Philosophy of Nursing Paper

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I began my nursing career in 2018 after a brief time as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). While the experience gained during my short time as a volunteer EMT and the education I received in the classroom opened the door to my future in nursing, it wasn't until I began working as a registered nurse (RN) that I began to develop my own personal philosophy in what it means to be a nurse. I felt a tremendous amount of satisfaction in passing my licensure exam, but the first year of nursing was somewhat of a struggle as I adapted to the challenges of being a newly licensed RN working on a busy cardiac telemetry unit. Eventually, I gained confidence in my skills and my rapport with patients improved to the point where I could make strong connections with people. From that point onward, I began developing what I consider to be my own nursing philosophy.

Nursing Philosophy

My nursing philosophy holds the values that have shaped me in my young life. I struggled finding a good career fit in my early twenties as my career choices were in conflict with the values that were instilled in me at a young age. These values were integrity, truth, honesty, and fairness. I worked a variety of jobs including warehouses, restaurants, retail, and car dealerships. I wasn't able to see myself growing within these careers, however, as they did not align with the personal values that I sought to nourish within myself and in my career. I pursued nursing because I believed that I could maintain these personal values and make a positive impact in the lives of people in need.

I am now in my sixth year as a bedside nurse. My experience has brought me to several hospitals and various units within them. In addition to values like truth, integrity, and fairness, I

have also learned to appreciate the value of respect, competence, and achieving work-life balance. Through all my experience in nursing thus far I believe that the core of nursing is based on the connection between the caregiver and the patient. My nursing philosophy is the belief that the nurse has the responsibility and duty to provide the best care regardless of the patient's situation, background, or spiritual beliefs. I also believe that nurses are lifelong learners who are highly adaptable and always seeking personal growth and improvement as caregivers. The purpose of this paper is to further explore this philosophy as it pertains to my experiences in nursing and my journey towards achieving my Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN).

Definition of Nursing

The *American Nurses Association (ANA) Standards of Professional Practice* contains the following definition of nursing:

> Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, facilitation of healing, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations (American Nurses Association, 2015).

While this definition provides a general explanation of nursing practice, its statement regarding the treatment of human response is important to my nursing philosophy. While much of nursing is based off assessing and treating changes in a patient's medical condition, nurses are also at the bedside to assess emotional and psychological changes as patients adapt in their healing process. As physiological changes occur in a patient's status, nurses are at the bedside to assess and provide interventions. Patients can experience a wide range of emotions during these times, including anxiety, fear, anger, and gratitude, and nurses provide a safe and nonjudgmental outlet

for these emotions. Advocacy of care is another component in this definition that I believe fits into my nursing philosophy. Nurses are the first line in patient and family advocacy, as they are ever-present at the bedside, and serve as advocates to make sure all needs are met in the healing process.

The Purpose of Nursing

In order to work effectively as a nurse, I have to adapt to many different roles within any given shift. I coordinate between multiple disciplines of the healthcare team to make sure all needs in the plan of care are met. I am responsible for the safety of my patients and ensure that they remain free from harm. I provide thorough assessments and ensure timely interventions to ensure the best possible outcomes. I provide emotional support for patients during the moments where they feel at their absolute worst. All of this is done without judgement, and with constant self-assessment to ensure any bias or lack of cultural-competence is eliminated from the equation in order to provide the best care for the patient. This constant self-evaluation is, in my opinion, what makes nurses so special.

In order to provide the highest level of care as a nurse, I need to ensure that I am constantly learning and improving my practice. Continual education is very important to me. Learning and perfecting new skills, obtaining new certifications, and staying up to date with evidence-based practice and unit standards are crucial to providing quality care. Self improvement and continual education are what motivates me in nursing as I strive to be a better care provider every day. Healthcare is a constantly changing environment, and nurses have a responsibility to their patients to be life-long learners in their careers.

