

## Henderson Nursing Model

### What We Know

- › Nursing is a professional discipline supported by a wide body of literature and multiple nursing models that guide its practice with the goal of identifying and resolving patients' health care needs at every level of care. The aim of a nursing model is to provide a framework or foundation that identifies specific nursing actions and functions<sup>(8)</sup>
  - Nurses typically practice within at least one conceptual model of nursing, and the one developed by Virginia Henderson has proven to be effective, practical, and versatile<sup>(8)</sup>
- › Virginia Henderson (1897–1996) was one of the most influential characters in the development of nursing theory in the twentieth century. She pioneered the view of nursing as an independent occupation separate from medicine at a time when few nurses contemplated the direction of modern nursing. Her theory is often called the “Definition of Nursing,” which provided patients and families with a clearer understanding of nursing practice<sup>(2,4,9)</sup>
  - Henderson’s nursing model was based on efforts to optimize patients’ activities of living as well promoting advocacy for patients who were unable to communicate their needs<sup>(2,4)</sup>
    - She suggested that nursing’s unique role to independently initiate and support basic patient care activities to promote self-sufficiency forms the basis of “independent nursing practice”
    - Her central focus was on what nurses actually do, how they function, and their unique role in health care with an emphasis on the patient *and* the family
  - Henderson’s model included 4 major concepts: individual needs of the patient, the patient’s environment, the patient’s ability to function, and nursing practice<sup>(1)</sup>
  - She promoted the idea that nursing is much more than simply following physicians’ orders. She wrote that critical thought (knowledge utilization) regarding basic nursing care distinguished nursing practice from other disciplines. She was dedicated to the concept of nursing excellence.<sup>(1,4,7)</sup>
- › Henderson coined the term “basic nursing care” to identify 14 basic needs of the patient, which include physiological, psychological, socio-cultural, spiritual, and developmental aspects. The nurse works with the patient to address each of the following basic needs to return the patient to self-sufficiency:<sup>(2,8,9)</sup>
  - Breathe normally
  - Eating and drinking adequately
  - Eliminating body wastes
  - Movement/positioning and maintaining desirable postures
  - Sleeping and resting
  - Selecting appropriate clothing; dressing and undressing
  - Maintaining normal body temperature within a normal range by adjusting clothing and modifying the environment
  - Maintaining clean and well-groomed body, and protecting skin
  - Avoiding dangers and avoiding injuring others
  - Communicating with others in expressing emotions, needs, fears, or opinions
  - Worshiping according to one’s own faith

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- Working for sense of accomplishment
  - Playing or participating in forms of recreation
  - Learning, discovering, or satisfying curiosity that leads to normal development and health and use of available facilities
- › Henderson viewed assessment as a “mutual process between the patient and the nurse.” Although she never specifically suggested cultural assessment, she acknowledged the influence of patient’s social or cultural status on his/her basic nursing needs. She believed there are two basic principles essential to transcultural nursing: The nurse must<sup>(3)</sup>
- be self-aware before delivering care
  - be open to the patient’s beliefs and values
- › Henderson’s concept has been extended beyond traditional bedside nursing to include
- childbirth education to support hospitals’ efforts to attain magnet status<sup>(9)</sup>
  - palliative end-of-life care<sup>(5)</sup>
  - nursing the patient who is brain-dead so that even though the patient cannot be returned to independent function, the nurse can act as the “voice unheard” to ensure realization of the patient’s preferences and decisions that were made before incapacitation <sup>(6)</sup>
- › Henderson’s efforts to define nursing have influenced the practice and education of nurses worldwide. She promoted the following tenets of modern nursing:<sup>(2,7)</sup>
- Nursing activities are required when an individual cannot manage his needs, partially or completely<sup>(7)</sup>
  - Nursing activities are goal oriented based on the specific need(s)of the patient<sup>(7)</sup>
  - The nurse is the authority regarding basic nursing care and bears the responsibility of assessing the patient’s needs<sup>(2)</sup>
  - The goal for each patient is to promote recovery so the patient can become as self-sufficient as possible or to allow for peaceful death, if death is unavoidable<sup>(2,7)</sup>

## What We Can Do

- › Become knowledgeable about Henderson’s nursing model, specifically the 14 basic human needs, so you can use it to accurately assess your patients’ personal characteristics and health education needs; share this information with your colleagues
- › Learn about your individual patients’ beliefs and values and acknowledge yours in respect to theirs
- If you do not understand or are uncomfortable with your patient’s belief system and values, discuss this issue with your supervisor immediately
- › When formulating and evaluating a patient care plan,
- discuss your ideas with the patient and include him/her in the goal-setting process
  - explain the rationale for each specific goal to promote the patient’s cooperation
  - work with the patient to create an environment that facilitates recovery so the patient can become as self-sufficient as possible or to allow for peaceful death, if death is unavoidable
  - involve the patient in the evaluation of outcomes

## Coding Matrix

References are rated using the following codes, listed in order of strength:

<b>M</b> Published meta-analysis	<b>RV</b> Published review of the literature	<b>PP</b> Policies, procedures, protocols
<b>SR</b> Published systematic or integrative literature review	<b>RU</b> Published research utilization report	<b>X</b> Practice exemplars, stories, opinions
<b>RCT</b> Published research (randomized controlled trial)	<b>QI</b> Published quality improvement report	<b>GI</b> General or background information/texts/reports
<b>R</b> Published research (not randomized controlled trial)	<b>L</b> Legislation	<b>U</b> Unpublished research, reviews, poster presentations or other such materials
<b>C</b> Case histories, case studies	<b>PGR</b> Published government report	<b>CP</b> Conference proceedings, abstracts, presentation
<b>G</b> Published guidelines	<b>PFR</b> Published funded report	

## References

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