



## CHAPTER 2

# Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice

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## NURSE HEALER OBJECTIVES

### Theoretical

- Describe the scope of holistic nursing.
- Describe the standards of holistic nursing.
- Discuss the five core values of holistic nursing.

### Clinical

- Integrate the principles of holistic nursing into practice.
- Identify how you implement the standards of holistic nursing in your practice.
- Discuss *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd ed., with colleagues.

### Personal

- Reflect on your worldview and how it is similar to or different from the philosophy of holism.
- Explore how the concepts of holistic nursing apply to your personal life.

## DEFINITIONS\*

**Allopathic/conventional therapies:** Medical, surgical, pharmacologic, and invasive and noninvasive diagnostic procedures; those interventions most commonly used in allopathic Western medicine.

### Complementary/integrative health approaches

**(CIHA):** A broad set of healthcare practices, therapies, and modalities that address the

whole person—body, mind, emotion, spirit, and environment, not just signs and symptoms—and that may replace or be used as complements to or in conjunction with conventional Western medical, surgical, and pharmacologic treatments.

**Critical thinking:** An active, purposeful, organized cognitive process involving creativity, reflection, problem solving, rational judgment, intuitive judgment, an attitude of inquiry, and a philosophical orientation toward thinking about thinking.

**Cultural competence:** The ability to deliver health care with knowledge of and sensitivity to cultural factors that influence the health behavior and the curing, healing, dying, and grieving processes of the person.

**Disease:** A disorder or state of unbalance that may produce signs or symptoms.

**Healing:** A lifelong journey into wholeness, seeking harmony and balance in one's own life and in family, community, and global relations. Healing involves those physical, mental, social, and spiritual processes of recovery, repair, renewal, and transformation that increase wholeness and often (though not invariably) order and coherence. Healing is an emergent process of the whole system bringing together aspects of one's self and the body, mind, emotion, spirit, and environment at deeper levels of inner knowing, leading toward integration and balance, with each aspect having equal importance and value. Healing can lead to more complex levels of personal understanding and meaning and may be synchronous but not synonymous with curing.

**Healing process:** A continual journey of change and the evolving of one's self through life that is characterized by the awareness of patterns that support or that are challenges or barriers to health and healing and that may be done alone or in a healing community.

**Healing relationships:** The quality and characteristics of interactions between one who facilitates healing and the person in the process of healing. Characteristics of such interactions involve empathy, caring, love, warmth, trust, confidence, credibility, competence, honesty, courtesy, respect, shared expectations, and good communication.

**Healing system:** A true healthcare system in which people can receive adequate, nontoxic, and noninvasive assistance in maintaining wellness and healing for body, mind, emotion, and spirit, together with the most sophisticated, aggressive curing technologies available.

**Health:** An individually defined state or process in which the individual (nurse, patient, family, group, or community) experiences a sense of well-being, harmony, and unity such that subjective experiences about health, health beliefs, and values are honored; a process of becoming an expanding consciousness.

**Health promotion:** Activities and preventive measures to promote health, increase well-being, and actualize the human potential of people, families, communities, society, and ecology; such activities and measures include immunizations, fitness and exercise programs, breast self-exams, appropriate nutrition, relaxation, stress management, social support, prayer, meditation, healing rituals, cultural practices, and promoting environmental health and safety.

**Holistic communication:** A free flow of verbal and nonverbal interchange between and among people and significant beings such as pets, nature, and God/Life Force/Absolute Being/Transcendent Being that explores meaning and ideas leading to mutual understanding and growth.

**Holistic ethics:** The basic underlying concept of the unity and integral wholeness of all people and of all nature, identified and pursued by finding unity and wholeness within the self and within humanity. In this framework, acts are not performed for the sake of law, precedent, or social norms but rather from a desire to do good freely to witness, identify, and contribute to unity.

**Holistic healing:** A form of healing based on attention to all aspects of an individual—physical, mental, emotional, sexual, cultural, social, spiritual, and energetic. The manifestation of

right relationship at one or more levels of the body-mind-spirit-environment-energy system.

