

## **Philosophy of Nursing**

Briana Leinart

School of Nursing, Old Dominion University

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Dr. Lynn Wiles

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Upon entering Old Dominion University's nursing program, I was asked to share my nursing philosophy. During my journey throughout nursing school, I have continued to develop my personal philosophy of nursing through my clinical experiences. My original belief was that nursing was caring for patients while utilizing a holistic approach encompassing the patient's mind, body, and soul. The overall nursing goal was to give patients independence while fostering a professional and friendly partnership. Although my philosophy has evolved during the past two years of school, it still utilizes similar concepts from my original idea. In this paper, I will expand on the changes to my philosophy and incorporate my thoughts on my beliefs as it pertains to how I view nursing today. Furthermore, I will utilize my nursing philosophy and ethical principles to guide my nursing practice for the patients I will come to care for.

## **Nursing Definition**

The definition of nursing is ever evolving as the nurse often plays many roles within the health care field. The World Health Organization states that nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups, and communities, sick or well and in all settings. It includes promoting health, preventing illness, and providing care for the ill (World Health Organization, n.d.) Nurses must care for individuals during their most vulnerable moments and utilize their critical thinking skills and judgment during the nursing process to ensure that every patient gets the best care possible.

On the other hand, Jean Watson's Theory on Human Caring defines nursing as both a science and an art that assist the patient to obtain greater harmony or agreement among the mind, body, and spirit. The nurse and the patient explore the meaning of their health-illness experiences through human-to-human interactions (Johnson & Webber, 2015). Jean Watson's definition of

nursing best aligns with my philosophy of what nursing is to me. The Theory on Human Caring focuses on the roots of nursing itself in regard to using kindness and empathy to develop a caregiver and patient relationship that can help the nurse to understand and treat the patient more effectively than using physical means alone. The focus of care should be on the immediate issue at hand and also the totality of circumstances surrounding the patients themselves. Overall, the healing of the mind and soul is just as important as healing the physical wounds of the patient.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of nursing is to restore the patients to the healthiest state possible and assist them in gaining their independence back. In my opinion, the purpose goes beyond treating patients' illnesses and diseases. Health is incredibly important and is often seen in only the physical aspect. However, health should also encompass the mind and soul; for me, health isn't just about being free of disease and illness. Patients often have many different situations that should be considered. In order to treat a patient effectively, the nurse should seek out all the circumstances surrounding the patient, such as their culture and religious views. Many factors will affect individuals' health, including external factors, such as family and money, and internal factors, such as conflicting emotions and mental care. Recognizing and identifying these factors can play a major part in promoting good health. It is important to foster a professional and friendly partnership with the patients to advocate for the most effective care.

### **Influences**

Since I was young, I was always interested in the anatomy and physiology of the human body. This piqued my interest and created my desire to enter the healthcare field. While attending high school, I was allowed the opportunity to earn my medical assistant certification. After completing my internship in a primary care office, I discovered that I enjoyed learning new

skills and getting to know patients and their families. This motivated me to pursue higher education with the overall goal of graduating with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

A few experiences in my life have confirmed that a nurse is what I wanted to be. I have had great experiences such as getting to watch my aunt give birth to my cousin, my grandmother having both of her knees replaced to increase her mobility, and the VA hospital always assisting both of my grandfathers, who are Vietnam veterans. On the other hand, I had very scary experiences. Unfortunately, my mother had a cancer scare that required surgery, and my father has had issues with his heart. This allowed me to observe the nurse's role in all instances, good or bad. I learned how important their role was and how much they could make a difference in their patients' lives. In dealing with these experiences, I have gained respect for individuals in the healthcare field, and it has helped shape the nurse I want to become.

### **Assumptions**

Healthcare is a team effort that brings together many different values and beliefs between the relationships of various individuals. Nurses play an integral part in connecting groups together to help them achieve their desired goals. Overall, as nurses we must be aware of all the cultural differences when forming therapeutic relationships between the nurse and their clients in a culturally diverse setting, nurses and the community, and nurses and other healthcare professionals.

### **Nurse and Client in a Culturally Diverse Setting**

All humans belong to different cultures and subcultures. Each of these cultures has different beliefs and values about healthcare. Whether admitted for the first time or a long-time patient, patients in the hospital setting are often given a plethora of information in which they must make difficult daily decisions. These choices are often influenced by the individual's

cultural beliefs and the illness or illnesses that brought them to the facility. More often than not, this is an environment that the patient does not wish to be in, which increases the already high-stress levels that they are experiencing.

Madeleine Leininger's Cultural Care Theory is focused on the importance of caring in nursing and becoming aware of the needs of patients with different cultural backgrounds. Transcultural nursing, as this subfield of nursing practice is known, focuses on the cultural values, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups with the goal of providing cultural-specific care (Johnson & Webber, 2015). This belief focuses on the holistic care of the patient and not just the physical one. The care provided often time will surpass that of a hospital stay and will often extend well into the home life of the patient upon release. This will help develop the trust between the nursing staff and the patient to foster a better healing environment that can assist the patient in obtaining culturally congruent care.

