



Supporting Self-Care with Intention: The Role of Feng Shui

This article is a reprint from

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The practice of self-care has gained attention in the lives of care providers including nurses and Energy Medicine practitioners. The American Holistic Nurses Association's (AHNA) commitment to self-care is clearly stated in Core Value 5: Holistic Nurse Self-Reflection and Self-Care. "Holistic nurses value themselves and mobilize the necessary resources to care for themselves" (AHNA & ANA, 2013, p.20). Holistic nurses create healing environments while they "strive to achieve harmony/balance in their own lives and to assist others to do the same" (AHNA & ANA, p. 21). The application of principles of Feng Shui can be instrumental in creating environments that support practitioners in achieving balance and harmony.

Model for Self-Care

Modeling and Role-Modeling (MRM), a holistic nursing theory, provides a framework for understanding and applying self-care. This nursing theory presents three components of self-care that include:

- Self-Care Knowledge—the personal understanding of what interferes with growth and development and what is needed to achieve or maintain holistic health
- Self-Care Resources—objects in the external environment and internal strengths that can be mobilized to maintain or regain health
- Self-Care Actions—use of self-care knowledge and

self-care resources to attain or maintain health (Erickson, Tomlin & Swain, 1983); "anything we do to take care of ourselves" (Hertz & Baas, 2006, p. 112).

The relationship among these components is represented in Figure 1.

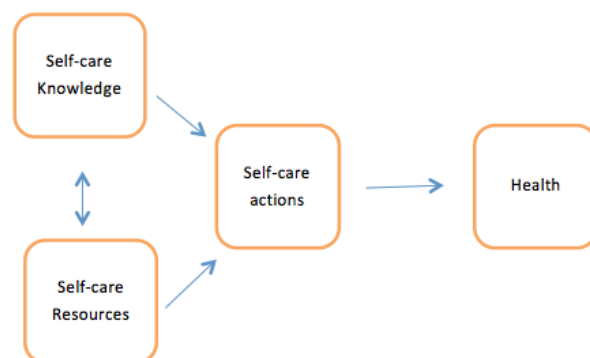


Figure 1. Relationships among Self-Care Concepts - Modeling and Role Modeling Theory (Hertz & Baas, 2006, p. 98)

Applying Feng Shui in Self-Care

Practitioners who use energy-based interventions will resonate with the philosophy and practice of Feng Shui. The flow of the energy through a space is the focus of Feng Shui. Free and abundant flow of energy creates harmony in the environment. Places in which energy flows freely "confer abundant energy to their inhabitants, who gain good luck, good health, harmonious relationships, and financial prosperity by being



where the energy is" (Reichstein, 1998, p. xx). Feng Shui principles are consistent with healing (Boykin and Raines, 2006) and may be applied in a number of simple ways.

Energy Medicine practitioners are learning about the importance of caring for self in order to provide care for others. "A lifestyle building resilience through meditative practices, healthy nutrition, exercise, supportive relationships, and ongoing assessments is crucial to the ability to participate as an instrument of healing" (McElligott, 2013, p. 834). Contemplative practices including creative expression, quieting

practitioners are centered, present and focused on a client's well-being, they are using intention. Thornton and Mariano (2013) state, "Creating an intention is a process that affects not only the mental and emotional realms, but also the physical world" (p. 624).

When applying intention to Feng Shui, begin by considering the MRM self-care concept of self-care knowledge. The practices of centering and grounding help to access inner wisdom. Be discerning. Schultz (2014) states:

Consider ways in which you can simplify your life,

Be clear about ways you want to enhance your life, before making a physical change in your home.

practices, movement, nourishment and interacting with nature are recommended by Shields and Stout-Shaffer (2016). Hover-Kramer (2009) states that energy-based interventions begin with the intention of the caregiver aligned with universal energy. The philosophy and practice of Feng Shui, built upon a foundation of intention, can support the practitioner's self-care.

Principles of Feng Shui

There are several principles that serve as a foundation for Feng Shui. One of those principles is *your space reflects your life*. What is the message about your inner self that your home or office gives to those who enter? Feng Shui can create a link between inner and outer. "The control you exert over the physical space you agreed to caretaker enables you to better control the outer elements of your life" (Hyder, 1998, p. 10).