**Holistic nurse:** A nurse who recognizes and integrates body-mind-emotion-spirit-environment principles and modalities into daily life and clinical practice, creates a caring, healing space within herself or himself that allows the nurse to be an instrument of healing, shares authenticity of unconditional presence that helps to remove the barriers to the healing process, facilitates another person's growth (body-mind-emotion-spirit-environment-energetic connections), and assists with recovery from illness or transition to peaceful death.

**Holistic nursing practice process:** An iterative and integrative process that involves six steps that can occur simultaneously: (1) assessing; (2) diagnosing or identifying patterns, challenges, needs, and health issues; (3) identifying outcomes; (4) planning care; (5) implementing the care plan; and (6) evaluating.

**Honor:** An act or intention indicating the holding of self or another in high respect, esteem, and dignity, including valuing and accepting the humanity of people with regard for the decisions and wishes of another.

**Human caring:** The moral ideal of nursing in which the nurse brings one's whole self into a relationship with the whole self of the person being cared for to protect that person's vulnerability, preserve her or his humanity and dignity, and reinforce the meaning and experience of oneness and unity.

**Human health experience:** That totality of human experience including each person's subjective experience about health, health beliefs, values, sexual orientation, and personal preferences that encompasses health-wellness-disease-illness-death.

**Illness:** A subjective experience of symptoms and suffering to which the individual ascribes meaning and significance; not synonymous with disease; a shift in the homeodynamic balance of the person to disharmony and imbalance.

**Intention:** The conscious awareness of being in the present moment to help facilitate the healing process; a volitional act of love; conscious alignment of essence and purpose allowing the highest good to flow through a healing intervention.

**Interdisciplinary/interprofessional:** Conversation or collaboration across disciplines where knowledge is shared that informs learning, practice, education, and research; it includes individuals, families, community members, and various disciplines.

**Meaning:** That which is signified, indicated, referred to, or understood. Personal/individual meaning denotes symbolic value, significance, and purpose—an individual's perception of an experience. Philosophical meaning is meaning that depends on the symbolic connections that are grasped by reason. Psychological meaning is meaning that depends on connections that are experienced through intuition or insight.

**Patient-centered care:** Care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values and that ensures that patient values guide all clinical decisions. Patient-centered care encompasses identifying, respecting, and caring about patients' differences, values, preferences, and expressed needs; relieving pain and suffering; coordinating continuous care/listening to, clearly informing, communicating with, and educating patients; sharing decision making and management; and continuously advocating disease prevention, wellness, and promotion of healthy lifestyles, including a focus on population health (Institute of Medicine, 2001).

**Person:** An individual, patient, patient, family member, support person, or community member who has the opportunity to engage in interaction with a holistic nurse.

**Person-centered care:** The human caring process in which the holistic nurse gives full attention and intention to the whole self of a person, not merely the current presenting symptoms, illness, crisis, or tasks to be accomplished, and that also includes reinforcing the person's meaning and experience of oneness and unity; the condition of trust that is created in which holistic care can be given and received.

**Presence:** The essential state or core of healing; approaching an individual in a way that respects and honors her or his essence; relating in a way that reflects a quality of being with and in collaboration with rather than doing to; entering into a shared experience (or field of consciousness) that promotes healing potential and an experience of well-being.

**Relationship-centered care:** A process model of caregiving that is based on a vision of community where three types of relationships are identified: (1) patient–practitioner relationship, (2) community–practitioner relationship, and (3) practitioner–practitioner relationship. Each of these relationships is essential within a

reformed integrative healthcare delivery system in a hospital, clinic, or community or in the home. Each component involves a unique set of responsibilities and tasks that addresses the three areas of knowledge, values, and skills (Tresolini and Pew-Fetzer Task Force, 1994).

