

# Nursing Programs Philosophical Concepts

## PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS: DEFINITION OF TERMS

### CRITICAL ELEMENTS:

The five critical elements (5 C's) are the essential attributes that the faculty believe all nursing graduates of the WCCC Nursing Programs need to acquire in order to practice nursing. They provide the organizing framework of the curriculum and serve to facilitate the attainment of the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to provide nursing care for individuals with basic human needs and/or alterations in basic human needs.

The critical elements are caring, competency, communication, critical thinking and commitment. The definition of each critical element follows:

**Caring** – Caring creates an environment of being available for individuals and families beyond just doing for them. It compels the nurse to seek and apply evidence from the sciences to act for or with individuals based on a respect for the uniqueness and needs of each individual. The nurse also must provide patient centered teaching and health education to meet the learning needs of individuals and groups in order to promote health and prevent disease.

**Competency** – The safe and skillful performance of technical and/or management skills with minimum expenditure of time, effort, and resources.

**Technical skills** – Interventions, actions, techniques or procedures necessary to implement the plan of care.

**Management skills** – Techniques, strategies, and tactics used when managing care for a group of patients.

**Communication** – A two-way process of sending and receiving messages. Skills associated with communication are verbal (spoken, written, or electronic) and non-verbal, both of which are influenced by sociological, physiological, psychological cultural and environmental factors. These skills are necessary to initiate and maintain care of individuals and their families. Communication with patient, family, and health care team members is clear, concise, correct and complete.

**Therapeutic Communication** – Is facilitative and leads the patient and the nurse to greater understanding of patient behaviors and behavior alternatives. These are goal-directed skills that the nurse uses to provide the individual and family

with the opportunity to: identify and explore needs and/or problems, discover healthy ways of meeting basic needs, integrate new knowledge and skills, experience satisfying interpersonal relationships, and achieve the optimum level of health and wellness. These skills are aimed at preserving respect and fostering growth of patients and families.

**Collaborative Communication** – Is the foundation of effective teamwork. It requires verbal (spoken, written, or electronic) and non-verbal skills necessary for interacting, planning, decision making, problem solving, and goal setting with health team members to achieve positive patient centered outcomes. This is essential for fostering continuity of care, and maintaining a culture of safety.

**Critical Thinking** – The knowledge based, goal directed process of gathering, analyzing and synthesizing data to make decisions and formulate judgments in the provision and management of patient care. The nurse uses an objective scientific problem solving process in a context of cultural, clinical and individual variables to provide and to manage care and to promote health for patients and families. The outcomes include safe effective care that meets the psychosocial and physiologic needs of the patient and family.

**Commitment** – A pledge to understand and adhere to standards of professional nursing practice and to abide by the Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC) Nursing Program, WCCC College Student Handbook, and Agency Standards. It is essential to be committed to uphold legal and ethical codes of professional nursing practice and to commit to active lifelong learning to develop professional identity and on-going professional growth.

The following documents are used as guidelines throughout the WCCC Nursing Programs to ensure that care is provided within the legal and ethical framework of nursing practice:

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. 2010. *Pennsylvania Code. Title 49. Professional & Vocational Standards, Department of State, Chapter 21. State Board of Nursing*. Retrieved from <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/049/chapter21/chap21toc.html>

American Hospital Association, 1992. *A Patient's Bill of Rights*.

American Nurses Association, 2001. *Code of Ethics for Nurses*.

American Nurses Association, 2010. *Scope and Standards of Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*.

Healthy People 2020 online at [www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov).

International Council of Nurses (1973) ICN Code for Nurses. Ethical Concepts Applied to Nursing.

National Council of State Boards of Nursing 2010 NCLEX-RN Detailed Test Plan (2010).

Quality and Safety Competencies for pre-licensure and for graduates for Quality and Safety Education for Nurses (QSEN-207) online at [www.qsen.org/competencies.php](http://www.qsen.org/competencies.php).

National League for Nursing, 2010. *Outcomes and Competencies for Graduates of Practical/Vocational, Diploma, Associate Degree, Baccalaureate, Master's, Practice Doctorate, and Research Doctorate Programs in Nursing*. National League for Nursing, New York, New York.

