

Holistic Nursing Practice Position Statement

Statement: New Jersey State Nurses Association supports integrating holistic nursing core values, inclusive of self-care, and implementing complementary and integrative health approaches into the practice of registered nurses and advanced practice nurses.

Explanation of Issues: Holistic nursing is foundational to nursing practice. The New Jersey (NJ) Nurse Practice Act and NJ Board of Nursing administrative code do not specifically acknowledge holistic aspects of nursing (N.J. Stat. Ann., 2020; N.J.A.C, 2024). Holistic principles are a universal skill set practiced in every area of nursing. These principles can support the nursing profession by fostering the wellbeing of both the nursing workforce and the communities they serve.

Rationale:

Holistic nursing is healing and caring for the whole person, mind, body, and spirit to foster whole person well-being and promote quality care and safety. “Self-reflection, self-development, and self-care, as well as personal awareness and continuous focus on being a facilitator of healing, are significant requirements for holistic nurses” (ANA & AHNA, 2019, p. 25). Holistic nursing provides the framework to optimize personal and professional well-being by establishing a healthy workplace. Holistic nursing core values also empower nurses to co-create a healing environment by implementing holistic practices, such as offering their full presence as an instrument of healing.

Self-care is a prerequisite to providing safe nursing care while ensuring health risk reduction and an overall sense of well-being. Empirical research indicates fatigue and burnout negatively impacts nurses' job performance which inherently compromises nurses' physical and mental health and safety, consequently increasing risks to patient safety and the quality of care provided (Aiken et al., 2023; de Cordova et al., 2016; Gentry, 2019; Johnson et al., 2014). A key component to a healing environment includes nurses who are supported to care for themselves and their colleagues.

Holistic nurses can expand upon the healing environment and patient experience by offering complementary integrative health approaches (CIHA) in which they are educated and trained. These are not to be used in replacement of traditional care but can be used in tandem leading to a comprehensive and individualized healthcare experience. This allows nurses to provide more robust care to promote whole person well-being.

Explanation/Definition of Terms:

Complementary Integrative Health Approaches (CIHA): If a non-mainstream approach is used together with conventional medicine, it's considered "complementary" (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, 2016, para. 4).

- CIHA include, but are not limited to, presence, breathing techniques, aromatherapy, music as a therapeutic intervention, guided imagery, energy healing practices, reflexology, mindfulness practices, art therapy, massage therapy, acupuncture.

Holistic Nursing: "A holistic nurse is a legally licensed nurse who takes a holistic (mind-body-spirit-emotion) approach to the practice of traditional nursing. Holistic nursing is based on a body of knowledge, evidence-based research, sophisticated skill sets, defined standards of practice, and a philosophy of living and being that is grounded in caring, relationship, and interconnectedness" (AHNA, 2024, para. 1).

Holistic Nursing Practices: Includes, but not limited to:

- intentionality
- therapeutic use of presence as an intervention for healing
- mindfulness practices
- facilitating pattern recognition with both self and others: understanding recurring themes or behaviors in a patient's overall well-being to plan care. (AHNA, 2016)

Holistic Nursing Core Values:

- Core Value 1. Holistic Philosophies, Theories and Ethics
- Core Value 2. Holistic Nurses Self-Reflection, Self-Development, and Self-Care
- Core Value 3. Holistic Caring Process
- Core Value 4. Holistic Communication, Therapeutic Relationship, Healing Environments, and Cultural Care
- Core Value 5. Holistic Education and Research (ANA & AHNA, 2019)

Self-care: "Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health" (National Institute of Mental Health, 2024, para. 2).

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Written by: Congress on Policy and Practice

Formulated: March 4, 2024, by COPP Position Statement Subcommittee and Sara Humeny, MS, BSN, RN, NBC-HWC, HNB-BC, Kelly Venditto BSN, RN, HN-BC, CPPS, Marie Feiter, BSN, RN, HNB-BC, and Shannon Rice MBA, MSN, RN, NE-BC, AHN-BC

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