**Spirituality:** The feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for meaning; that which is generally considered sacred or holy; usually, though not universally, considered to involve a sense of connection with an absolute, imminent, or transcendent spiritual force, however named, as well as the conviction that meaning, value, direction, and purpose are valid aspects of the individual and universe; the essence of being and relatedness that permeates all of life and is manifested in one's knowing, doing, and being; the interconnectedness with self, others, nature, and God/Life Force/Absolute/Transcendent; not necessarily synonymous with religion.

**Transformational leadership:** Leadership that creates valuable and positive change in individuals and systems, encouraging individuals to contribute to their fullest potential by enhancing the motivation, morale, and performance of followers.

**Transpersonal:** A personal understanding that is based on one's experiences of temporarily transcending or moving beyond one's usual identification with the limited biological, historical, cultural, and personal self at the deepest and most profound levels of experience possible; that which transcends the limits and boundaries of individual ego identities and possibilities to include acknowledgment and appreciation of something greater. From this perspective the ordinary biological, historical, cultural, and personal self is seen as an important, but only a partial, manifestation or expression of this much greater something that is one's deeper origin and destination.

**Well-being:** An inner attitude of feelings of comfort and harmony and acceptance to the wholeness of one's being. Integrated, congruent functioning aimed toward reaching one's higher potential.

**Wellness:** An active process through which people become aware of and make choices toward a more successful existence. It is a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential. Wellness is multidimensional and holistic, encompassing lifestyle, mental and spiritual well-being, and the environment.

\* Many of the definitions in this chapter were adapted from *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd ed. (ANA and AHNA, 2019) and from *Holistic Nursing: A Handbook for Practice*, 7th ed. (Dosssey et al., 2016).

## Scope and Standards of Holistic Nursing Practice

Extraordinary changes occurred in health care and nursing from 2010 to 2020. During this time, holistic nurses recognized that not only were they practicing a unique specialty within nursing, but also that they needed to develop and publish standards of practice to document and define that specialty practice. Holistic nursing was officially recognized as a distinct specialty within the discipline of nursing by the American Nurses Association (ANA) in November 2006.

*Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd ed. (ANA & AHNA, 2019), articulates the scope and standards of the specialty practice of holistic nursing and informs holistic nurses, the nursing profession, other healthcare providers and disciplines, employers, third-party payers, legislators, and the public about the unique scope of knowledge and the standards of practice and professional performance of a holistic nurse. *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd ed. (ANA & AHNA, 2019), is the foundational document and resource for holistic nursing education at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, continuing education) and for holistic nursing practice, theory, research, advocacy, and certification.

### Function of the Scope of Practice Statement of Holistic Nursing

The scope of practice statement describes the *who, what, where, when, why, and how* of the practice of holistic nursing. These elements provide a picture of the dynamic and complex practice of holistic nursing, its evolving boundaries, and its members.

*Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd ed. (ANA, 2015b), applies to all professional registered nurses engaged in practice, regardless of specialty, practice setting, or educational preparation. With the *Code of Ethics for Nurses With Interpretative Statements* (ANA, 2015a) and *Nursing's Social Policy Statement: The Essence of the*

*Profession* (ANA, 2010a), it forms the foundation of practice for all registered nurses. The scope of holistic nursing practice is specific to this specialty, but it builds on the scope of practice expected of all registered nurses.

### Function of the Standards of Holistic Nursing

“The Standards of Professional Nursing Practice are authoritative statements of the duties that all registered nurses, regardless of role, population, or specialty, are expected to perform competently” (ANA, 2015b, p 2.). “Standards reflect the values and priorities of the profession. Standards provide direction for professional nursing practice and a framework for evaluation of this practice. Written in measurable terms, these standards define the nursing profession’s accountability to the public and the outcomes for which registered nurses are responsible” (ANA, 2004, p. 1).

The standards of holistic nursing practice are specific to this specialty but build on the standards of practice expected of all registered nurses.

Competencies accompany each standard of holistic nursing and articulate the “expected and measureable level of nursing performance that integrates knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment” (ANA, 2015b, p. 44).

*Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd ed., presents a differentiation between practice at the basic and advanced practice levels. The scope and standards are organized according to the ANA criteria used to recognize a nursing specialty area and build on nursing knowledge, skills, and competencies required for licensure (ANA, 2010b; Mariano, 2006). The text reflects a consensus of the most current thinking in the specialty and provides a blueprint for holistic nursing philosophy, theory, principles, education, research, and practices. It incorporates the fundamental philosophical beliefs, theories, and practices as well as new developments and advancements in the field of holistic nursing. It is a foundational resource for holistic nursing and a key resource for certification in holistic nursing. The standards guide clinicians, educators, researchers,

nurse leaders, and administrators in professional activities, knowledge, and performance that are relevant to basic and advanced practice, education, research, and advocacy in holistic nursing. The third edition is derived from values that are central to the specialty and are consistent with the philosophies and theories of holism.

## Evolution of Holistic Nursing

Ancient cultures have defined holism within the healing arts in terms of the balance of forces in nature. These elements are foundational in the healing arts practiced today by traditional and indigenous peoples around the globe. American physician Dr. Jacob Bigelow, in 1835, encouraged physicians to rethink their practice of prescribing medicine for all diseases. He stated that “some diseases are controlled by nature alone” (Bigelow, 1859, p. 36). This holistic philosophy, emphasizing a relationship with nature and her elements, was deeply embedded in the sphere of American domestic medicine and family self-care and ascribed to by many physicians, community healers, and the professional midwives and nurses of the period. Holism and the relationship with the environment and the elements of care is a foundational philosophy of care that has endured throughout centuries of American nursing care.

Early 19th century American nurses working in religious communities sought the balance of the humors and the elements, as did the ancient Greeks. In Britain, Florence Nightingale continued the holistic tradition. She believed that “Nature alone cures . . . and what nursing has to do in either case, is to put the patient in the best condition for nature to act upon him” (Nightingale, 1860, p. 133). Nightingale believed in care that focused on unity, wellness, and the interrelationship of human beings, events, and environment (Dossey, 2016). She, like her American predecessors, demonstrated an enduring commitment to a holistic philosophy and approach that incorporated the elements of care in service to people’s physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Even Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, espoused a holistic orientation when he taught doctors to observe their patients’ life circumstances and emotional states. Socrates, too, promoted it, stating, “Curing the soul; that is the first thing.” In holism, symptoms are believed to be an expression of the body’s wisdom as it reacts to cure its own imbalance or disease.

The root of the word *heal* comes from the Greek word *halos* and the Anglo-Saxon word *haelan*, which means to be or to become whole. The word *holy* also comes from the same source. Healing means “making whole”—or restoring balance and harmony. It is movement toward a sense of wholeness and completion. Healing, therefore, is the integration of the totality of the person in body, mind, emotion, spirit, and environment.

One of the driving forces behind the holistic nursing movement in the United States was the formation of the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA). In 1980, founder Charlotte McGuire and 75 founding members began the national organization in Houston, Texas. The national office is now located in Topeka, Kansas. The AHNA’s mission is to advance the philosophy and practices of holistic nursing and unite nurses in healing with a focus on holistic principles of health, preventive education, and the integration of allopathic and complementary caring and healing modalities to facilitate care of the whole person and significant others. From its inception in 1980, the AHNA has been the leader in developing and advancing holistic principles, practices, and guidelines. The association predicted that holistic principles, caring and healing, and the integration of complementary and integrative therapies and approaches would emerge into mainstream health care.

The AHNA, the definitive voice for holistic nursing, has as its vision: “Every nurse is a holistic nurse” (AHNA, 2019). The mission of the AHNA is “to illuminate holism in nursing practice, community, advocacy, research, and education” (ANA and AHNA, 2019, p. 5). It is committed to promoting wholeness and wellness in individuals, families, communities, nurses themselves, the nursing profession, and the environment. Through its various activities, AHNA provides

vision, direction, and leadership in the advancement of holistic nursing; integrates the art and science of nursing into the profession; empowers holistic nursing through education, research, and standards; promotes research and scholarship in holistic nursing; encourages nurses to be models of wellness; honors individual excellence in the advancement of holistic nursing; and influences policy to change the healthcare system to a more humanistic orientation.

