

# Introduction to Professional Nursing - 2021

## Roles of a Nurse (What is a nurse?)

- Caregiver
- Communicator
- Teacher
- Advocate
- Counselor
- Change agent
- Leader
- Manager

## Domains of Nursing Practice (What does a nurse do?)

- Provide skilled care
- Advocate for patients' rights
- Teach patients, families, communities about health maintenance
- Support patients and families in critical times
- Help patients navigate the complex health care system

## Definitions of Nursing

Florence Nightingale-

“the act of utilizing the environment of the patient to assist him in his recovery”

Virginia Henderson's Definition of the Unique Function of Nursing, 1966

“The unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, will or knowledge...”

ANA's Definition of Nursing

“Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, facilitation of healing, alleviation of suffering through diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations” (2010)

## Professionalism in Nursing

- Nurses must function within the policies and cultures of our organization and public expectations
- Starts now as nursing students and develops over time
- Nurses and Nursing Students must be accountable for their actions

## Legal Aspects of Nursing

- Scope of Practice - Essential care of nursing practice is to deliver holistic, patient-centered care
- Scope of practice depends on educational preparation; Generalist, Specialist, Advance Practice
- Legally...Licensed professionals = accountable for our actions
- Accountability is essential concept of professional nursing and the law
- Important to know basics of legal concepts
- Decisions and actions must be consistent with legal principles
- Protects us from liability (being sued)

## Functions of the Law in Nursing

- Regulates nursing practice

- Differentiates the nurse's responsibilities
- Establishes the boundaries of independent nursing action
- Maintains standards of nursing practice

#### Nurse Practice Act

- Regulation of Nursing is a function of state law
- Describes responsibilities for which nurses are accountable
- Defines and describes scope of nursing practice
- Differs from state to state

#### Nurse Practice Act (*Chapter 19 – Delaware Code*)

- Defines the practice of professional nursing
- Sets the educational qualifications and other requirements for licensure
- Determines legal titles and abbreviations nurses may use
- Provides for disciplinary action of licensees
- Defines responsibilities and authorities of State Board of Nursing

#### State Board of Nursing - *Responsibilities and Authority*

- Establish Standards for Nursing Practice
- Licensing of practitioners
- Establish standards for educational programs
- Prescribe penalties for violations of the Nurse Practice Act

#### Nursing License

- Legal permit to engage in nursing profession
- Mandatory to practice nursing
- Specific to state
- Nurse Licensure Compact law
- Licensure is a PRIVILEGE...can be revoked for just cause

#### Standards of Care

- To protect public
- Skills and learning possessed by members of profession
- Used to evaluate quality of care nurses provide = become legal guidelines
- Internal Standards of Care
- External Standards of Care
- Correspond to the Nursing Process
- Assessment
- Analysis (Diagnosis)
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation

#### Nursing Codes of Ethics

- Set of ethical principles that:
  - Is shared by members of the group
  - Reflects their moral judgements over time
  - Serves as a standard for their professional actions

#### Liability

## Two types of law

Criminal = Crimes

Civil = Torts

Intentional torts - Deliberate attempt to cause pain or suffering

Unintentional torts - No intent to do harm = Negligence (failing to act as a reasonably prudent person)

## Professional Negligence – Malpractice

Negligence occurring in performance of one's professional duties

Liability for gross negligence

## How do we protect ourselves and our license against Malpractice?

Function within scope of education, job description, and Nurse Practice Act

Follow policies and procedures

Build good relationships with our patients

Always check patient identity

Assess our patients accurately

Perform interventions correctly and appropriately

Follow the “rights” for medication administration

Maintain clinical competence

Ask for assistance in situations where you feel unprepared

Always protect patients from harm/injury

## Legal Accountability for Student Nurses

Responsible for own actions

Liable for own acts of negligence

When performing duties within scope of professional nursing, held to same standard of care

Lower standards are NOT applied to nursing students!!

**ALWAYS!**

Make sure you are prepared to carry out necessary care to assigned patients

Never perform ANY care without permission from instructor

Ask for help if not sure of what you are doing

Comply with policies and procedures that you are taught

Comply with policies/rules of the School

If you are employed in another role, be careful to perform in role of student