**Act of Moral Courage**

**Situation**

I was a graduate nurse working in a particular hospital under the leadership of a registered nurse by the name Joan. One of my colleagues, Lillian was attending to a semicomatose patient who was frequently agitated and was under the medication of a certain Dr. Gilead. Lillian felt that Dr. Gilead was supposed to sedate the patient to avoid agitation. Before this situation, Lillian had already been reported by the doctor to the lead nurse for questioning everything he did to the patient.  With this in mind, Lillian was unable to talk to the doctor about the need of sedating the patient. When Lillian talked to me, I felt that she was acting ethically since patients needed to be protected and accorded the right treatment. I, therefore, went ahead and talked to the lead nurse about the situation. Joan acted accordingly by talking to Dr. Gilead where the case was validated and the patient sedated. Afterwards, Joan talked to Lillian and I about the need of speaking up when we felt things were not right.

**Background**

Considering that Lillian had been reported to the lead nurse, she felt distressed by the fact that if she raised the issue of sedating the patient her working relationship would be compromised. Lillian also felt that by raising the issue to the lead nurse, she would appear to be interfering with the work of Dr. Gilead. Her distress, therefore, emanated from the fact that she might appear to be intrusive and meddling in nature. Her other distress was that if she failed to raise the issue, the medical status of the patient she was attending would deteriorate significantly. Edmonson (2017) notes that nurses who are willing to take part in acts of moral courage will always find themselves in moral distress as they struggle internally on whether speaking up may compromise their careers and/or working relationships.

**Assessment**

In an act of moral courage, leadership responsibility is quite important in reducing moral distress. Edmonson (2010) indicates that in the current nursing environment, lead nurses need to act responsibly, especially in situations that require acts of moral courage. In the scenario presented, Joan acted responsibly and reduced the complexity of matter by validating the case with Dr. Gilead. By leveraging on her responsibilities, she tackled the situation to save Lillian of her moral distress. It should be noted that Joan was able to utilize her responsibility as expected in any act of moral courage. Joan was able to show that nursing is the moral fulcrum of the medical sector.

**Recommendation**

There are various strategies that can be utilized to enhance acts of moral courage in any healthcare institution or situation. A probable solution is ensuring that nurses who take part in acts of moral courage are protected by nurse leaders and the health institutions as there have been cases of morally courageous nurses being prosecuted and their careers compromised (Burston & Tuckett, 2012).  There is also a need for nurses to be taught the needs to act ethically and raising the alarm whenever they note an error in patient care. On that note, nurses should be equipped with skills that enhance their asking and assessment prowess to ensure that whatever they raise alarm about is credible and does not threaten the status of healthcare. The above strategies can only be summed up by creating an organizational culture that does not compromise the career of any nurse whenever he or she acts in a morally courageous manner.

**References**

Burston, A. & Tuckett, A. (2012). Moral distress in nursing: Contributing factors, outcomes and interventions. *Nursing Ethics*, *20*(3), 312-324. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0969733012462049

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