



# Comprehending the Nursing Process

*a workbook approach*



Carol Vestal

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## Foreword

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The health care system is changing rapidly. Cost containment pressures are impacting on the length of inpatient stay. Clients receiving inpatient care are often critically ill. Complex health problems are still faced by clients discharged to their homes. At the same time, there is an ever increasing demand for health care services. The changing age structure in our society, is reflected in the increasing demand for such services by the elderly. The AIDS epidemic is demanding costly treatment. Improved and highly sophisticated technology is making it possible for segments of our society - such as premature infants - to receive such high tech care not possible previously. Then there is the push for health promotion and disease prevention: health care consumers today are seeking more information about health conducive life style changes.

The contemporary nurse is faced with caring for clients who expect quality nursing care and who expect the professional nurse as a health care provider to be well-informed. The contemporary nurse is also faced with caring for them following discharge in their home, while these clients are often still suffering from complex health problems. The contemporary nurse is best challenged with ever expanding opportunities in providing nursing care for a diverse group of persons in ever expanding practice settings, patterns, and organizations. The contemporary nurse is challenged to provide quality nursing care in an effective and cost efficient manner in this ever shifting environment.

Among the tools to help today's professional nurse to meet these challenges is the nursing process which can now be found incorporated into ANA Standards of Practice, state nurse practice acts, and major nursing textbooks in all specialty areas. This systematic approach to client care can facilitate the delivery of quality nursing care, and the clarification of nursing's unique contribution to health care delivery as well as the development of a common language for the profession.

Beginning students and clinicians need a means of clearly understanding and mastering the nursing process. *Comprehending the Nursing Process: A Workbook Approach*, is a unique learning tool designed for this purpose, examining the nursing process in depth in two comprehensive case studies. Part I includes an introduction, an explanation of how to use the workbook, and two comprehensive case studies. The first case study uses Marjory Gordon's Functional Health Patterns as the assessment framework, and the second case study uses Marilyn Doenges's and Mary Moorhouse's Diagnostic Divisions as the assessment framework. Part II includes clearly written explanations for each of the five steps in the nursing process. Interwoven in each step of the process are a variety of application exercises drawing on elements of the case studies to reinforce understanding. The exercises build upon each other to incorporate knowledge learned from each step of the process. By following the process, the user learns to write a thorough care plan based on the case studies in Part I. Part III includes a comprehensive appendix containing information needed to complete the exercises, and the correct answers.

The author - Carol V. Allen - brings to this project successful experience teaching the nursing process to basic nursing students and nursing staff. As a delegate on two People to People Nursing Delegations to the Far East and Eastern Europe, she has led panels and scientific exchanges on the nursing process, bringing much clarity to the understanding of this concept to our professional nursing counterparts. *Comprehending the Nursing Process: A Workbook Approach*, represents in written media much of Carol Allen's teachings from which many more nursing students and clinicians can benefit.

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## Preface

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Nursing faces two challenges in its efforts to deliver quality care in a rapidly changing health care system. First, today's nurses care for clients with more complex health problems than ever before. Second, nurses as individuals possess different personal traits and characteristics, as well as differing abilities and knowledge bases. The nursing process was developed to meet this challenge by providing nurses with a systematic approach to client care and a common professional language.

*Comprehending the Nursing Process: A Workbook Approach* is a learning tool designed to be used independently or in the classroom by nursing students and clinicians to understand and master the Nursing Process.

Part I includes an introduction, an explanation of how to use the workbook, and two comprehensive case studies. The first case study uses Marjory Gordon's "Functional Health Patterns" as the assessment framework, and the second case study uses Marilyn Doenges's and Mary Moorhouse's "Diagnostic Divisions" as the assessment framework.

Part II includes clearly written explanations for each of the five steps in the nursing process. Interwoven in each step of the process are a variety of application exercises drawing on elements of the studies to reinforce understanding. The exercises build upon each other to incorporate knowledge learned from each step of the process. By following the process, the user will learn to write a thorough care plan based on the case studies in Part I.

Part III includes a comprehensive appendix containing information needed to complete the exercises and the correct answers.