Another foundational principle in Feng Shui is *intention is the key*. Intention has been described in a number of ways. Shields & Wilson (2016) state intention is "choosing to think, act, or be in a certain way" (p. 188) while Mariano (2016) defines intention as "the conscious awareness of being in the present moment to help facilitate the healing process" (p. 55). When

keeping in mind the goal of balance and harmony. Sometimes it is mistakenly assumed that one only needs to change the color of a room or move a piece of furniture and the goals of Feng Shui will be achieved. This perspective ignores the importance of intention. (p. 15)

Be clear about ways you want to enhance your life, your priorities for self-care and what you hope to accomplish before making a physical change in your home or work environment. "The power of Feng Shui comes from 'programming' your intention into the physical representation. The physical object acts as a reminder to you of what your focus is lest you forget" (Hyder, 1998, p. 20). In a manner similar to practicing Energy Medicine, an important part of setting intention in Feng Shui is to detach from the outcome.

RJ, an RN-BSN student, had been unable to find a position as an RN in the six months since graduation. He returned to school hoping that a BSN degree would improve the likelihood of finding a position. In a Feng Shui class, he recognized that, while his garage was prominent, his front door was difficult to find. From the perspective of Feng Shui, this limited the flow of energy and opportunity into his home. He purchased several



clay pots, planted them with red geraniums and placed them leading from the sidewalk to the front door. He set the intention that opportunity would come in the form of an offer for a RN position. He made a commitment to use his front door daily. Within two weeks he reported that he had been called for an interview at a local hospital. Because of the specific intentions with which RJ made the changes around his front door, the flow of opportunities into his life was enhanced.

Another important concept in Feng Shui is that *everything is energy* (Hyder, 1998). Practitioners of Feng Shui and energy-based healing modalities know that everything is connected energetically; everything has its unique vibrational pattern. Because all the objects in a space have energy, they have the potential to capture our attention. De-cluttering is an excellent strategy to use when feeling overwhelmed or lacking energy. It enhances the flow of energy and supports getting “unstuck” in both a physical and spiritual sense. “Creating a sense of harmony and peace in your space reflects the same harmony and peace in your life so you can feel empowered and strong.... Done in the spirit of lifting your energy, being grateful for the things you once needed and making room for new events in your life, you’ll find yourself surprisingly invigorated in energized” (Hyder, p.129). Releasing possessions may be challenging, yet making the decisions about what you choose to have in your personal or work space is empowering.

Insomnia was interfering with SA’s work and graduate school responsibilities. Assessment of her bedroom revealed possible sources of the problem. In an attempt to create a quiet place to study, SA had created a room that was part bedroom, part office. Books and journals were piled on the floor and the computer and printer had been moved into the bedroom. There were many items in her bedroom requiring her attention. As part of her self-care plan, SA set an intention to sleep at least six hours per night and wake feeling rested. She returned her computer and printer to the family room and used a screen to partition her study space. Books were cleared from her bedroom. Although she was

not able to “close the door” to her study space, her bedroom was returned to a peaceful retreat. The energy of her bedroom had changed, SA’s sleep improved, which facilitated her ability to concentrate and study. (Schultz, 2014, p. 15)

Feng Shui Adjustment Recommendations

“Any adjustments should be appropriate for your space and be done with intention. . .

- Use the front door. Energy and good fortune enter the home primarily through the front door. The entrance should be welcoming and easy to identify.
- Honor the center of the home. The center represents health. Strategies for enhancing the center include hanging a crystal, using the color yellow, or placing a fountain in the center (Hyder, 1998).
- Create a peaceful retreat in your bedroom. The bedroom should restore serenity, harmony, and balance. It is a room for renewal, not work. Minimize the electronic devices in the bedroom.
- View the kitchen as a sanctuary. The energy of food affects health. It is influenced by the physical environment and the energy state of the cook. Assets in the kitchen are a fully-functioning stove and a clean and clutter-free environment (Barreras, 2007).
- Keep the space in good repair. Plumbing and electrical systems, doors and windows should be functioning well (SantoPietro, 2002).
- Clear clutter. “ (Schultz, 2014, p. 16)

Hyder states, “You cannot control the world, but Feng Shui enables you to control your personal space. It is a powerful way to bring harmony and balance to your life” (2011, p. 206). Consider using Feng Shui as a part of your self-care plan. Feng Shui provides simple and inexpensive strategies to enhance work and home environments, altering the flow of energy to transition your space into your sanctuary. €



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