

Care and Caring in Nursing Practice

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

1. analyze the concept of caring
2. distinguish the characteristics of caring
3. integrate the advocacy and caring

The act of caring is foundational to the practice of nursing.

Jean Watson (2012), in her *Human Caring Science Theory*, emphasizes the personal relationship between patient and nurse; highlights the role of the nurse in:

defining the patient as a unique human being to be valued, respected, nurtured, understood, assisted; and stresses the importance of the connections between the nurse and patient.

Human caring is not just an emotion, concern, attitude, or benevolent desire. It involves values, knowledge, caring actions, acceptance of consequences, a will, and a commitment to care.

The nurse must possess competence, professional maturity, interpersonal sensitivity, a moral foundation that supports caring actions, and access to a setting that is conducive to caring,

While the care recipient must possess a need for and openness to caring.

Caring is

- Grounded in ethics, beginning with respect for the autonomy of the care recipient,
- Grounded, as a science, in nursing, but is not limited to nursing,
- An attribute that may be taught, modeled, learned, mastered,
- Capable of being measured and analyzed scientifically,
- The subject of study within caring science institutes/academies worldwide, and
- Central to relationships that lead to effective healing, cure, and/or actualization of human potential.

When Nursing Occurs

Nursing occurs whenever there is a need for nursing knowledge, wisdom, caring, leadership, practice, or education. The term “whenever” encompasses

anytime, anywhere, with anyone.

When nursing is practiced, it is holistic and the nurse:

- Partners with the individual/family/group/community/population;
- Considers norms and values, health and illness perspectives and practices, customs, behaviors, and beliefs of the healthcare consumer; and

- Arrives at healthcare decisions that are contextualized by how the individual/family/group/community/population perceives health, the nature of the body, and its relationship to mind, emotion, energy, spirit, or environment.

The Where of Nursing Practice

Nursing occurs in any environment where there is a healthcare consumer in need of care, information, or advocacy.

Advocacy is fundamental to nursing practice in all settings. Advocacy is “the act or process of pleading for, supporting, recommending a cause or course of action”

Advocacy occurs at the individual, interpersonal, organization and community, and policy levels).

At the **individual level**, the nurse engages in informing healthcare consumers so they can consider actions, interventions, or choices in light of their own personal beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge to achieve the desired outcome.

At the **interpersonal level**, the nurse empowers healthcare consumers by providing emotional support, attainment of resources, and necessary help through interactions with families and significant others in their social support network.

At the **organization and community level**, the nurse supports cultural transformation of organizations, communities, or populations when present.

Nurses firmly believe it is their obligation to help improve environmental and societal conditions related to health, wellness, and care of the healthcare consumer. Such issues have included but are not limited to protective labor laws, minimum wage, communicable disease programs, immunizations, well-baby and child care, women's health, violence, reproductive health, and end-of-life care.

Finally, at the **policy level**, the nurse translates the consumer voice into policy and legislation that address such issues as control of healthcare access, regulation of health care, protection of the healthcare consumer, and environmental justice.