

# Chapter 4

## Nursing Process and Critical Thinking

# Chapter 4

## Lesson 4.1

# Learning Objectives

## Theory

- 1) Explain the use of the nursing process.
- 2) Identify the components of the nursing process.
- 3) Compare and contrast the terms *critical thinking*, *clinical reasoning*, and *clinical judgment*.
- 4) Identify the steps of the problem-solving process.
- 5) List the steps used in making decisions.

# Learning Objectives

## Theory

- 6) Identify ways to improve critical reasoning skills.
- 7) Apply the critical thinking process to a real-life problem.
- 8) Discuss the use of critical thinking in nursing.

## Clinical Practice

- 1) Apply nursing process to a patient care assignment.

# The Nursing Process

- A way of thinking and acting based on the scientific method
- Used as a tool identify patients' problems and an organized method to meet patients' needs

# The Nursing Process (cont'd)

- Components of the nursing process
  - Assessment
  - Nursing diagnosis
  - Planning
  - Implementation
  - Evaluation

# Assessment

- Collecting, organizing, documenting, and validating a patient's health data
- Data are gathered from patient (physical assessment and interview) and family, as well as from the physician and patient's medical record
- Data from other health professionals and diagnostic tests included in assessment

# Nursing Diagnosis

- Sorting and analyzing the assessment data to identify potential health problems
- Problems identified during the process are specific nursing diagnoses
- Nursing diagnoses prioritized and entered into the nursing plan of care

# Planning

- A series of steps in which the nurse and the patient set priorities and goals to eliminate, diminish, or control identified problems
- Goals should be stated with specific outcomes
- Nurse and patient collaborate to choose specific interventions to enable the patient to meet the specific outcomes listed in the plan of care

# Implementation

- Carrying out nursing interventions prioritized during the planning process
- Some interventions may be delegated or carried out by other members of the health care team

# Evaluation

- Assessing the patient to evaluate his or her response to the nursing interventions
- Responses compared with expected outcomes to evaluate whether outcomes have been met
- Based on results from the evaluation process, the nursing plan of care may need to be changed

# Critical Thinking

- Required to use the nursing process successfully
- Means requiring careful judgment
- Directed, purposeful mental activity by which ideas are evaluated, plans are constructed, and desired outcomes are decided

# Critical Thinking (cont'd)

- Problem solving and decision making
  - First define the problem clearly
  - Second, consider all possible alternatives as solutions
  - Third, consider outcomes for each alternative
  - Fourth, predict likelihood of each outcome occurring
  - Finally, choose alternative with best chance of success and fewest undesirable outcomes

# Skills for Critical Thinking

- Effective reading
- Effective writing
- Attentive listening
- Effective communicating

# Critical Thinking in Nursing

- Requires skills and experience as well as knowledge
- Influenced by professional standards and codes of ethics

# Critical Thinking and Nursing (cont'd)

- Critical thinking and the nursing process
  - Assessment: organized and systematic; includes gathering and recording data
  - Nursing diagnosis requires analysis of data gathered, clustering related information, identifying problem areas, and choosing appropriate nursing diagnoses
  - Planning involves determining specific desired outcomes for each nursing diagnosis

# Critical Thinking and Nursing (cont'd)

- Critical thinking and the nursing process
  - Implementation involves preparing for and performing the interventions
  - Evaluation involves gathering data to determine if expected outcomes have been achieved

# Question 1

Which of the following is an example of a nurse's statement that reflects using the scientific method in the nursing process?

- 1) "I believe that this patient is getting depressed."
- 2) "The patient doesn't look right to me; I think something is wrong."
- 3) "The patient's husband told me that she is feeling very uncomfortable."
- 4) "The patient reports more pain than yesterday and her blood pressure is elevated."

# Chapter 4

## Lesson 4.2

# Learning Objectives

## Theory

- 9) Explain the basic principles of setting priorities for nursing care.
- 10) List factors to be considered when setting priorities.

## Clinical Practice

- 2) Use critical thinking to prioritize care for a patient assignment.

# Priority Setting and Work Organization

- Priority setting (prioritizing): placing nursing diagnoses/interventions in order of importance
  - High priority: life-threatening problems
  - Medium priority: problems that threaten health or coping ability
  - Low priority: problems that do not have a major effect on the person if not attended to that day or week

# Organizing Workload

- Priorities change as patient conditions change
- To maintain an organized workload you must:
  - Write out a worksheet; list major tasks to accomplish
  - Be flexible and frequently reorder your tasks
  - Evaluate and reprioritize work plan at least every 2 hours
  - Know when to ask for help and when to delegate a task to others

# Application of Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

- Goal is to avoid having your decision cause injury to anyone
- With critical thinking skills, you can weigh many factors and skillfully solve problems, making good decisions a majority of the time
- Operating in critical thinking mode while pursuing nursing studies helps develop clinical judgment needed to practice safe nursing

# Question 2

Which of the following nursing actions is the best example of problem solving?

- 1) Requesting the IV team to start an antibiotic drip on a patient with a history of being a difficult stick
- 2) Offering to call the kitchen to provide an alternate breakfast for a patient who does not like cooked cereal
- 3) Trying several difficult wound dressings to determine which one the patient can apply the most effectively
- 4) Calling for another pain medication order when the current drug results in the patient experiencing nausea