in Caring for People Living with HIV and AIDS: A Concept Analysis

Dorah Ursula Ramathuba¹ and Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele²

¹*Department of Nursing, University of Venda, P/Bag X5050 Thohoyandou 0950, South Africa*

²*Faculty of Agriculture, Science and Technology, North West University (Mafikeng Campus),
P/Bag X2046, Mmabatho 2735, South Africa*

Telephone: 015 962 8684/072 078 9555, Fax: 0865423711,

E-mail: dorah.ramathuba@univen.ac.za

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of support to nurses' caring for people living with HIV/AIDS in health care institutions using evolutionary approach. This paper describes the antecedents, attributes, and consequences of nurses' support in the context of HIV/AIDS caring. The concept "support" was undertaken because of its frequent use in nursing literature in connection with of support of patients and families to enable them to restore their health. The aim of the investigation was to inductively develop a definition of support, specifically for nurses who are overburdened by caring for People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA). The study followed an evolutionary method of concept analysis. Data were sourced from scientific journals, dictionaries, the thesaurus and encyclopedias, and they were analysed using reasoning strategies such as analysis, synthesis, inductive and deductive strategies, retroduction, inferences and derivation. These essential attributes were then organised into categories and sub-categories that would meaningfully define the support of nurses in health care services which care for PLWHA. The definition of support was derived from clarifying the empirical meaning of support. Synthesis was used to collate the theoretical and empirical meaning of support.

INTRODUCTION

Nurses are the largest regulated healthcare provider group worldwide, representing almost half of all healthcare workers. Nurses are compassionate caregivers, who experience a variety of workplace stressors, many of which can result in demonstrating less than effective emotional responses, leading to stress and burnout. Nurses working with PLWHA are exposed to diverse stressors, and they lack counselling and social support.

Nurses in Limpopo Province are overworked and burdened by the increasing number of people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as the poor working conditions and limited resources. Because of that, nurses migrate to urban areas in search of better workplaces. This attrition places a toll on the nurses that are left to render care in rural health care facilities (Ramathuba and Davhana-Maselesele 2011).

The prevalence of burnout in nursing is particularly high, because of the high emotional and physical demands of their work (Spence Laschinger and Fida 2014). Caregiver burden of AIDS sufferers is characterized by persistent hardships, stress or negative experiences resulting

from the provision of care. This is related to physical and psychological symptoms. Chiou et al. (2009) also reported that caregiver burden is negatively related to health-related quality of life, particularly mental health, and that social support has a buffering effect on caregiver burden.

Positive workplace environment and leadership approaches that support employees' relationships with their work is an important organizational resource that has been shown to discourage the development of burnout. However De Villiers and Ndou (2008) indicated that those in management positions often fail to ensure that there are enough resources and an adequate number of nursing personnel. Unfortunately caring for PLWHA can be physically and psychologically exhausting. Nurse managers play a key role in creating work environments and organizational cultures that optimize employee performance and workplace well-being. Wong et al. (2010) are of the opinion that leaders shape the quality of the immediate work environment, which has an important impact on employees' experiences in their work and subsequent job and health-related outcomes.

The current status of knowledge concerning support within nursing raises many ques-

tions. There is an important lack of studies seeking a deeper understanding of the experience of support as it is lived. Therefore, there is need for clarity of the concept in order to arrive at a theoretical definition that would direct the description of a model to support nurses caring for PLWHA in health care services. Participants in the study experienced different burdens of caring in their care giving roles. The scourge of HIV/AIDS has impacted negatively on the health care services, and nurses as carers expressed how work overload, increased patient ratios and shortages of resources have contributed to physical, psychological and emotional strain. Participants expressed the need to be supported in different and unique ways so as to be able to cope with the current situation in their workplaces. Therefore the concept "support" was central to the development of a theory that would provide a model for understanding human thoughts, emotions and behaviour.

Concept Analysis

Cloutier and Bailey (2007) state that concept analysis is a process of operationalizing a phenomenon so that it can be used for theory development or research measurement that would evolve over time. The theory is never fixed, but creates a useful understanding of the shared meaning of the concept within a specific context. Rodgers (1989) acknowledges that concepts are influenced by significance, use and application over time, resulting in an analysis that is practice-related and current.