The goals and endeavors of the AHNA have continued to map conceptual frameworks and the blueprint for holistic nursing practice, education, and research, which is the most complete way to conceptualize and practice professional nursing. The relevance and validity of holistic nursing as a science and practice have been increasingly demonstrated in recent years, as noted here:

While becoming more popular and more highly regarded, holism and holistic nursing have contributed to enhancing the human condition in many ways. Holism as a philosophy, concept, theory, and practice has been used to expand our understanding of human wellness and illness. Holistic nursing has become more systematized, refined, and diversified as strategies and practices have been shown to have an impact on health and well-being. Holistic nursing . . . has progressed . . . through the development of standards, endorsement of programs, and certification of beginning and advanced practitioners. Holistic nursing's contributions to human welfare have been increasingly recognized . . . as evidenced in their current standing in health care and appreciation by society. . . . Holism as a perspective and holistic nursing as a response may offer the world something that counteracts the fragmentation and isolation that exists so predominantly in our society. . . . Holistic nursing . . . provides a context in which nurses can consider, understand, and appreciate all

the aspects of human experience that contribute to patterns of life, health, and illness. (Cowling, 2011, p. 5)

## Scope of Holistic Nursing

*Holistic nursing* is defined as “all nursing practice that has healing the whole person as its goal” (AHNA, 1998). Holistic nursing is a specialty practice that draws on nursing knowledge, theories of nursing and wholeness, expertise, and intuition to guide nurses in becoming therapeutic partners with people in strengthening human responses to facilitate the healing process and achieve wholeness. Holistic nursing focuses on protecting, promoting, and optimizing health and wellness; assisting healing; preventing illness and injury; alleviating suffering; supporting people to find peace, comfort, harmony, and balance through the diagnosis and treatment of human response; and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, populations, and the planet.

Holistic nursing care is healing oriented and centered on the relationship with the person in contrast to an orientation toward diseases and their cures. Holistic nursing emphasizes practices of self-reflection and self-care, intentionality, presence, mindfulness, and therapeutic use of self as pivotal for facilitation of healing and patterning of wellness in others. In some sense, all nursing practice can be comprehensive—that is, all nursing practice may have a biopsychosocial perspective. What makes holistic nursing practice a specialty is that there is a philosophy, a body of knowledge, and an advanced set of nursing skills applied to practice that recognize the totality of the human being and the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotion, spirit, energy, society, culture, relationships, context, and environment. Philosophically, holistic nursing is a worldview, a way of being in the world, not just a modality. This philosophy honors the unique humanness of all people regardless of who and what they are. Knowledge for holistic nursing practice derives not only from nursing but also from theories of wholeness, energy, and unity as well as from other

healing systems and approaches. Holistic nurses incorporate both conventional nursing and integrative modalities and interventions into practice.

Through unconditional presence, mindfulness, and intention, holistic nurses create environments conducive to healing, using techniques that promote empowerment, peace, comfort, and a subjective sense of harmony and well-being for the person. The holistic nurse acts in partnership with the individual or family in providing options and alternatives regarding health and treatment. In addition, the holistic nurse assists the person to find meaning in the health and illness experience.

Holistic nursing focuses on simultaneously integrating as an iterative process all of these realms: a philosophy of being and living, using theories of nursing and wholeness with related knowledge and skills, focusing on the unity and totality of humans, incorporating healing approaches, creating healing environments, partnering with and empowering individuals, and assisting in the exploration of meaning in the care of people. In holistic nursing, the nurse is the facilitator of healing, honoring that the person heals himself or herself. The holistic nurse assists individuals in identifying themselves as healers and accessing their own innate healing capacities.

