Maternal Role Attainment: Becoming a Mother

Maternal Role Attainment: Becoming a Mother Conceptual Framework
Centered on the bond between mother and child which fosters competency, confidence and joy in the motherhood role. There are 4 stages in this theory:

Stages of Maternal Role Attainment-Becoming a Mother
1) Anticipatory - During pregnancy when the mother makes psychological adjusts and prepares for the expectations of her new role.
2) Formal- Begins with the infant’s birth when the role of the mother is assumed and learned in the contexts of her social system.
3) Informal - Where she makes her new role fit her lifestyle in a personal way instead of in context with a social system.
4) Personal - When the mother internalizes her role and experiences a sense of harmony, competence and confidence.

Maternal Role Attainment Application to Practice
Example of how this theory can be applied in practice: In case of medically unstable, prematurely born infants the stress of becoming a mother is increased in the face of an infant’s critical illness. Seeing their infant’s distress and exposure to painful procedures causes mothers worry and feelings of incompetence. Maternal role attainment theory can provide a framework to help predict behavior and guide practice in real life situations such as in the case of prematurely born infants at risk for poor maternal bonding (Miles, Holditch-Davis, Burchinal &Brunssen, 2011).

Scope of Theory
Focuses on specifically in the area of parent-child nursing and is applicable mainly in pediatric and maternal child nursing. However Mercer’s theory has also been incorporated into other disciplines’ parenting philosophies such as sociology, psychology and education (Meighan, 2010). This theory is considered a middle range theory because of its concrete, practical focus vs. abstract universality (Alligood, 2010).

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Theorist’s Biography
- Graduated in 1950 with her nursing diploma at 21 in Montgomery, Alabama.
- Worked for the next 10 years in pediatric and obstetrical nursing
- Returned back to school in 1960 and earned a master’s degree in 1964 from the University of New Mexico.
- Graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1973 with her Ph.D.
- Taught as professor at the University of California retiring in 1987 (Meighan, 2010).
- Mercer is active in her work today, even in retirement (Mercer, 2004).

Works & Accomplishments
- Written 6 books
- Published 6 book chapters
- Wrote numerous journal articles
- Multiple award recipient
- A member of several professional organizations and committees (Meighan, 2010)
- Many current maternal child textbooks based on her work (Freda, 2005).
MATERNAL ROLE ATTAINMENT: BECOMING A MOTHER

Global Nursing Concepts

1. **Human Being**: Seeing themselves as an individual & separates itself from other roles
2. **Environment**: has an impact maternal role. There are issues outside the family that will impact how the maternal role is played.
3. **Health**: As a background of the mother’s and father’s health history then as it relates to the future children they may have.
4. **Nursing**: Important part of the maternity cycle, nurses have a duty to promote growth and well-being in others while educating families on what should done before, during, and after the maternal cycle.

Major Concepts & Definitions

**Maternal Role Attainment**: Process occurring over time in which mother becomes attached to her infant, acquiring competence in caretaking, and expressing pleasure/gratification in the role

**Self-Concept**: “overall perception of self that includes self-satisfaction, self-acceptance, self esteem…”

**Attachment**: process of forming enduring affectional & emotional commitment to an individual (Meighan, 2010.)

MERCER’S MODEL OF MATERNAL ROLE ATTAINMENT

History of Maternal Role Attainment Theory

- Based on becoming a mother throughout a woman’s lifespan in order to develop a strong maternal identity.
- Provides the framework for mother-infant bonding that affects the health and development of individuals and families throughout the lifespan (Role Attainment, 2005).
- She used many theoretical sources to research and develop the theory.
  - Theory based on work of her professor and mentor, Reva Rubin (Mercer, 1995).
  - Further influenced by theories of Mead, Turner, Werner, Thornton, Nardi and the work of Burr, Leigh, Day and Constantine.
  - Maternal role attainment model is based on Bronfenbrenner’s concepts of nested circles, see diagram above (Meighan, 2010).
- Mercer continually applies research and evidence based practice to the theory to make improvements.
  - The work of Walker, Crain, and Thompson stated a change needed to happen since the role attainment indicated an end to the process as a final goal (Meighan, 2010).
  - In 2004, Mercer revised the model’s title to include “Becoming a Mother” (Mercer, 2004).
References


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Nursing Theory Project: 100 (out of 100)

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Date: November 27, 2011 2:07 PM

Ladies...I agree...both of you work quite well together and I appreciate both of you for taking the challenge of 2 team members in a group...you definitely rose above the expectation.

Eppie