



Patients with cancer face many challenges from the time of diagnosis to the end of life. It is important for nurses to explore new approaches that may enhance care for patients. Nurse coaching is a practice that has the potential to significantly influence care of patients with cancer. This article describes how nurse coaching practices provide holistic support to patients in a way that may help to relieve cancer-related distress and assist patients in achieving their goals. Based on the nurse coaching scope of practice and competencies, this article reviews tools and strategies to assist patients in reaching their individual goals and presents a case study demonstrating how a patient, with guidance, came to realize his own needs.

AT A GLANCE

- Nurse coaching provides skills that can improve the care of patients with cancer, such as by offering holistic support.
- The nurse coaching scope of practice and competencies place the patient at the center of focus.
- Using nurse coaching skills can help patients become more aware of their needs, treatment goals, and quality of life, as well as help to relieve cancer-related distress.

KEYWORDS

nurse coach; nurse-patient communication; nurse competencies; distress

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Nurse Coaching

Providing holistic care to patients with cancer

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Oncology nurses play a vital role in ensuring that patient needs are met from diagnosis to the end of life. About 50% of patients with cancer experience conditions that can adversely affect quality of life, such as pain, anxiety, and fatigue (Koesel et al., 2019). A patient-centered approach is a core component of care for patients with cancer-related distress. Oncology nurses are well positioned to explore new practices that may enhance the care they provide. Nurse coaching offers skills that can have a significant impact on care for patients with cancer. This article aims to describe how nurse coaching practices can offer holistic support to patients in a way that may help to relieve cancer-related distress and assist patients in achieving their individual goals for care.

Nurse Coach Role

Nurse coaching is a unique role aimed at helping patients establish health goals, modify lifestyle habits, manage health conditions, and incorporate integrative practices, when appropriate, to promote a healthier lifestyle (Montgomery-Dossey et al., 2014). The nurse coach model has been acknowledged by the American Nurses Association (ANA) since 2010 (Stan et al., 2020). According to Hosler and Rhodes (2018), nurse coaches concentrate on the whole person and patients' strengths, knowing that patients are the experts on their desires and decisions, and use tools and strategies that integrate the mind, body, emotions, spirit, and environment to promote health and wellness. Nurse coaches practice in various settings and

specialties, including chronic conditions, cardiac rehabilitation, and end-of-life care (Montgomery-Dossey et al., 2014).

Nurse coaches are fully present for the patient during coaching sessions and view the patient as whole. Therefore, the nurse coach creates a safe environment for patients to articulate how they feel and share their desires, goals, and dreams for the future, as well as their hurt, pain, or weaknesses (Hess et al., 2013). Interpersonal nurse coaching skills can expand the practice of nursing in any setting.

Various studies have proven the positive impact of nurse coaching. Vincent and Sanchez Birkhead (2013) reviewed 13 studies on the effects of nurse coaching interventions in patients with various chronic conditions. The review examined the advantages of nurse coaching with patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and showed improvements in dyspnea, fatigue, emotional function, and quality of life. Of the 13 studies reviewed, 11 showed increased compliance to treatments, decreased hospital readmission rates, and improved clinical biomarkers. The authors concluded that the practice of nurse coaching could be recognized as an enhancement to the standards of clinical care (Vincent & Sanchez Birkhead, 2013). Delaney and Bark (2019) also examined the experience of nurse coaching among patients with chronic conditions and found that patients had a greater awareness of their self-care and self-management.

Nurse Coach Framework and Competencies

The nursing process is the framework used for nurse coaching. The nurse coach