It is a pleasure to share with you the knowledge that I have acquired by implementing and teaching the nursing process. I welcome your comments and look forward to hearing from you.

Carol Vestal Allen

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## PART I: INTRODUCTION

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### THE CHALLENGES OF THE 1990s

The 1990s bring many challenges to the profession of nursing. In the healthcare arena, what essential role is performed by the nurse? Will nursing exist in the year 2000?

Establishing and identifying to the public the uniqueness of nursing remains a critical concern. A profession exists only as long as society considers the services rendered of value. Nursing needs to identify its contribution to the resolution of client problems.

The nursing process is the framework that enables nursing to identify its uniqueness to society. The nursing process facilitates identification of human responses to health problems. Human responses represent changes in the client's sense of well-being, wellness and life style.

The nursing process assists the client in achieving a maximal level of wellness, well-being and adaptation to life styles. The nursing process is operationalized through an assessment of each client and individually written nursing care plans. Nursing care plans customize the delivery of nursing care to clients and aid in problem resolution. The nursing process guarantees quality care.

It is essential to present the nursing process in a consistent manner throughout a program of nursing and a healthcare center. Consistency in teaching aids the student and practicing nurse in transferring learning from the classroom to the clinical setting.

The nursing process is (a) based on the problem solving approach, (b) founded on the American Nurses Association Standards of Practice (1973), (c) the basis for standards of nursing care and performance, (d) the legal framework for nursing practice, and (e) the core of quality assurance monitoring. Nursing diagnosis, step 2 of the nursing process, aids nursing in the transition to a professional model of nursing practice. Guidelines for utilization of the workbook, *Comprehending the Nursing Process: A Workbook Approach*, are discussed on p. 5.

### PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH

The nursing process is based on the problem solving approach. A problem is a question that is asking for a solution. Problem solving skills include the collection of information, the identification of a problem and the generation of alternative courses of action to solve the problem.

### STANDARDS OF NURSING PRACTICE

Standards explicitly state the optimum levels of care against which actual performance is compared and measured. A standard of nursing practice focuses on the provider of the care, the nurse. A standard of nursing practice describes the nurses' methods in providing client care that assists the clients in achieving outcome criteria.

The American Nurses' Association Standards of Nursing Practice, 1973 (see inside front cover) define the role of the nurse in the delivery of nursing care to a client or group of clients. The eight ANA Standards of Nursing Practice state that nurses (1) assess the client, (2) formulate a nursing diagnosis based on the collected data, (3) (4) develop a plan of care, (5) (6) implement, and (7) (8) evaluate the effectiveness of the plan of care.

## 2 Introduction

The American Nurses Associations Standards of Nursing Practice provide clients and nurses with written criteria for the evaluation of the nurses' role in the delivery of nursing care. Standards of Practice permit nursing to (a) defend its practices if the need arises; (b) conduct research to improve nursing practice, and (c) measure the nursing care provided to clients against the Standards of Practice for quality and appropriateness.

The nursing process is based on the American Nurses Associations' Standards of Nursing Practice. The eight standards are incorporated into the five step nursing process: (1) assessment, (2) nursing diagnosis, (3) planning, (4) implementation and (5) evaluation.

Professional specialty nursing organizations establish and publish professional practice standards based on the nursing process to guide the membership. For example, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses Standards of Practice includes the nursing process as a standard.

### **STANDARDS OF NURSING CARE**

A standard of nursing care focuses on the recipient of care, the client. A standard of care states the outcome criteria and the care a client will receive from nursing service. Standards of care are established by nurses and explicitly state the nursing interventions that will be delivered to the clients based on an identified problem and expected outcomes. Achievement of the standards of care are reflected in the nursing care plans and nurses' notes.

### **STANDARDS OF NURSING PERFORMANCE**

Standards of nursing performance compare the nurses' performance with the identified standards of performance specified in the job description for evaluation purposes. Annual evaluations of nursing performance reflect the nurse's ability to implement the nursing process.