Activities for the evolutionary method consist of the following processes: (a) identifying the concept of interest, (b) identifying and selecting a setting and sample for data collection; (c) collecting data to identify antecedents, attributes, surrogate terms, and consequences; (d) analyzing data; (e) identifying an exemplar or model case; and identifying hypothesis and implications for further development of the concept.

The current exploration is meant to form a basis for further inquiry based on the experiences of nurses and their understanding of support when caring for PLWHA in the health care services. The aim is to improve morale among nurses, job satisfaction and professional growth and subsequently develop a model of support for nurses to help them cope with caring for PLWHA in Limpopo Province.

Identification of the Concept of Interest

Support can mean "enabling someone to last out, give strength to, encourage". It can mean "to endure, withstand, tolerate, bear out or tend to". Support can also mean "to give help or countenance to, back up, second, to speak in favour of or be actively interested in". Support can be about "assisting a person by one's presence, giving moral or psychological support" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 1986; Readers Digests Oxford Complete Word finder 1993; Readers Digest Family Word Finder 1977). Support can also be defined as the total level of assistance or any services given (Cummings 1996). Thus, support is what happens in meetings between human beings. It is co-created, as opposed to a service given and received, and social support could be the umbrella term of choice (Stoltz et al. 2007).

Taylor (2007) describes support as an array of social exchanges which involves encountering support, recognizing support and feeling supported. Taylor (2008) state that social support is the perception or experience that one is cared about by others, esteemed and valued, and is part of a social network of mutual assistance and obligations. Organizational support is defined as the degree to which employees perceived their organization's concern with their health and well-being as well as with the reduction of conflict between employees' personal and professional life (Keyser et al. 2014).

Kath et al. (2010) defined perceived organizational support (POS) as global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. POS is the employees' view of how much the organization values their contribution and cares about them (Allen et al. 2008; Rentao and Heung-Gil 2010).

Social support is the perception or experience that one is cared about by others, esteemed and valued, and is part of a social network of mutual assistance and obligations (Taylor 2007). Social support can be emotional, instrumental (or practical), and informational, and in the workplace it occurs through social interactions with coworkers and supervisors (Taylor 2008).

Received social support is provided support that can be objectively measured, the actual administered aid or the behaviour of engaging in positive interpersonal social exchanges (Tang 2008). Social support benefits the well-being by

protecting individuals from detrimental effects of stress.

Identification and Selection of an Appropriate Setting and Sample

In the evolutionary approach, setting refers to the time period examined and types of literature included in the analysis (Rodgers and Knafl 1993). The sample was selected from a population of literature published in nursing, psychology and social work that dealt with support in family caring, informal and formal caregivers, gerontology, oncology care, organizational behavior and HIV/AIDS. This study focuses on the support as experienced by nurses in health care services or institutions when caring for PLWHA.

Data Collection Regarding Attributes, Surrogate Terms, References, Antecedents and Consequences

The researchers reviewed literature to identify as many uses of support as possible. The search for appropriate literature was combined with additional search terms used for the purpose of directing the literature searches in the context of HIV/AIDS, nurses and health services, family care givers and palliative care. Sources such as dictionaries, encyclopedia, the Internet, journal papers and books were reviewed, in order to clarify the meaning of support for nurses caring for PLWHA in health service settings. The search term "support" was directed towards formal and informal caregivers. Saturation point was reached when the defined concepts from nursing, psychology and sociology were exhausted and were shown to be overlapping. Thereafter similar citations of "support" were converged.

Identification of Defining Attributes

The attributes of the concept constitute a real definition, as opposed to a nominal or dictionary definition that merely substitutes one synonymous expression for another (Rodgers and Knafl 1993). The researchers identified the uses of the concept found in literature related to vocational behaviour or organizational behaviour and human decision processes to define attributes. Stoltz et al. (2007) illustrated the mul-

tiplicity of the meaning by highlighting the prefix and suffixes used in relation to support, for example, appraisal, available, community service, conjugal, direct, educational, emotional, esteem, family, financial, fiscal, friend, general, indirect, informal, intimacy, instrumental, nursing, perceived, respite, social and workplace.