The practice of holistic nursing requires nurses to integrate self-care and self-responsibility into their own lives and to serve as role models for others. Holistic nurses strive for an awareness of the interconnectedness of individuals to the human and global community. Thus, holistic nurses also attend to the health of the ecosystem.

Holistic nurses are instruments of healing and facilitators in the healing process. They honor the individual's subjective experience of health, health beliefs, and values. To become therapeutic partners with individuals, families, communities, and populations, holistic nurses draw on nursing knowledge, theories, research, expertise, intuition, and creativity, incorporating the roles of clinician, educator, consultant, coach, partner, role model, and advocate. Holistic nursing practice encourages peer review of professional practice in various clinical settings and provides care based on current professional standards, laws, and regulations that govern nursing practice. The

### **Box 2-1** Phenomena of Concern to Holistic Nursing

- The caring, healing relationship
- The subjective experience of and meanings ascribed to health, illness, wellness, healing, birth, growth and development, and dying
- The cultural values, beliefs, and folk and indigenous practices of health, wellness, well-being, illness, healing, and death
- Spirituality in nursing care
- Energy and consciousness
- Reflective practice
- The use and evaluation of complementary and integrative health approaches (CIHA) in nursing practice
- Comprehensive health promotion, disease prevention, and well-being
- Self-reflection, self-care, and self-development processes
- Physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual comfort, discomfort, and pain
- Empowerment, decision making, and the ability to make informed choices
- Social and economic policies and their effects on the health of individuals, families, and communities
- Diverse and alternative healthcare systems and their relationships to access and quality of health care
- The environment, ecosystem, and prevention of disease
- Healing environment

major phenomena of concern to holistic nursing are listed in **Box 2-1**.

## **Philosophical Principles of Holistic Nursing**

Holistic nurses express, contribute to, and promote an understanding of the following:

- A philosophy of nursing that values healing as the desired outcome
- A foundation of holistic nursing in the sciences of health, wellness, well-being, and healing
- Nursing as an art
- The human health experience as a complex, dynamic relationship of an individual's

understanding of health, wellness, illness, and disease

- Environmental influences and cultural perspectives that inform an individual's health experience

## Person

- There are unity, totality, and energetic interconnectedness of everyone and everything (body, mind, emotion, spirit, sexuality, age, environment, social/cultural, belief systems, relationships, context).
- Human beings are unique, diverse, and inherently good.
- People are able to find meaning and purpose in their own life, experiences, and illness.
- All people have an innate power and capacity for growth, development, and self-healing. Health/illness is subjectively described and determined by the view of the individual. Therefore, the person is honored in all phases of his or her growth, development, and healing process, regardless of expectations or outcomes.
- People/persons/individuals are the recipients of holistic nursing services. They may be healthcare consumers, patients, families, significant others, populations, or communities, local to global. They may be well and moving toward personal betterment and enhanced well-being or ill within the healthcare delivery system.

## Healing/Health

- Health and illness are natural and a part of life, learning, and movement toward growth, development, and potential change.
- Health is seen as balance, integration, harmony, right relationship, and the betterment of well-being, not just the absence of disease. Healing can take place without cure. The focus is on health promotion, disease prevention, health restoration, and lifestyle patterns and habits, as well as symptom relief.
- Illness and disease are seen as a teacher, an opportunity for self-awareness and growth, and part of the life process. Health challenges

and symptoms are respected for their potential messages.

- Healing is multidimensional, can occur at any level of the human energetic system, and is creative, unfolding, and unpredictable.
- Healing is an experience defined by the individual and therefore is variable.
- People, as active partners in the healthcare and healing process, are empowered when they take some control of their own lives, health, and well-being, including personal choices and relationships.
- Treatment is a process that considers the root of the problem, issue, or illness, not merely treating the obvious signs and symptoms.