The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health (October 5, 2010) Committee on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing, at the Institute of Medicine; Institute of Medicine online at <http://www.nap.edu>.

The Joint Commission's 2013 Hospital National Patient Safety Goals at [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org).

**BASIC HUMAN NEEDS:** Needs that are present across the life span that may be satisfied or altered as related to health or illness. Within our curriculum these needs are categorized as: physiological (oxygenation, nutrition/elimination, and activity/rest), safety/security, psychosocial/sexual, self-esteem and self-actualization. Basic human needs and alterations in basic human needs provide the structure for organizing common health problems and related nursing care within clinical nursing courses.

**EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE:** Is a science-to-practice model of the use of critical thinking to apply research based and practice based evidence to deliver quality, safe, and cost sensitive care. It is based on practice guidelines and standards of care as well as patient and family values and expectations.

**HEALTH:** It is a dynamic state of wellbeing characterized by a physical, mental, and social potential, which satisfies the demands of a life commensurate with age, culture, and personal responsibility.

**Illness:** A condition related to an alteration in the satisfaction of basic human needs.

**INDIVIDUAL:** Man, woman, child or infant who has an essential need for care to satisfy basic human needs across the life span. Needs may be satisfied or altered and can be related to health and illness. Individuals possess unique values and beliefs which influence their choices in relation to their health.

**Family:** A system of relationships where members share activities, are emotionally involved with each other, and who usually live together or in close geographic proximity. Members are committed to the well-being of the family and share a past, present, and future. A family is defined by its members.

**NURSING:** A dynamic and evolving evidence based practice profession that requires specialized scientific knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Nursing is the process of diagnosing and treating of actual or potential problems in meeting basic human needs of patients and their families. Nursing is based on five critical elements: caring, competency, communication, critical thinking, and commitment.

**NURSING EDUCATION:** Process that promotes the attainment of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed to fulfill the roles of the nurse.

**Learning:**

An active process of acquiring new knowledge, behaviors, and skills that result in a measurable change of behavior and achievement of learning outcomes.

**Student:**

An individual committed to learning and growth who seeks to achieve the program/graduate outcomes of the nursing program.

**Faculty:**

Academically and professionally qualified individuals who provide an environment that is conducive to student achievement of program outcomes. Faculty function as role models and resource persons who assess, plan, organize, implement, facilitate and validate student learning experiences. They also evaluate student progress toward program/graduate outcomes. Faculty maintain expertise related to their teaching responsibilities.

**Associate Degree Nursing Education:**

Enables the student to become a caring, competent and committed professional nurse who can think critically, communicate effectively and therapeutically in providing care. At the conclusion of the program, the student is granted an Associate in Applied Science Degree (A.A.S.) and is eligible to apply for licensure as a Registered Nurse.

**Associate Degree Nursing Graduate:**

An individual prepared to assume the role of the professional nurse in a variety of health care settings. A graduate of this program is eligible to apply for licensure as a Registered Nurse.

**PHILOSOPHY**

The faculty believes that a dynamic relationship exists between the individual and society, and that individuals have the ability and the right to make choices in all aspects of their lives including their health. The faculty believes that individuals are unique beings that have human needs across the life span and possess unique values and beliefs that influence their choices in relation to their health and well-being.

The faculty believes that an individual's definition of health is subjective and is influenced by one's cultural and societal experience. Definitions of health may include a sense of well-being, the ability to perform role functions, and a dynamic inter-play among mind, body, spirit, and the environment. The individual's definition of health provides a context for life decisions related to health practices and perceived needs. Individuals who experience alterations in basic human needs may require care related to those needs. The faculty believes that satisfied or altered needs influence health and illness. Nurses provide care and comfort to those individuals who require assistance to meet the basic human needs.

The faculty believes that nursing is a dynamic and evolving evidence based practice profession that requires specialized scientific knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Nursing is the process of diagnosing and treating of actual or potential problems in meeting basic human needs of patients and their families across the lifespan. Nursing is based on five critical elements: caring, competency, communication, critical thinking, and commitment.