Organizational support is valuable for nurses in order to make them feel part of the organization, to belong, to be recognized /appraised and rewarded. This would lead to job satisfaction. Jawar and Carr (2007) indicate that POS creates feelings of obligation in which employees do not only feel that they are committed to their employers, but they also feel an obligation to return the employers' commitment by engaging in behaviors that support organizational goals. This will result in feelings of trust, long term obligation and organizational identification among employees. Zagenczyk et al. (2010) also reported that human resource practices such as rewards, developmental experiences and promotions are an indication of the organization's respect for the ability of employees.

Identification of Surrogate Terms

Surrogate terms are means of expressing the concept other than the word or expression selected by the researchers, meaning that the concept can be expressed in many ways (Rodgers and Knafl 1993). One way of illustrating the multiplicity of meanings existing in the "support" literature is through concepts such as appraisal, available, educational, informational, general, instrumental (Stoltz et al. 2007). Some of these concepts were identified during data collection with support being portrayed as a tangible service that can be received such as: "*Ward visit, provision of resources, provision of incentives, advocate*" or intangible where the support appears to be created, such as: "*Opportunity to share emotions, experiences, to verbalize, voice and express.*" The findings reveal the importance of creating a therapeutic workplace climate where employees are able to learn, grow and communicate freely. Thus, supervisors need to be supportive and provide assistance.

Supervisor support is defined as the degree to which employees form impressions that their superiors care about their well-being, value their contributions, and are generally supportive (Dawley et al. 2008). Supervisors who are deemed

to be supportive have been found to be effective in managing subordinate emotions.

Identification of References

Reference indicates the actual situation to which the concept support is applied (Rodgers and Knafl 1993). It assists in identifying the scope of the concept to enhance its clarity and effective application. The researcher explored various support programmes in literature and derived a support process which will be adapted according to Dickoff's theoretical framework. The support process can occur as *initiation phase*- (need analysis, formulation of support objectives, involvement of stakeholders (multi-disciplinary) and resources); *execution /implementation phase*- (development of a support structure, the operational process of mobilizing the strategic plan to meaningful objectives that are achievable and measurable); and *sustenance*- (monitoring and evaluating the support process by periodic review and feedback mechanisms).

Identification of Antecedents

The antecedents of support when caring for PLWHA in health care services would be aspects that would precede the process of support (Rodgers and Knafl 1993). Nurses' caring role is burdening and leads to physical stress, strain, psychological and emotional problems that result in ill-health. For this study, the support required was identified as comprising self-awareness, respect, empathy, tolerance and good interpersonal and communication skills, willingness and courage amongst participants. Self-awareness involves getting in touch with one's behavior and learning more about self when caring for clients with diverse health problems in different settings. It brings a better understanding and the opportunity to change one's behaviour and the things in the environment. Thus, the support process requires the critical "self" to be able to change perceptions towards PLWHA and those affected by the disease.

Respect encourages teamwork and offers an ethical frame for understanding one another and the organisation. Everyone needs a little respect, and nurses need to demonstrate respect in the workplace to avoid insensitive situations. Actions are powerful ways of showing disrespect. To avoid such, nurses need to treat PLWHA

with courtesy, politeness and kindness. They should never insult people, name call, disparage or put down people or their ideas. They should treat all clients in health care services the same and implement policies and procedures consistently. Treating clients differently can constitute harassment or a hostile work environment.

Geer et al. (2000) explains empathy as the ability to understand and identify with another person's point of view, and the capacity to experience the same feelings as another. When nurses are empathetic, it builds the trust and respect that PLWHA are regarded as human beings. They are not dismissed lightly or thoughtlessly.

Merriam Webster's Dictionary (1986) states that courage is the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger or pain, without fear. Thus, courage encourages nurses to act in accordance with one's beliefs in caring for PLWHA. Communication and interpersonal relationships can be indicators of a supportive process. Maintaining a reciprocally social and emotional interaction among PLWHA and others, can result in the organizational environment can impact positively on organizational behaviour.