Nursing Relationships

While nurses are constantly present at the bedside, it is important to note that the role they play in healthcare delivery is part of a multi-disciplined effort. These multi-team efforts can vary depending on the institutions or organizations in which they are delivered. The unity of bureaucracy and ethical caring is necessary to ensure that quality care needs are met within the organizational structure in which they are delivered (Alligood, 2022). Nursing also requires cultural competence in diverse patient populations and the community.

Nursing Relationships in the Professional Setting

Nursing theorist Marilyn Anne Ray's *Theory of Bureaucratic Caring* states, "bureaucratic caring, the synthetic margin between the human and structural dimensions, is where nurses, patients, and administrators integrate person, nursing, health, and environment" (Alligood, 2022). The theory implies a differential meaning of caring, in that it is contextual and influenced by organizational structure. Nurses must accept the challenge of providing patient-specific care as it pertains to technological, political, ethical, legal, and societal structures within the healthcare organization (Alligood, 2022). Nurses are responsible for making decisions that advocate for their patients while coordinating effectively with other members of the healthcare team. This includes professional communication with attending providers, pharmacists, nutritionists, physical and occupational therapists, social workers, and administrators. The unity of these disciplines with nursing care is what supports a good outcome in the care of the patient.

Nursing Relationships in a Culturally Diverse Setting

The *ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses: Provision 1* states, "The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and attributes of every person"

(American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nursing, 2015). This provision is prioritized because it is the basis for providing culturally-competent care. Nurses must be nonjudgmental in their interactions towards their patients, as it will only weaken the connection between patient and caregiver. Frequent self-reflection and evaluation is also necessary to identify any cultural biases that could negatively impact a patient's care. As life-long learners in the healthcare setting, nurses should make every effort to understand cultural differences within the patient population in order to be caring and humane providers.

Nursing Relationships in the Community

Nurses are not only representative of the organization in which they practice, they are representative of the community based around the organization. As such, nurses should be an example to their fellow community members. I believe that nurses have a responsibility to uphold standards of health and conduct in their environment, including the community. According to Alligood (2022), the environment is, "a complex spiritual, ethical, ecological, and cultural phenomenon… nursing practice in environments embodies the elements of the social structure and spiritual and ethical caring patterns of meaning."

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Ethical Principles Guiding Professional Practice

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Provision 6 of the *ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses* states, "The nurse, through individual or collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care" (American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nursing, 2015). I currently work in a Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit (CVICU) at a Level 1 hospital. Our patient population is highly acute, and the success of our patients depends on collective efforts to maintain high standards on our unit.

As such, we work as a team to hold each other accountable in our efforts to reduce preventable events, such as hospital-acquired infections. We have a dedicated resource nurse each shift who conducts auditing on each individual patient to ensure these standards are met. I am very fortunate to work on a unit where there are resources available to maintain such a high standard of care for our patients, and I make it a priority to uphold these standards in every shift.

Provision 4 of the *ANA Code of Ethics* states, "The nurse has the authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to provide optimal patient care" (American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Nursing, 2015). This ethical principle can be applied to my professional development as a nurse. Before I began working as a CVICU nurse, I worked as a local traveling ICU nurse at several hospitals. I felt that my personal growth in my career was beginning to stagnate, and I wasn't providing the highest level of care possible. I made the decision to leave travel nursing and took a job in a new specialty where I would receive excellent training. Despite my years of experience in ICU nursing, I realized that I needed to take ownership of my personal development in nursing and pursued an advanced specialty. It is also when I decided to take ownership of my educational development and enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program.

My nursing philosophy is what guides my practice both in my career as an RN and in my educational pursuits outside of the clinical setting. Through the implementation of this nursing philosophy, I hope to continue to provide quality care and maintain the dignity of all my patients regardless of their situation or cultural background. As I continue my journey towards completing my BSN, I hope to maintain the principles of this philosophy and continue to seek self improvement through reflection and continual education.

References

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