The associate degree nurse uses the five steps of the nursing process to provide and manage care and recognizes the importance of teamwork and interdisciplinary

collaboration in meeting mutually identified patient-centered outcomes in the promotion of health, and the prevention of disease. Because an individual's need for care is affected by society and culture; the nurse recognizes that the ability to provide quality care within all practice settings, is influenced by societal, cultural, economic, political factors, and regulatory agencies, as well. The faculty believes the associate degree nurse assumes the responsibility of monitoring and ensuring the delivery of safe patient care based on current patient safety goals and intervenes as needed.

The faculty uses evidence-based practice findings, innovative teaching and learning technologies, and informatics systems to prepare graduate nurses with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors and the ability to access, use, and manage knowledge needed to make accurate clinical judgments and decisions; and to provide culturally competent patient-centered care for diverse populations. The faculty believes that the responsibility for learning and success is a collaborative effort between faculty and student. The faculty strives to provide an environment that is conducive to student success in achievement of program outcomes by functioning as role models and resource persons who organize, facilitate, validate, and evaluate progress toward graduate outcomes. The faculty also strives to instill in students, a desire for achieving and maintaining a high code of ethical and practice standards, continued safety in the provision of care, and professional excellence.

The faculty recognizes that the student brings a personal uniqueness to the learning situation and encourages the student to participate actively in self-assessment related to learning needs. The faculty expects the student to commit to both learning within the nursing program and to life-long learning within the profession, as well.

## **PURPOSE AND GOALS**

The purpose of this Associate Degree Nursing Program is to prepare a caring, competent, and committed graduate who can think critically and communicate effectively in the practice of nursing. The graduate will be eligible to apply for licensure as a Practical Nurse upon completion of the practical nursing program and to apply for licensure as a Registered Professional Nurse upon completion of the AAS degree program.

The goals of the *Associate Degree Nursing Program* are:

- Offer a professional nursing education program with a quality curriculum that is recognized as affordable, accessible, and acceptable to applicants and to the community at large.
- Offer a professional nursing education program whose graduates demonstrate caring, competence, communication skills, critical thinking skills, and commitment in their professional Nursing practice.

## **CURRICULUM ORGANIZING STRUCTURE**

### **BASIC HUMAN NEEDS**

Needs present across the life span that may be satisfied or altered as related to health or illness. Within our curriculum these needs are based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and classified as:

Physiologic (Oxygen, Nutrition/Elimination, and Activity/Rest)  
Safety and Security  
Psychosocial/Sexual  
Self-esteem  
Self-actualization

Basic human needs and alterations in basic human needs provide the structure for organizing common health problems and related nursing care within clinical nursing courses.

### **CRITICAL ELEMENTS**

The five critical elements (5 C's) are the essential attributes that the faculty believes all nursing graduates of the WCCC Nursing Programs need to practice nursing. The critical elements are:

Caring  
Competency  
Communication  
Critical thinking  
Commitment

The 5 C's serve as the organizing framework of the curriculum to facilitate the attainment of the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to provide nursing care for individuals with basic human needs and/or alterations in basic human needs.

## **GRADUATE/PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

The graduate of the **Associate Degree Nursing Program** is prepared to assume the role of the professional nurse in complex environments. This curriculum is designed to prepare the graduate to:

### ***Caring***

1. Deliver quality and safe professional nursing care based on knowledge and evidence from nursing, physical, biological, and behavioral sciences.
2. Promote health through patient and family centered teaching and health education.
3. Use caring constructs to provide patient and family centered care that is based on respect for diversity.

### ***Competency***

4. Implement technical aspects of care safely, skillfully, effectively, and efficiently.
5. Manage the care for a group of patients in a variety of settings using evidence based management concepts and skills.

### ***Communication***

6. Use therapeutic communication skills with individuals when providing professional nursing care.
7. Use effective communication skills to promote teamwork, multidisciplinary collaboration and shared decision making.

### ***Critical Thinking***

8. Use the nursing process to assess, diagnose, plan, implement, and evaluate care to meet mutually identified needs of individuals and their families.
9. Apply critical thinking to decision making and safe clinical judgments
10. Use information technologies effectively by accessing and managing information to enhance provision, adaptation, and management of care.

### ***Commitment***

11. Implement collaborative, dependent and independent nursing actions within the legal and ethical framework of professional nursing practice.
12. Demonstrate commitment to active learning to enhance self-development, professional identity and growth as a nurse.