### **Nurse and the Community**

Nurses often interact with various individuals, from patients to their families and friends who accompany and visit them. These interactions will take place in an environment that's stressful to the patient and can often have a major impact on them. Betty Neuman's Systems Model states that nurses interact with individuals, families, and communities in an interrelated and goal-directed manner. Nurses use primary, secondary, and tertiary nursing prevention to provide their care. The primary care promotes wellness and stability through the prevention of stressors and the reduction of risk factors. The secondary prevention is the development of prevention as an intervention typology. The tertiary prevention is the adaptive process for the client to return to optimal wellness (Johnson & Webber, 2015). The reduction of stressors often relates to the patient's environment and individuals in it and how it can affect their ability to heal.

Interactions between the nurse and the patients often encompass this and can directly affect how well the patient can heal. This adaptable process can be changed to encourage the best healing process for the patient.

The experience of being in the hospital setting in itself is overwhelming and can make the patient uncertain of whom they can turn to. Creating a therapeutic relationship between the nurse and the patient can directly influence the patient's ability and willingness to learn and heal. The nurse must be able to recognize the patient's social determinants of health and be able to communicate with the patient therapeutically. This requires the nurse to adapt their approach to the patient and provide the relevant treatment needed to foster a helpful and positive healing environment through effective communication for the patient and their loved ones.

### **Nurse and Other Healthcare Professionals**

The healthcare field has a variety of staff that all have one goal: to provide quality healthcare to the patient in order to return them to their quality of life. The nurse and the staff influence the interaction process with their perceptions, goals, needs, and values. Imogene King's Goal Attainment Theory states that human behavior involves goal-directed actions that lead to outcomes representing evidence-based nursing practice (Johnson & Webber, 2015). Communication between nurses and staff must be respectful, concise, timely, and appropriate to allow all parties to work together effectively. These interactions then lead to transactions between the nurse, staff, and patient that result in health-related goal outcomes.

### **Principles**

There are four main principles of ethics in nursing: autonomy, beneficence, justice, and non-maleficence. Nurses use these principles during the course of care for patients and their

families. The experiences gained while administering patient care have created core principles that I now utilize to help me guide my clinical practice.

### **Autonomy**

The first example of an ethical principle that has guided my nursing practice is the act of autonomy. Autonomy is when each patient has the right to make decisions based on their beliefs and values. A patient's need for autonomy may conflict with care guidelines or suggestions that nurses or other healthcare workers believe are best. A person has a right to refuse medications, treatment, surgery, or other medical interventions regardless of what benefit may come from it. If a patient chooses not to receive a treatment that could provide a benefit, the nurse must respect that choice (Haddad & Geiger, 2022). During my clinical experiences, I have had many situations where autonomy was utilized. While working in the labor and delivery unit, I cared for a patient who stated that her religion was Roman Catholic, influencing her desire to have a natural birth. She informed the nurse and doctor that she would prefer a spontaneous rupture of the membranes instead of an artificial one. Additionally, she informed the nurse and I that she wanted delayed cord clamping, skin-to-skin contact immediately after giving birth, and wanted the father to cut the umbilical cord. Upon seeing how care can be impacted by the decisions the patient and their loved ones make, it is important to respect the patient's autonomy to help facilitate optimal care.

### **Beneficence**

The second ethical principle that I used during my clinical rotations is beneficence. This principle is utilized every day by nurses during the course of their job. Beneficence is assisting patients with tasks they cannot perform on their own, such as keeping side rails up for fall precautions or providing medications quickly and promptly (Haddad & Geiger, 2022). I had

many examples of using the beneficence principle during my clinical. One such instance was when I was caring for a patient during my rehab clinical who was immobile due to a leg injury. The patient's left lower extremity was non-weight-bearing for six months, and she could not bend her leg past thirty degrees. Because of this, I assisted with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and transferring. The patient would occasionally forget to lock her wheelchair, which could be extremely dangerous, so I made sure to educate her on safety and proper transferring techniques. Furthermore, I assessed her pain regularly and assisted in administering her medication twice a day. Beneficence is a core nursing principle that is displayed by nurses whom I have found to be the type of nurse that I wish to become.

### **Conclusion**

While writing this paper, I was able to reflect on my personal nursing philosophy. Although nursing does utilize my philosophy of having a holistic approach encompassing the mind, body, and soul, there are many more aspects to consider. Being a nurse includes developing therapeutic relationships with patients and always advocating for them and their decisions. This care encompasses the need to be aware of different cultures, races, and religious beliefs. Nursing also includes working within the communities and educating individuals to help promote safer and more efficient health practices. Florence Nightingale once stated, “Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses; we must be learning all of our lives” (Newland, 2019). This serves as a foundation for my ever-expanding knowledge and will help me to build toward my goal of eventually obtaining my Master of Science in Nursing. Through the continued evolution of my nursing philosophy, I will continue to grow with my experience and become the nurse that I envisioned I could be, compassionate, caring, and capable.

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**Signature:** Briana Leinart

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