

# Essay on components of theory

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



## **Virginia Henderson's Nursing Theory Application to Nursing Practice**

The Nursing Need Theory is the product of the imagination of Virginia A. Henderson. The reason for which this theory was developed is to underscore the inimitable focus offered by the nursing practice. The mainstay of the theory is the need for improving the independence of the patients so as to help accelerate the rate at which they outcomes improve while in the hospital. The theory poses a challenge to the nurses by emphasizing the basic needs of human beings and the role played by nurses in order to help the patients meet the basic needs, by that accelerating the rate at which they develop positive outcomes (Vera, 2014).

### **The theory is pegged on four vital concepts. The concepts are outlined as follows:**

Individual: the theorist posits that human beings possess certain basic needs that are vital components of health. It is essential for humans to receive assistance in order to achieve wholeness through the balance of the emotional and psychological elements as well as independence and health (Sabra, n. d.).

Environment: the environment is a determinant of health outcomes. A conducive environment in which the patient is accorded all the care is vital for their improvement. The nursing practice assists by creating an enabling environment for those individuals who cannot function independently (Sabra, n. d.).

Health: the nursing role is vital to the promotion of health. Nurses have other roles including the prevention of diseases and their curative roles. The

theorist understands this component to be challenging because in delivering their mandate, nurses have to maneuver various factors such as emotional balance, cultural taboos, personal beliefs and regulatory mechanisms (Sabra, n. d.).

Nursing: the theorist posited that the nurse has a role to help patients gain their independence. However, the role of the nurse is not just limited to the sick. Even though who lack the knowledge, strength or will to contribute to their health. This concept also requires the collaboration between nurses and physicians in order to develop comprehensive therapeutic plans (Sabra, n. d.).

## **Structural Aspects of Theory**

In developing this theory, Virginia Henderson made several assumptions. One of the assumptions is that in their delivery of care, nurses tend to the patients until a time when they can contribute to their health independently. Virginia Henderson also assumes that patients have an enduring desire to regain their health. This is not necessarily the case as some patients, such as those with terminal illnesses do not desire to regain their health. Additionally, Virginia Henderson assumes that nurses have an unwavering willingness to tend to their patients and that they are devoted to the needs of the patients around the clock. Issues of job satisfaction, working conditions and remunerations among other issues affect the morale of the nurses. Finally, Virginia Henderson also makes the assumption that the body and mind of an individual are interrelated and inseparable (Vera, 2014). The concepts on which the theory is based are consistent with the assumptions that the theorist makes. Based on the four concepts, the

theorist outlines fourteen components which highlight not only the physiological and psychological needs of the patients but also the social and spiritual needs (Vera, 2014). For instance, one of the components of the theory is the environment. Based on this, and the assumptions made, nurses are required to assist the patients achieve cleanliness, not just of their bodies and clothes, but also the integument. In the same respect, the environment should be void of dangers, and ensuring that the temperature of the environment is optimal. With regard to the physiological needs, nurses are tasked with ensuring that the patients breathe normally, are able to eliminate their wastes in a clean and dignified manner, and have adequate food and drinks. The nurses are also tasked with ensuring that the patients have adequate rest and sleep (Vera, 2014).

In addition to these concepts, the theory is clear in its intention and easy to apply. The concepts of the theory do not introduce foreign elements into the nursing process. Instead, they reinforce nursing concepts that might have been forgotten over time or taken for granted. In its general view, the theory underscores the relationship between the nurse and the patient, and its influence in achieving positive patient outcomes. The fourteen components highlighted in the theory reinforce the need for diligence during the assessment and planning as well as the implementation and evaluation phases of the nursing process.

## **Uses of the Theory**

### **Nursing Practice**

Even through some of the assumptions made by Virginia Henderson are more Utopian than practical, the theory still influences nursing practice to-

date. The emphasis of the theory that the role of a nurse is to provide assistance to the patients in their daily activities, more so for those who are impeded from contributing to their health by a debilitating health condition still informs the nursing practice today. The fourteen basic needs as highlighted in the theory still inform many of daily activities of a nurse. Such activities include ensuring the normal breathing of patients, the provision of adequate food and drinks, and elimination of body wastes form the chief concerns of a nurse. The clinical settings show the role of nurses helping the patients meet their physical, social, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs.

## **Nursing Education**

Virginia Henderson's theory has been very influential in nursing education. The theory has influenced nursing education because it requires a nurse to have the right knowledge, function as an independent practitioner and an expert in order to meet the demands of the definition of a nurse. The fourteen components highlighted in her theory have also revolutionized nursing education. Owing to these components, nursing education has afforded emphasis to the supportive and assistive roles that nurses play in the delivery of care.

## **Nursing Administration**

The theory has also influenced the nursing administration. The theory underscores the relationship between nurses and the patient. This is one of the tenets that influence nursing administration (Wills & McEwen, 2002). A nurse is seen as the substitute who acts on behalf of the patient. The nurse

is also seen as the patient's partner in order to help the patient meet their needs. The nurse is also the patient's helper in order to help the patient achieve physiological, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs.

## **Nursing Research**

The use of this theory in research cannot be denied. The fourteen components that form the human needs that nurses should satisfy have resulted in research questions that have inspired nursing research. The role and obligation of a nurse to not only identify the problems in patient care, but also to find their solutions has validated the efforts of the nursing fraternity to improve the nursing process and methods through research. The research questions derived from the fourteen basic needs have also validated the effectiveness of the nursing process through clinical trials. The support of nursing the theorist has also encouraged nurses to identify other human basic needs through research in order to add to the fourteen needs highlighted in her theory.

## **Application of Virginia Henderson's Theory in Advanced Nurse Practice**

Virginia Henderson's theory is vital to the advanced nurse practice. The advanced nurse practice field makes use of the nurses with post-graduate education. This level of nursing operates at the forefront of the nursing profession. Virginia Henderson's theory calls for the education of nurses in arts and sciences in order to enable problem solving. The theory is also in tandem with developments in advanced nurse practice where advanced registered nurse practitioners are given advanced roles such as issuing prescriptions (Buppert, 2008) and performing diagnosis of illnesses

(Grossman & O'Brien, 2010). Virginia Henderson's theory calls for nurses to be independent practitioners able to meet the needs of the patients ranging from preventive to curative services.

Virginia Henderson's theory also emphasizes the importance of nursing research in development profession-wide knowledge. This is one of the tenets of advanced nurse practice where nursing research is employed to develop and synthesize knowledge that can be used in the improvement of patient care (Mc Ewen & Wills, 2006). Even with these applications, this theory has inherent weaknesses that make its applications in real situations difficult. For instance, the absence of a conceptual framework through which the fourteen components as well as the underlying concepts can be connected makes it difficult to connect the concepts. Additionally, the theory is not explicit on the role that nurses should play in assisting their patients to have a peaceful death in the case of terminal diseases.

## **Evaluation of Theory**

The Virginia Henderson's theory underscores the roles of nurses in patient care. The theory is user friendly because it outlines the concepts upon which it is based. It also highlights the components that form the basic human needs that inform nursing care. However, the absence of a conceptual framework elects challenges, especially in interconnecting the concepts. A conceptual framework for this theory would make it more applicable. This is because it would aid in the synthesis of the knowledge.

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