

Faith Community Nursing Compared to Other Nursing Specialties

Faith community nursing is similar and different when compared to other nursing specialties.

How is faith community nursing similar to other nursing specialties?

There are 104 specialty practices in nursing. More than one-third of these (34), are considered to be community-based, multifaceted, independent, and patient facing (relational). Of these, 19 seen to be very similar and require a generalized knowledge to practice. They include: ambulatory care nurse, camp nurse, community health nurse, domestic violence nurse, environmental health nurse, **faith community nurse**, holistic nurse, home health care nurse, hospice and palliative nursing, independent nurse contractor, international nurse, missionary nurse, health coach nurse, occupational health nurse, public health nurse, rural nurse, school nurse, supplemental nurse, and transcultural nurse (<https://www.discovernursing.com/explore-specialties#characteristics=independent>).

All of nursing practice is under the legal authority of each state's Nurse Practice Acts and policies. In addition, all are guided by the *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (American Nurses Association, 2015). They are also guided by individualized specialty scope and standards of practice.

How is faith community nursing practice different?

There are three noted definitions of Faith Community Nursing

1. "... specialized practice of professional nursing that focuses on the intentional care of the spirit as part of the process of promoting wholistic health and preventing or minimizing illness in a faith community" (ANA & HMA, 2017).
2. "... care that supports and facilitates: physical functioning; psychological functioning and lifestyle change, with particular emphasis on coping assistance and spiritual care; protection against harm; the family unit; effective use of the health system; and health of the congregation and community" (Twadell and Hackbarth, 2010).
3. "... a method of health care delivery that is centered in a relationship between the nurse and client (client as person, family, group, or community). The relationship occurs in an iterative motion over time when the client seeks or is targeted for wholistic health care with the goal of optimal wholistic health functioning. Faith integrating is a continuous occurring attribute. Health promoting, disease managing, coordinating, empowering and accessing health care are other essential attributes. All essential attributes occur with intentionality in a faith community, home, health institution and other community settings with fluidity as part of a community, national, or global health initiative" (Ziebarth, 2014).

How can faith community nursing be summarized?

Based on a literature review of 124 faith community nursing articles (Ziebarth, 2014), faith community nurses (FCNs):

- Routinely performs intentional spiritual care, spiritual leadership practices, and integration of health and faith.
- Practices with or in a faith community, home, health institution, or other community setting with fluidity and consistency.
- Is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary team member, advocating and providing resources from many different sources.
- Coordinates, implements, and sustains ongoing activities.
- Routinely utilizes and applies results from surveys.
- Is familiar with and able to implement community and public nursing concepts and practices.
- Is familiar with motivational and empowering techniques to encourage lifestyle change.
- Routinely trains and utilizes volunteers.
- Practices with the knowledge and skills as a generalist (assessment, prevention, disease processes, procedures, treatments, and end-of-life issues).

- Is accessible (long-term), approachable, professional, culturally sensitive, and communicates well.
- Understands the concept of “wholistic health” functioning.

To summarize, uniquely Faith Community Nursing interventions include:

- Routine and intentional spiritual care, spiritual leadership/practices, and integration of health and faith
- Partnership with a faith community
- Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary resourcing and referring
- Coordination, implementation, and sustention of ongoing activities
- Utilization and application of results from surveys
- Training and utilization of volunteers
- Interventions occur over time when the client seeks or is targeted for wholistic health care and the goal of interventions is wholistic health functioning

This delineation is important because the Joint Commission (2010) states that patients or clients have specific characteristics and nonclinical needs that can affect the way they view, receive, and participate in health care. In addition, supporting patients’ spiritual needs may help them to cope with their illnesses. Patients who have services rendered by an FCN may experience a range of assessments and interventions that promote an adaptive process of attaining or maintaining wholistic health functioning (Cavan, 2000; Wolf, 2008; Solari-Twadell & Hackbarth, 2010; Ziebarth 2014).

*Wholistic health is defined as the human experience of optimal harmony, balance and function of the interconnected and interdependent unity of the spiritual, physical, mental, and social dimensions. The quality of wholistic health is influenced by human development at a given age and an individual’s genetic endowments, which operate in and through one’s environments, experiences, and relationships (Ziebarth, 2016).

References

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Resources

- For a list of nurse specialty practice certifications, see <https://www.nursingworld.org/certification/>
- For a list of ANA approved nurse specialty practices and their affiliated organizations, see <http://nursingworld.org/FunctionalMenuCategories/AboutANA/WhoWeAre/AffiliatedOrganizations>.
- *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (American Nurses Association, 2015) available at <https://www.nursingworld.org/nurses-books/nursing-scope-and-standards-of-practice-3rd-ed/>
- *Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (American Nurses Association & Health Ministry Association, 2005, 2012, 2017) available at <https://www.nursingworld.org/nurses-books/faith-community-nursing-scope-and-standards-of-practice-3rd-edition/>
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Written by Deborah Ziebarth, and edited by Westberg Institute for Faith Community Nursing, Church Health, Memphis Tennessee, 2019.