Organizational antecedents comprised of commitment to organisational culture, values, vision, and mission and, administrative and clinical commitment to HIV/AIDS issues and existence of a meaningful relationship. The organization's vision, mission, values, culture, and climate guides the behaviour and social responsibility of the organisation towards PLWHA and those caring for them. Positive relationships with superiors, peers and subordinates within the work setting leads to effective alliances, and when employees have access to power tools that enable them to accomplish their work in meaningful ways, it influences their behavior and attitudes and the overall purpose of the organization will be visible. This would enable the organization to realise its goals. There should be a collaborative process, and this process should be supported by all structures involved so as to realise the organization's goal.

Identification of Consequences

Consequences are defined as events occurring following a concept (Walker and Avant 2005). The positive results of support when caring for PLWHA in health care services were identified

tified as job satisfaction and organisational commitment, whereas negative consequences result in organizational cynicism. Colakoglu et al. (2010) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Robins and Judge (2009) also defined job satisfaction as a positive feeling about one's job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics. This means that social support is a predictor of job satisfaction.

Organizational commitment is thought of as the strength of attachment to the organization, and comprises of compliance or instrumental attachment, identification or desire to affiliate and internalisation or agreement between individual and organizational values. This is how one participant displayed commitment *"Eer...., let me say that we do get support from management, she really involve herself so much, eer...., maybe it's because our manager was a project coordinator when the whole thing started, she really understand what is happening in the unit, and she takes all the effort to attend to our requests."*

Likewise, support given by supervisors and management affect the support and sends a strong signal regarding the organisation's positive or negative orientation towards them. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have a unique predictive relationship with turnover intentions. The intent to quit is perhaps the strongest predictor of actual turnover. For example participants indicated that *"some resign or even look for transfer when they are allocated in medical wards or HIV/AIDS units due to increased workload."* Decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment are positively related to turnover intentions. Morteza et al. (2013) indicate that the organizational commitment reflects the unique relationship between the individual and organization. This relationship is very important in illustrating the individual behavior in the organization. Furthermore, there is a belief that the organisational commitment is an attempt to realise the goals of the organisation and inclination towards continuing the membership in the organization.

Participants perceived support as being both positive and negative. POS is influenced by how the employee is treated by the organization, and in turn, influences the employee's perception of how the organization supports and values them. Employees then seek a balance in

their exchange relationship with employers in that they develop attitudes that are consistent with the degree of employer commitment shown to them as individuals. Mallette (2011) indicates that employees with high POS engage in activities supportive of the organization's goals, have increased job satisfaction, and have less absenteeism and job withdrawal. The obligation created by decreased perception of organisational support will lead to decreased organisational cynicism, decreased levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Negative Consequence: Organizational Cynicism

Treadway et al. (2004) defined organisational cynicism as a feeling of disdain towards an organisation that manifest itself in feelings of despair, contempt and frustration. The participants in the study also experienced the same feelings, *"It is an ongoing thing, when you encounter problems you do report but the response you get will be 'let's just try, working and nothing further will be done to assist you.'"*

Cynicism is likely to surface when it is perceived that the organization is not concerned about the socio-emotional needs of nurses.

The psychological contract refers to an employee's beliefs about the mutual obligations that exist between the employee and the organization (Mearns and Reader 2008). This belief is based upon the contracts made by the employer such as conditions of employment and career ladder opportunities, with a promise given to the employer that the employee will meet his/her end, of the bargain. A perceived contract breach results when there is a sense of discrepancy between the social exchanges of what an employee feels has been promised and what has been fulfilled. Lack of support from the organization causes lack of the sympathetic growth and lack of compatibility among individual nurses. Consequently, lack of efficacy and efficiency of the organization (Morteza et al. 2013).

Identification of Concepts Related to the Concept of Interest

Related words to the concept of support may aid in understanding and facilitating effective communication of the intentions or objective of support. Support has been related to terms such

as “advocate”, “backup”, “assistance”, “encouragement” and “providing means”.