## Practice

- Practice is a science (clinical reasoning, critical thinking, reflection, evidence/research/theory) as foundational to practice and an art (intuition, creativity, appreciation, presence, self/personal knowing) as integral to practice.
- The values and ethic of holism, caring, moral insight, dignity, integrity, competence, responsibility, accountability, and legality underlie holistic nursing practice.
- Intention for the well-being and highest good for the care of the recipient is the cornerstone of all holistic practice.
- Any and all interventions have an effect on the whole.
- There are various philosophies and paradigms of health, wellness, well-being, healing, and illness and approaches/models for the delivery of health care (both in the United States and in other cultures) that should be understood and utilized.
- Older adults represent the predominant population served by nurses.
- The health and well-being of society influence public policy, the healthcare delivery system, and professional nursing.

## Environment

- The environment includes the surroundings and conditions in which persons/groups live



and function; humans constantly interact with their environment.

- The World Health Organization defines environment, as it relates to health, as “all the physical, chemical, and biological factors external to a person and all the related behaviors” (USDHHS, 2017).
- Environment is physical, social, psychological, cultural, and spiritual characteristics; external and internal features; animate and inanimate objects; climate; seen and unseen vibrations, frequencies, and energy patterns not yet understood (Luck & Keegan, 2016).
- Environmental health integrates numerous interacting factors such as safety, security, and violence; it is not simply a result of physical qualities (such as air quality and temperature).
- Holistic nurses advocate for environmental conditions and policies that foster health, wellness, well-being, and healing for all people.

### **Nursing Roles**

- Utilizing warmth, compassion, caring, authenticity, respect, trust, and relationship as instruments of healing in and of themselves and as part of the healing environment
- Utilizing conventional nursing interventions as well as CIHA that enhance body-mind-emotion-spirit-environment connectedness to foster the healing, health, wholeness, and well-being of people
- Collaborating and partnering with all constituencies in the health process, including the person receiving care, family, significant others, community, peers, and other disciplines using principles and skills of cooperation, alliance, consensus, and respecting and honoring the contributions of all
- Participating in the change process to develop more caring cultures in which to practice, learn, and live
- Assisting everyone to nurture and heal themselves
- Participating in activities that contribute to the improvement of local and global communities, as well as the betterment of public health, the environment, and the planet

- Acting as an advocate for the rights of, equitable distribution of, and access to health care for all persons, especially vulnerable populations
- Participating in and providing leadership in the positive transformation of systems
- Participating in research of the human experience and improvement of the nursing process
- Conducting independent and collaborative research and quality demonstration projects to contribute to the rapidly changing knowledge base for education and practices
- Honoring the ecosystem and our relationship with and need to preserve it, as we are all connected

### **Self-Reflection, Self-Development, and Self-Care**

- Self-reflection—defined as turning inward to examine one’s thoughts, values, beliefs, experiences, behaviors, and inner wisdom—enhances self-awareness and understanding and facilitates reflective practice.
- The nurse’s self-reflection, self-assessment, self-care, healing, and personal development are necessary for service to others, as are growth and change in the nurse’s own well-being and understanding of the nurse’s own personal journey.
- The nurse values herself and her calling to holistic nursing as a life purpose through mobilizing the necessary resources to develop and care for herself.

### **Core Values of Holistic Nursing: Integrating the Art and Science of Nursing**

Holistic nursing emanates from five core values summarizing the ideals and principles of the specialty. These core values are listed here and then are discussed:

1. Holistic philosophy, theories, and ethics
2. Holistic nurse self-reflection, self-development, and self-care
3. Holistic caring process

4. Holistic communication, therapeutic relationship, healing environment, and cultural care
5. Holistic education and research

### **Core Value 1: Holistic Philosophy, Theory, and Ethics**

A nurse's philosophy is his or her personal approach to nursing. It is shaped by the nurse's reflection on his or her practice, beliefs, experiences, education, relationships, and the environment. Holistic nursing celebrates a way of being that values connection with others and the environment. Holistic nurses recognize the human health experience as a complicated, dynamic relationship of health, illness, and wellness, and they value healing as the desired outcome of the practice of nursing. Their practice is based on scientific foundations (theory, research, evidence-based practice, critical thinking, reflection) and art (relationship, communication, creativity, presence, caring).

