



Editorial

Levels in Undergraduate Family Nursing Education

The month of August finds most nurse educators preparing for a new academic year. Therefore, it is appropriate that the special focus of this issue is on the teaching and learning of family nursing, primarily at the undergraduate level. A number of educational innovations are offered by nurse educators across North America. Three Canadian universities and one U.S. university are represented in the descriptions of how, what, and when to teach nursing students about families. An interesting, firsthand account of learning about family health policy is offered by two undergraduate students. This issue concludes with a selected bibliography of literature that focuses on family nursing education. There has not been a lot of writing in this area. I encourage more dialogue on this topic through conference presentations, articles, and book chapters.

In 1995, Dr. Lorraine Wright and I were invited to offer recommendations for leveling family nursing education across 4 years of an undergraduate nursing curriculum at the University of Calgary. I share our joint effort to bring symmetry to the three areas of family nursing theory, practice, and research (see Table 1).

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Editor

Table 1. Levels of Family Nursing Education in a Baccalaureate Nursing Program, University of Calgary

Year

1st Year

Family Theory

Conceptualization of family: What is a family? *Definitions of family. Family structure, Calgary Family Assessment Model (CFAM):* Internal structure: family composition, gender, rank order, subsystems, boundaries. External structure: extended family and larger systems. Context ethnicity, race, social class, religion, environment. *Tools:* genograms and ecomaps. *Individuals in a relational context:* Systems theory: illness and problems arise at different systems levels, change in one part affects change in all parts, etc. *Health/illness:* Appreciate the impact of illness and wellness on the family.

Family Nursing Practice

Perceptual/ conceptual/executive skills: Engagement and beginning family assessment skills within therapeutic conversations with families.

Family Nursing Research

Knowledge and use of research related to the impact of illness and wellness on the family.

2nd Year

Family Theory

Family development, CFAM: Stages, tasks, transitions, and attachment. Types: middle-class, North American family life cycle; divorce and post divorce family life cycle; remarried family life cycle; adoptive family life cycle; professional and low-income family life cycle. *Individuals in a relational context:* Communication theory. *Tool:* circular pattern diagrams. *Health/Illness:* Appreciate the impact of the family on illness and wellness.

Family Nursing Practice

Perceptual/conceptual/executive skills: Family assessment skills within therapeutic conversations with families.

Family Nursing Research

Knowledge and use of research related to the impact of the family on illness and wellness.

3rd Year

Family Nursing Theory

Family functioning, CFAM: Instrumental functioning. Expressive functioning: communication, roles, problem solving, beliefs, influence, alliances, and coalitions. *Individuals in a relational context:* Family intervention, Calgary Family Intervention Model. *Health/Illness:* Appreciate the reciprocity between family and illness/wellness.

Family Nursing Practice

Perceptual/conceptual/executive skills: Engagement, assessment, intervention, and termination within therapeutic conversations with families.

Family Nursing Research

Knowledge and use of research related to the reciprocity between family and illness/wellness.

4th Year

Family Nursing Theory

Application of conceptual family models to different populations of families experiencing illness and wellness in different settings. *Individuals in a relational context:* Focus on relationship between health care professional(s) and family in a variety of contexts. *Health/Illness:* Same as 3rd year.

Family Nursing Practice

Perceptual/conceptual/executive skills: Engagement, assessment, intervention, and termination within therapeutic conversations with families.

Family Nursing Research

Knowledge and use of research related to family health care provider relationships.

Source: Developed by Dr. L. M. Wright and Dr. J. M. Bell. Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary. February 1995.