

## Exploring the Foundations: A Comprehensive Overview of Nursing Theories

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### Short Communication

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#### ABSTRACT

Nursing, often referred to as the heart and soul of healthcare, is a dynamic and evolving profession that encompasses not only scientific knowledge and technical skills but also a deep understanding of human beings and their well-being. At the heart of nursing practice lies a complex web of theories that serve as the foundation for understanding and guiding nursing actions. These nursing theories provide a framework for nurses to comprehend the art and science of their profession and to deliver holistic, patient-centered care. In this article, we embark on a journey to explore the diverse and essential nursing theories that underpin the field's practice. Nursing theories are frameworks developed by nursing scholars and theorists to articulate the concepts and principles that shape nursing practice. These theories provide insights into various aspects of nursing, such as how nurses interact with patients, families and communities and how they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the healthcare environment.

**Keywords:** Nursing theories, Healthcare, Florence nightingale

### INTRODUCTION

Florence Nightingale, known as the founder of modern nursing, laid the groundwork for nursing theories in the 19th century. Her Environmental Theory emphasized the impact of the physical environment on patient outcomes. Nightingale's theory focused on maintaining a clean and well-ventilated environment to promote healing, showcasing the significance of preventive measures in healthcare. Behavioral theories, such as those developed by B.F. Skinner and Pavlov, have also influenced nursing. These theories center around conditioning, reinforcement and the impact of stimuli on behavior. Nurses draw upon these theories to understand patient responses, create positive reinforcement strategies and encourage desired behaviors. In the 20th century, Jean Watson introduced the Theory of Human Caring, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships in nursing <sup>[1]</sup>. Watson's theory asserts that caring is an essential component of nursing and that nurses must connect with patients on a deep level to promote healing and well-being.

Dorothea Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory, also known as the Nursing Systems Theory, focuses on the role of nurses in helping patients meet their self-care needs. Orem's theory encourages nurses to assess the patient's ability to perform self-care activities and intervene when there's a deficit, promoting patient autonomy and independence. In a globally interconnected world, Madeleine Leininger's Cultural Care Theory is of paramount importance. This theory emphasizes the significance of understanding and respecting cultural differences in healthcare <sup>[2]</sup>. Leininger's theory guides nurses to provide culturally sensitive and appropriate care, ensuring patients' beliefs and practices are considered in their care plans. Betty Neuman's Systems Model views individuals as holistic beings influenced by internal and external stressors. Neuman's theory guides nurses in assessing the impact of stressors on patients and developing interventions to maintain their stability. This theory takes into account psychological, physiological and sociocultural factors that influence a patient's well-being.

### DESCRIPTION

Contemporary nursing theories continue to evolve, incorporating advances in healthcare, technology and research. One

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such theory is the Theory of Unpleasant Symptoms, developed by Lenz and Pugh, which focuses on managing and alleviating the symptoms that patients find distressing. Nursing theories are more than just abstract concepts; they are the backbone of evidence-based practice. Nurses apply these theories in clinical settings to assess patients' needs, develop care plans, make clinical judgments and evaluate outcomes<sup>[3]</sup>. By using nursing theories, nurses enhance their critical thinking skills and provide holistic, patient-centered care. The application of nursing theories is a crucial aspect of providing effective and patient-centered care. These theories serve as frameworks that guide nurses in understanding patients, making clinical decisions and delivering holistic care.

Nursing theories provide a structured approach to assessing patients. Nurses use these frameworks to gather information about a patient's physical, emotional, psychological and social needs. For instance, the Self-Care Deficit Theory by Dorothea Orem guides nurses in assessing a patient's ability to perform self-care activities, helping them identify areas where patients require assistance. Once a thorough assessment is conducted, nursing theories assist in developing individualized care plans. These plans take into account the patient's unique needs, preferences and circumstances. The Theory of Human Caring by Jean Watson, for example, emphasizes the importance of forming a deep connection with the patient, which can inform the development of a care plan that addresses not only physical needs but also emotional and spiritual aspects.

Nursing theories provide a foundation for clinical judgment and decision-making. Nurses can analyze patient situations using the principles of these theories to determine the most appropriate interventions. The Systems Model in Nursing by Betty Neuman, for instance, helps nurses understand how internal and external stressors can impact a patient's overall health and well-being, aiding in making informed decisions to mitigate those stressors<sup>[4]</sup>. Effective communication is a cornerstone of nursing practice. Nursing theories offer insights into how to establish therapeutic relationships with patients and communicate effectively. The Theory of Unpleasant Symptoms, which focuses on managing distressing symptoms, can guide nurses in communicating sensitively about symptoms, understanding patients' experiences and providing appropriate interventions.

Many nursing theories emphasize holistic care, considering the physical, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of patients. Nurses apply these theories to ensure that all aspects of a patient's well-being are addressed. The Cultural Care Theory by Madeleine Leininger, for instance, encourages nurses to respect and incorporate patients' cultural beliefs into their care plans, promoting culturally sensitive care. Nursing theories contribute to nurses' professional growth and development. Engaging with theories encourages critical thinking and ongoing learning. Nurses can attend workshops, seminars and training sessions related to nursing theories to enhance their understanding and application in practice<sup>[5]</sup>. Nursing theories also guide research endeavors and the development of evidence-based practice. Nurses can design studies that test the effectiveness of interventions based on these theories. For example, research studies may investigate how the application of Watson's Theory of Human Caring positively impacts patient outcomes. Nursing theories are integrated into nursing education programs to help students understand the underlying principles of nursing practice. Aspiring nurses learn how to apply these theories in real-world scenarios, preparing them for effective patient care upon graduation.

## CONCLUSION

Nursing theories illuminate the multifaceted nature of nursing practice. They serve as guides, empowering nurses to provide compassionate care, make informed decisions and adapt to the ever-changing healthcare landscape. These theories, whether focused on the environment, human relationships, self-care, or cultural sensitivity, collectively shape the essence of nursing – an art that intertwines with science to promote health, alleviate suffering and enhance the quality of life. In essence, nursing theories provide a structured framework for nurses to approach patient care in a systematic and thoughtful manner. By incorporating these theories into their practice, nurses can provide care that is not only based on scientific knowledge but also takes into account the unique needs and circumstances of each patient, fostering a patient-centered approach that is at the core of the nursing profession.

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None.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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