### **LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE NURSING PROCESS**

Malpractice stems from professional negligence. In order for the plaintiff, the client, family or significant other, to receive compensation for damages, the plaintiff establishes the following elements: (a) the existence of the nurse's duty to the plaintiff, based upon the existence of the nurse-client relationship; (b) the applicable standard of nursing care and the nurse's violation of this standard; (c) a compensable injury, that the injured client is entitled to receive payment for damages; and, (d) a causal connection between the violation of the standard of care and the harm the client claimed (Black, 1990).

Nurses are legally bound to follow the American Nurses Association Standards of Nursing Practice and the standards of care applicable to their work area. In a malpractice suit against a nurse, the plaintiff's attorney will examine whether the nurse, the defendant in the malpractice suit, implemented professional standards of nursing practice and standards of care. That is, the standards that a reasonable and prudent nurse would be expected to follow.

### **IMPACT OF THE NURSING PROCESS ON THE JOINT COMMISSION OF ACCREDITATION OF HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS' STANDARDS**

The Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) is an independent accrediting body. JCAHO reviews the extent to which healthcare organizations (e.g., hospitals) meet written quality assurance standards. JCAHO requires coordination of quality assurance efforts throughout a healthcare organization and involves administrative staff, nurses, medical staff, pharmacists and other professional groups.

JCAHO holds nurses responsible for implementing the American Nurses' Association Standards of Nursing Practice, and standards of care. The JCAHO Nursing Service Standards state nursing care will be provided to clients through the use of the nursing process. Nursing care is based on a documented assessment and reassessment of the client's needs (JCAHO, 1991).

## **IMPACT OF THE NURSING PROCESS ON QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Quality assurance (QA) is the evaluation of nursing care against a standard. QA is an ongoing systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of care delivered to the client, the appropriateness of client care, the identification of opportunities to improve client care, and the resolution of identified problems (JCAHO, 1991).

Nursing service constructs QA monitors founded on the nursing process and tracks implementation of the five step nursing process. The QA monitor begins with an audit of the admission data assessment tool (step 1), the nursing care plan (step 2 and 3) and the nurses notes (step 4 and step 5). The QA monitor quantitatively measures the compliance rate with established standards of practice and care.

Quality assurance monitoring is usually conducted on a quarterly basis during a fiscal year. An acceptable compliance rate is established by the nursing service quality assurance committee. For example, in a hospital 91-100% of the clients on a nursing unit must have a written nursing care plan and documentation of nursing actions. Sharing results of the QA monitors assists the nurses in identifying strengths and areas needing improvement in their delivery of nursing care.

Student nurses and practicing professionals contribute to the quality of client care. The nursing QA monitors provide evidence to JCAHO and other accrediting organizations that quality care has been rendered to the clients.

## **FUNCTIONING WITHIN A NURSING MODEL IN NURSING PRACTICE**

The uniqueness of nursing is readily identified through the application of a nursing model. When the nurse functions within a nursing model, the problems identified, the data collected and the nursing diagnoses formulated are different from those of physicians. Nursing models deal with human responses to a problem that fall within the realm of nursing care.

In a medical model, the medical diagnosis addresses pathological cellular, tissue and organ changes. Changes are identified through an assessment of body systems. For example, a physician will conduct a health assessment of body systems such as the cardiovascular, neurological, urological and gastrointestinal systems.

There are various methods to collect and cluster client data. *Comprehending the Nursing Process: A Workbook Approach* presents the assessment of clients using two nursing models: (1) Gordon's 11 Functional Health Patterns (Appendix A, p. 133-136), and (2) Doenges and Moorhouse's Diagnostic Divisions (Appendix B, p. 137-139). Functional health patterns and diagnostic divisions organize the assessment data according to human responses to a problem. Both models have been tested in nursing practice for several years. In addition to facilitating the assessment of the client, the models aid in the identification of appropriate nursing diagnoses, and guide the nursing plan of care.

## **BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR NURSING DIAGNOSIS**

Nursing diagnosis aids in the transition to a professional model of nursing practice. In 1973, the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association (NANDA) held its first conference. At the time, nursing lacked autonomy that characterized it as a profession. Nursing leaders strove to clarify the nurse's role in the delivery of healthcare. Nursing diagnosis was accepted as the term used to describe problems identified

in nursing practice and within the realm of nursing to care. Nursing diagnosis became step 2 of the nursing process.

