

Personal Theoretical Framework for Advanced Practice Nursing

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Nursing is deeply rooted in science and human connection, guided by theoretical and philosophical foundations that define its purpose and practice. According to the American Nurses Association (2023), exploring nursing theories will provide you with insights into the “how” of nursing, offering structured approaches to care delivery, decision-making, and patient interactions [1]. However, understanding the “why” of nursing elevates this exploration to a higher level of thought, examining the personal and philosophical values that drive the profession.

This study will present a personal nursing philosophy, identify a theoretical framework that aligns with this philosophy, and critically evaluate how the framework complements or conflicts with real-world nursing situations. This reflective process will explore the significance of aligning philosophy and theory with practice, emphasizing the need for flexibility and adaptability in delivering effective, patient-centered care.

Personal Nursing Philosophy

Nursing is more than just a profession; it is a calling to serve, support, and empower individuals on their health and wellness journeys. My nursing philosophy is founded on holistic, patient-centered care that emphasizes empathy, advocacy, and collaboration. I believe the essence of nursing lies in fostering connections with patients and families, meeting them where they are, and addressing their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. This philosophy is guided by a commitment to upholding dignity, promoting autonomy, and recognizing the individuality of every person entrusted to my care.

To me, nursing is a blend of science and compassion. It is anchored in evidence-based practice and uplifted through human connection [2,3]. Nurses serve as patient advocates, educators, and leaders, ensuring that care is equitable, culturally sensitive, and customized to each individual’s unique needs. Beyond

clinical expertise, I see the nurse’s role as one of guidance and partnership—empowering patients to take an active role in their care, make informed decisions, and achieve their health goals.

A core principle of my philosophy is that health extends beyond the absence of disease. It is a dynamic state of physical, mental, and social well-being. Therefore, nursing requires a holistic approach considering clinical interventions and the broader social health determinants impacting patients’ lives [4]. Addressing barriers such as access to care, health literacy, and socioeconomic challenges is integral to providing comprehensive nursing care.

Furthermore, I firmly believe in the transformative power of nursing. Nurses serve as change agents who are critical in shaping healthcare policies, promoting health equity, and enhancing population health outcomes. This necessitates ongoing learning, adaptability, and dedication to professional growth. In a rapidly changing healthcare environment, nurses must remain at the forefront of innovation while upholding the essential values of compassion and care.

Theoretical Framework: Florence Nightingale’s Environmental Theory

Florence Nightingale’s Environmental Theory is a foundational framework that closely aligns with my nursing philosophy. According to Gilbert Nightingale highlighted the significance of establishing a healing environment to foster health and prevent illness [5]. Her theory outlines essential environmental factors—such as ventilation, cleanliness, light, nutrition, and noise.

At the heart of Nightingale’s theory is the idea that the environment plays a critical role in the healing process. Nurses manipulate environmental conditions to support patients’ recovery and well-being. For example, ensuring proper hygiene and sanitation can prevent infections, while providing a quiet and comfortable setting can promote rest and reduce stress.

Nightingale's emphasis on holistic care resonates with my belief in addressing health's physical, emotional, and social aspects. Her framework also highlights the role of nurses as patient advocates and caregivers who work to optimize the conditions necessary for healing.

Comparison of Personal Philosophy and Nightingale's Theory

My nursing philosophy and Nightingale's Environmental Theory share many commonalities. Both emphasize the importance of holistic, patient-centered care and recognize the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, and environmental factors in health. Additionally, both stress the nurse's role as an advocate and facilitator of healing.

However, there are some differences in emphasis. Nightingale's theory mainly emphasizes the physical environment and its effect on health, while my philosophy adopts a more comprehensive perspective that includes social determinants of health, cultural competence, and patient empowerment. While I value the importance of creating a healing environment, I also prioritize collaboration and partnership with patients to address their individual needs and goals.

Another difference is the context in which the frameworks were developed. Nightingale's theory was based on the healthcare challenges of the 19th century, such as poor sanitation and infectious diseases [6]. While many of her principles remain relevant today, modern nursing practice requires a more expansive approach that accounts for technological advancements, changes in healthcare delivery, and the complexity of chronic diseases.

Situations of Conflict Between Framework and Philosophy

Conflict can arise between a chosen theoretical framework and a personal nursing philosophy when the framework's principles fail to fully align with the values, beliefs, or specific circumstances encountered in practice.

Take, for instance, Florence Nightingale's Environmental Theory, which highlights the impact of environmental factors such as ventilation, sanitation, and nutrition on health. While this theory provides valuable guidance in creating conditions conducive to healing, it may conflict with a nursing philosophy rooted in patient-centered care when a patient's personal choices or cultural beliefs diverge from what the theory prescribes. For example, a patient from a specific cultural background may reject certain environmental interventions, such as modifications to diet or ventilation, which Nightingale's framework would consider essential to recovery. In such cases, the nurse must reconcile the framework's emphasis on environmental control with the patient's autonomy and cultural preferences.

Additionally, a potential conflict between Nightingale's Environmental Theory and my personal philosophy could arise in situations where social determinants of health outweigh the influence of the physical environment. For example, a patient with a chronic condition such as diabetes may encounter significant barriers to self-management due to limited access to healthy food, financial constraints, or lack of health literacy. While Nightingale's framework emphasizes optimizing the

physical environment, it may not fully address the broader systemic issues that affect the patient's ability to achieve health.

In such cases, my philosophy of addressing the social determinants of health and advocating for systemic change becomes even more relevant. For example, I would prioritize connecting patients with community resources, providing education on affordable meal planning, and collaborating with a social worker to tackle financial barriers. While the principles of Nightingale's theory can still be applied, they must be adapted to address the complexities of modern healthcare challenges.

Conclusion

Nursing is a profession that extends beyond technical skills and clinical interventions; it embodies a profound commitment to patient care, advocacy, and the holistic promotion of health. My nursing philosophy has given me a deeper understanding of the "why" behind our actions, forming the foundation for compassionate and effective practice. It reflects the values, beliefs, and intentions that guide nurses' daily interactions with patients and colleagues. It presents a framework for decision-making, particularly when confronted with ethical dilemmas or challenging situations in practice. Integrating Nightingale's Environmental Theory brings structure and evidence-based strategies to enhance care delivery, aligning the "how" with the "why" of nursing practice.

However, conflicts may arise when the principles of a chosen framework do not fully align with the nurse's personal philosophy or the realities of practice. These conflicts, whether stemming from cultural differences, resource limitations, or organizational constraints, underscore the complexity of applying theory in varied and dynamic healthcare environments. Recognizing and addressing these discrepancies requires flexibility, critical thinking, and a patient-centered approach that respects individual needs and preferences.

Ultimately, nursing philosophy and theoretical frameworks are tools that guide practice but must remain adaptable to ensure optimal patient outcomes. Through continuous reflection, education, and a commitment to holistic care, nurses can effectively bridge the gap between philosophy, theory, and practice, reaffirming their essential role in the evolving healthcare landscape.

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