

Personal Philosophy of Nursing

Vickie Rogers

UIN # 01010636

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Personal Philosophy of Nursing

Nursing fits my personality and desire to help society. I could have chosen other careers but I don't think they would provide the feeling of fulfillment I get from helping others. Nursing is my passion. Developing my philosophy of nursing has been an interesting endeavor. By reflecting on my core values I can better understand and evaluate my beliefs and what is the most important to me as a person and a nurse. It will aid in the decisions I make every day. I am aware that my personal values and beliefs impact the care I provide. My nursing philosophy centers on caring, support, respect and advocacy. Nursing care and treatments are always evolving and re-evaluation of my philosophy may be necessary to encompass these changes.

I believe nursing is the prevention and treatment of illnesses by providing assistance and the education of the patient and community in all aspects of health. It involves providing holistic care for patients on all levels of the health continuum with caring, compassion, competence, and respect, regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture, or life choices. My philosophy also involves advocating for patient's rights, being accountable for ensuring quality care and a safe environment.

Definition and purpose of nursing

Establishing a definition of nursing can be difficult. The American Nurses Association (ANA) 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."(American Nurses Association, Nursing World website, 2014)

My definition of nursing and the purpose of nursing are intertwined. Nursing's framework is comprised of science and education with the art of caring. It is the care of

individuals and communities by support and education about various states of illness and wellness. It involves providing assistance and interventions to return or keep them in an optimum state of health and well-being by addressing multiple issues and stressors the patient may be facing. It is treating everyone with respect and dignity and realizing cultural and spiritual issues play a part in health. It is providing a safe environment of care through maintaining competency by continuing to seek education and validation of skills. Nursing advocacy helps enable patients have a voice in all levels of their care including advance directives and end of life decisions.

Values and beliefs

I believe being a nurse is much more than a job or career. It is more a part of who you are and how you view the world. Your dictionary website describes core values as "...the guiding principles that dictate behavior and action." (Your dictionary website, 2014). Knowing your values is important to formulate both a life philosophy as well as a philosophy of nursing. My core values are honesty, integrity, accountability, caring, compassion, respect, moral courage, work ethic, and the acceptance of others values and belief systems. There are many other traits a nurse should possess such as, the desire for professional development, good communication skills, critical thinking skills, flexibility, and the drive seek information on the newest evidence based practices and policies in their area of practice. I also believe we should have a professional demeanor and promote nursing to gain the level of acknowledgement and respect we deserve in the healthcare team.

Principles or rules that guide practice

Two principles that guide my practice are the acceptance of accountability, and advocating for the patient. (American Association of Nurses, Nursing World website, 2014) The acceptance of accountability is important because it is of the utmost importance to understand

that your decisions may impact the care of a patient. We must admit to mistakes, report them, and correct them if possible. We must understand our actions or lack thereof may cause catastrophic effects for the patient. We also must report unethical practice or deviation in standard of care. We are accountable if we know something is wrong and we do not report or address the issue. An example of this is when I was a new employee, but an experienced perioperative nurse, in a facility and I was hired into the operating room. I was assigned as the circulator to a room and I went to interview my patient. When I came back to help open the case no one was in the room and all the sterile supplies were open. I was told this is how we do things here. I took the policy and reported it to my director. I knew I was accountable for maintaining standard of care and protecting my patients from possible surgical site infections. I was also accountable for the other staff member's actions that were operating under my supervision.

I feel one of my most important duties is to be an advocate for the patient. In an article written by Deborah Wood, RN she stated she feels that advocating for patients comes naturally for nurses today. She stated that they call attention to potential errors, ensure patients have a voice, and help shape policy from clinical experience. (Wood, 2010) Cindy Zolnierek, RN, MSN, director of practice at the Texas Nurses Association stated, "Advocacy is the heart and soul of nursing practice." "Nurses believe they hold the patients' safety and care in their hands."(Wood, 2010) Being an advocate for the patient can be the most difficult and at times the most rewarding action. I advocate for my patients every day. I work in an operating room and I feel even more responsibility to speak up for the patient as they are under anesthesia and cannot speak for themselves. They are in one of the most vulnerable positions they can possibly experience. Patients and their families trust that we will take care of them or their loved one with competence and integrity. I must speak up daily when I see issues that need to be addressed.

One such example was staff reusing single use foam positioning devices on multiple patients. I refused to reuse the items. I saw this as an infection control issue. Their rationale was that it was covered with a towel and it was sufficient to protect the multiple patients that they used it on. I persevered and contacted the infection control nurse. In the end, all single use foam products are used per patient and discarded.

Summary

Nursing is a profession that is able to balance medical knowledge and caring. It requires flexibility and critical thinking to care for patients in an ever changing environment. Nurses should continue to seek out information to maintain competence and skills. We are accountable for our decisions and others under our supervision. It is important to know your personal values and beliefs. By understanding your values and creating a philosophy you can better care for others whose values, beliefs or life decisions differ from your own. Having a strong moral compass will aid in the difficult situations, ethical dilemmas, and decisions you encounter in your clinical practice. Developing a philosophy of nursing will guide you in caring for patients throughout the health continuum from prevention, to illness, and wellness.

I have learned many things in developing my personal philosophy of nursing. First, I realized I do have one. Second, by evaluating and reflecting on my values and formulating my philosophy I have a better understanding of myself personally and professionally. Lastly, by putting it in writing it makes it more real and tangible. I am sure I will look at my practice in a different light. I am proud of my values as a person and a nurse.

References

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Name: __Vickie Rogers_____

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