

Definition and philosophy of nursing

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As new nurses, it is important to determine your own definition and philosophy of nursing. We need these to decide who we will be as professional nurses. Our original definition will evolve over the course of our careers, as will our philosophy. As we gain experience in our particular fields, we will undoubtedly find that our perspectives are different and our feelings and goals are ever changing.

The definition of nursing has changed dramatically over the years. The American Nurses Association (2011) defines nursing as, “ the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations” (p. 66). My definition is more basic. I believe that a nurse is someone who has the knowledge, compassion, and ability to help people be in the best health they can be. We need to be confident and competent in order to make our patients feel they are in good hands.

A nurse must be able to educate a patient through the various stages of life. If a patient is in good health, we need to help them learn about things like nutrition and exercise to help them stay that way. We need to teach them health promotions such as the importance of mammograms and limiting sun exposure. As a patient grows from an infant to elderly, we need to help them understand and cope with the changes that occur and how it affects their life. When a patient is ailing, we should aid them in the return to good health through the use of critical thinking treating each patient as an individual with different needs.

Our personal philosophy of nursing is what we, as individuals believe to be true about the nature of our profession. Virginia Henderson, a very famous nursing theorist is quoted as saying: Nursing is rooted from the needs of humanity and is founded on the ideal of service. The nurse is temporarily the consciousness of the unconscious, the love of life for the suicidal, the leg of the amputee, the eyes of the newly blind, a means of locomotion for the infant, knowledge and confidence for the mother and the mouthpiece for those too weak or withdrawn to speak. (Ang & Basilio, 2013)

My philosophy is that we are to be advocates for our patients' right to be healthy. We should work toward a future of more education to prevent illness. Every patient should be treated with compassion and respect, and as an individual with his or her own unique needs. Although we as nurses cannot make medical diagnoses, we can, and do, assess health, develop plans for care management, engage in public health functions, and act as first responders in emergency situations.

As a nursing student, I have learned a lot not only about the nursing profession, but also about myself as an individual. I entered this program looking for job security. What I have found is that I am joining a group of educated caring individuals that have the skills and knowledge to make a difference in the lives of everyone they encounter. This program has already increased my self-confidence and improved my outlook. I can't wait to see what comes next!