With an increase in the number of nursing diagnoses, a need to organize them into an orderly structure evolved. Consequently, NANDA developed a taxonomy to classify nursing diagnoses.

Nine human response patterns provide the classification schema. Nursing diagnoses are listed under the human response patterns according to the pattern definition, and the diagnosis definition and defining characteristics.

Each nursing diagnostic label in the NANDA taxonomy is defined. The diagnostic labels and definitions facilitate consistency, communication and utilization of the NANDA taxonomy around the world. NANDA's Nursing Diagnosis Taxonomy I was accepted by the 1986 General Assembly of NANDA. Taxonomy I-Revised (Appendix C, p. 141-142) was accepted at the 1990 NANDA Ninth Conference. The taxonomy has been prepared for possible inclusion in the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

Professional nursing organizations promote the formulation of nursing diagnoses. The American Nurses Association (ANA) supports nursing diagnoses. The ANA Standards of Practice (1973), Standard II states, "Nursing diagnoses are derived from health status data." The ANA Social Policy statement indicates, "Nursing is the diagnosis and treatment of human responses to actual or potential health problems" (ANA, 1980, p. 9). The ANA acknowledged NANDA as the association to be utilized by the ANA practice councils for the development, review and approval of nursing diagnoses (ANA, 1988). Nursing diagnoses facilitate reimbursement for nursing interventions.

NANDA remains the professional nursing organization responsible for the research, classification and approval of nursing diagnoses for use by nurses throughout the world. Every two years NANDA reviews and approves nursing diagnoses that have been researched and tested clinically for their inclusion in the NANDA list of approved diagnostic labels.

#### **The Nine Human Response Patterns of the NANDA Taxonomy**

<u>Patterns</u>	<u>Definitions</u>	<u>Patterns</u>	<u>Definitions</u>
1. Exchanging	Mutual giving and receiving	6. Moving	Activity
2. Communicating	Sending messages	7. Perceiving	Reception of Information
3. Relating	Establishing bonds	8. Knowing	Meaning associated with information
4. Valuing	Assigning of relative worth	9. Feeling	Subjective awareness of information
5. Choosing	Selection of Alternatives		



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## How to Use the Workbook

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Each step of the nursing process is succinctly explained in the workbook and followed by an exercise based on either case study #1 or case study #2. The inclusion of exercises assist the user in (a) active involvement in the application of the five step nursing process and (b) the development of beginning critical thinking. The user, at times, will need to refer to information in Appendix A-L, p. 133-174, for information to answer some of the exercises. The recommended answers to the exercises are located in Appendix M (p. 175-209). The workbook offers the user an opportunity to select one or both of the case studies for each content area.

The case studies focus on a client's responses to a medical problem, case study #1, and a surgical problem, case study #2. The case studies are presented using assessment frameworks of nursing models. Gordon's 11 Functional Health Patterns, the nursing model used in case study #1, represent sequences of behavior that is, ways of living (Gordon, 1989). See Appendix A, p. 133-136, for Gordon's assessment framework. Doenges and Moorhouse's 13 Diagnostic Divisions, the nursing model used in case study #2, "reflect a blend of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and a self-care philosophy" (Doenges & Moorhouse, 1989). See Appendix B, p. 137-139, for Doenges and Moorhouse's framework.

In the workbook, the word client refers to the individual, family, significant other or the community. Outcome criteria are synonymous with client goals and objectives, expected outcomes, outcome behaviors, long and short term goals.

The author based the workbook on information gleaned from years of research and teaching of the nursing process to student nurses, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. *Comprehending the Nursing Process: A Workbook Approach* focuses on application of the five step nursing process.

### Case Studies

Medical p. 7-12

Case Study #1: Human Response to  
a Medical Problem  
(Rheumatoid Arthritis)

Surgical p. 13-19

Case Study #2: Human Response to a Surgical  
Problem (Carcinoma Left  
Breast, Stage I)