Back up

Additional personnel who provide assistance, auxilliary, reinforcement, reserve, substitute. Standing by as an alternative or auxiliary, give moral support (Complete Wordfinder Dictionary and Thesaurus 1993).

Care giver burden is stressful and can lead to physical, as well as emotional exhaustion. HIV/AIDS has impacted negatively on the health services resulting in nurses needing backing up. Thus, volunteers were recruited to *give assistance* or *aid* by *providing* Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), and home-based carers provide care and assist with discharge plans.

Assistance/ Aid

It is an activity which contributes to the fulfillment of a need, or furtherance of an effort or purpose. It is an act of assisting, aiding, helping, in support of (Complete Wordfinder Dictionary and Thesaurus 1993). The care giving role can result in negative outcomes like neglect of physical health, thus resulting in chronic conditions or withdrawal symptoms. Nurses therefore, should be assisted with services such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP). There are services offered by employers to their employees *to help* them overcome problems that may negatively affect job satisfaction. These services include counselling services or work-based intervention programmes (Barker 2003; Heery and Noon 2001).

Encouragement

This is an act of giving hope or support to someone. It is human action or human activity. It is an expression of approval and support, morale building or morale booster (Complete Wordfinder Dictionary and Thesaurus 1993). Individual employees need a bit of praise or encouragement. They need to be acknowledged for their care giving role, and managers need to *maintain* good interpersonal and open communication by always being visible to give praise. Perceived support increases job morale and commitment.

Provide Means

It is the provision of what is desired or needed especially support for sustenance. To procure supplies or means in advance, to take measures beforehand in view of an expected or possible future need (Complete Wordfinder Dictionary and Thesaurus 1993). Nurses as carers need resources to adequately render their care giving role. When resources are not sufficient or adequate, this leads to low productivity, decreased morale and burnout. Managers should ensure that they provide needed support and resources so that employees can reciprocate with effort and commitment.

Analysis of Data Regarding the Above Characteristics of the Concept

During this phase, the central and related concepts were defined and interrelational statements generated. A list of essential attributes from empirical data was compiled and compared with those emanating from the literature review. These were integrated, in order to determine the list of essential attributes. These essential attributes were then organised into categories and sub-categories that would meaningfully define support of nurses in caring for PLWHA in health care services.

Identify a Model Case of the Concept

The role of the model case is to enhance the degree of clarification by providing an everyday example which includes the attributes of the concept (Rodgers and Knafl 1993). In accordance with the evolutionary view of concept analysis, model cases were identified rather than constructed. The model cases were identified in the interview data, in order to understand the meaning of support as narrated by nurses who are caring for PLWHA in health services. The following model cases illustrated the defining attributes of support:

Participant: *She is supported when she is sick, they are usually there for her, and they make sure that she takes treatment from the HIV clinic* (antecedents).

Participant: *I mean our colleagues who are HIV+ we don't want them to come to the HIV clinic per se, but are....., they are being cared for in the occupational health nurse' office.....*

Ja, so there are designated doctors, they are not supposed to be seen by each and every doctor in the institution, there are doctors who are seeing them (antecedents).

Participant: *Eer....., we also involve the psychologist.....,*

...we also involve the social workers....., those who may need counselling we just refer them.....there (process).

Participant: *Ah....., we haven't encountered such a situation, but what I have..... learnt..... while working in that situation, those who may need some shift in placement, they move them from a specific ward to..... the ward where the activities are a bit lighter, and they are not prone to infections like Tuberculosis and so on, so the..... the supervisors and management..... the person may let them know or make them aware that he is in this situation, they move them (process).*

Participant: *Er....., no....., in that case it is being explained to the person....., there is that agreement between the employee and the supervisor..... Ja..... It is also there to address the problem of sick leaves, er..... exhaustion..... and er..... you find that maybe the person is working in a busy ward he will end up distressed, not coping with the situation and will not be working for most days, so if they move them to lighter wards it helps them to cope and to recover but it is not for everyone, only those who willingly disclose to the supervisor, they don't have problems if the condition is known, even by the nursing service manager (outcome).*

The findings show that employees that are satisfied with their working conditions report more social support at work, and better working conditions. Taylor (2008) also maintains that workplace support from both supervisor and coworkers is associated with lower blood pressure. In addition, people who perceived that they had support from their supervisors reported more satisfying job conditions and more emotional commitment to the organization. Perceived support from the supervisor was also related to lower turnover in the organization.

Theoretical Definition

The results of concept analysis revealed three categories which gave a clear understanding of the definition of support for nurses to

enable them to cope in caring for PLWHA. The description of the theoretical definition emanated from the identified attributes. Support means a network of mutual exchange that is based on honesty, rewards and policies that value the contributions of employees and also shows that the organization cares about the well-being of employees.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the researchers found that POS is related to both job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and that this relationship is mediated by meaningfulness, while POS mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Nurses who perceived that the organization supported them were more committed and responsible in their work, and they made sacrifices by working extended hours.

Nurses who did not perceive organizational support were not committed and portrayed negative behaviours like absenteeism, playing sick and they were not supportive as team members in their respective units. This compromised the nursing care of PLWHA. Furthermore, some indicated that their concerns were not taken into consideration and that the bureaucratic principles and a rigid organizational culture deterred them from approaching management.

Implications for Practice

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is impacting on the organisation and influences performance and the sense of well-being among nurses. Activities or trends occurring within the organization can affect the interaction of employees with those in managerial positions, leading to a climate that is either threatening or positive. Thus, nurse managers have a responsibility to make the organizational climate supportive and satisfying, in order to create a sense of well-being amongst personnel. Therefore, policies and procedures are necessary to ensure a supportive organizational climate.

The organizational climate should display openness and allow for frequent feedback, and relationships driven by trust. The organization should uphold ethical and professional values. There should be involvement of all workers in decision making, even clinical managers and the

provision of information of the disease. It is, therefore important that managers in institutions should be responsible for creating and changing the organizational culture into a positive one. This should be done by creating a robust vision for the future of HIV/AIDS support programmes or interventions.

Support interventions should be characterised by a trusting relationship, and decreasing power imbalances so that nursing personnel are not threatened by organisational protocols. This would so as to develop a climate of working together as a team to realise the shared values and vision of providing effective support to nurses living with and caring for HIV/AIDS.

Participatory management can facilitate the development of a supportive climate as both parties will be engaging with one another in the decisions that affect issues around HIV/AIDS in the workplace. Transformational leadership takes a visionary position and inspires people, and is focused on helping every member to succeed. It encourages creativity among followers, fosters supportive relationships and keeps communication open so that employees feel free to share their ideas. Supervisors or managers who give individualised support, and foster acceptance of group goals are more readily trusted by subordinates.

Nurses need to be supported with more concrete forms of social support such free medical consultations or subsidized medical insurance, appropriate nursing shifts or breaks and rest rooms, meal coupons, protective clothing, as well as material resources to plan nursing care of PLWHA. They should be and commended by their supervisors, managers and colleagues for caring under stressful conditions. Their efforts should be recognized through the provision of incentives, and they should be provided with knowledge to care for patients, those affected should be communicated with.

Support is perceived as empowering because nursing personnel that receive support tend to perceive organizational goals positively. When those infected and affected by the disease are treated with respect and dignity, and those caring for them are provided with information or rationale for how decisions that affect them are made, this will lead to commitment of nurses and to them aligning their personal goals with those of the organization.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to analyse the concept "support" among nurses caring for people living with HIV/AIDS in the health service. Support was perceived differently. The study revealed that support received from health care organizations and the work place should include provision of resources, flexible working hours and supervisor support. However, low levels of social support were associated with nurse turnover. Organizational support theory holds that, in order to assess the benefits of commitment, employees form a general perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and their well-being. Hence, favorable or positive POS is reciprocal as it would increase employee moral obligation to assist the organization to reach its objectives. This mutual relationship between organization and employee will bring about a return on investment for both the organization and employees.

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