Holistic nursing is grounded in nursing knowledge and skill and guided by nursing theory. Florence Nightingale's writings are often referenced as a significant precursor of the development of holistic nursing. Although each holistic nurse chooses which nursing theory to apply in any individual case, the following theories, listed with their developers, are most often used to support holistic practice:

- Theory of Human Caring and Caring Science (Jean Watson)
- Science of Unitary Human Beings (Martha Rogers)
- Health as Expanding Consciousness (Margaret Newman)
- Theory of Cultural Care Diversity and Universality (Madeleine Leininger)
- Human Becoming School of Thought (Rosemarie Rizzo Parse)
- Humanistic Nursing Theory (Josephine Paterson and Loretta Zderad)
- Modeling and Role Modeling (Helen Erickson, Evelyn Tomlin, and Mary Ann Swain)

There has been significant development in the evolution of holism, healing, and caring conceptualization and theory, largely due to the work of holistic

nurses. Prominent among those (with their theories in parentheses) are the following:

- Barbara Dossey (Theory of Integral Nursing)
- Anne Boykin (Theory of Nursing as Caring)
- Marlaine Smith (Theory of Unitary Caring)
- Marilyn Anne Ray (Theory of Bureaucratic Caring)
- Rozzano Locsin (Technological Competency as Caring and the Practice of Knowing Persons in Nursing)
- Mary Jane Smith and Patricia Liehr (Story Theory)
- Joanne Duffy (Quality Caring Model)

In addition to nursing theory, holistic nurses utilize philosophies and theories from other disciplines to guide and inform healing practice. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Theories of consciousness
- Systems theory
- Biofield theory
- Quantum physics
- Complexity science
- Chaos theory
- Coherence
- Complementarity
- Spirituality
- Self-in-relation
- Holographic theory
- Psychoneuroimmunology
- Morphic resonance
- Integral theory
- Rig Veda
- Four Directions
- Eastern contemplative orientations such as the following:
  - Zen Buddhism
  - Taoism
- Alternative medical systems such as the following:
  - Traditional Chinese medicine
  - Ayurveda
  - Native American and indigenous healing

Holistic nurses further recognize and honor the ethic that each person is the authority on his

or her own health experience. The holistic nurse is an option giver and helps the person develop an understanding of alternatives and implications of various health and treatment options. The holistic nurse first ascertains what the individual thinks or believes is happening to him or her and then assists the person to identify what will help the situation. The assessment begins from where the individual is. The holistic nurse then discusses options, including the person's choices across a continuum and the possible effects and implications of each. The holistic nurse acts as partner and coprescriber versus sole prescriber. The relationship is a copiloting of the individual's health experience where the nurse respects the person's decision about his or her own health. It is a process of engagement versus compliance.

Client/patient narratives, whether they arise from individuals, families, or communities, provide the context of the experiences and are used as an important focus in understanding the person's situation. Holistic nurses hold the belief that people, through their inherent capacities, heal themselves. Therefore, the holistic nurse is not the healer but the guide and facilitator of the individual's own healing.

In the belief that all things are connected, the holistic perspective espouses that an individual's actions have a ripple effect throughout humanity. Holism places the greatest worth on individuals' developing higher levels of human awareness. This, in turn, elevates the whole of humanity. Holistic nurses believe in the sacredness of one's self and of all nature. One's inner self and the collective greater self have stewardship over not only one's body, mind, and spirit but also the planet. Holistic nurses focus on the meaning and quality of life deriving from their own character and from their relationship to the universe rather than that imposed from without.

Holistic nurses hold to a professional ethic of caring and healing that seeks to preserve the wholeness and dignity of the self and others. They support human dignity by advocating and adhering to the Patient Bill of Rights (The Joint Commission, 1992) and the AHNA *Position Statement on Holistic Nursing Ethics* (AHNA, 2012).

The *Code of Ethics for Nurses With Interpretive Statements* (ANA, 2015a) provides a framework

for the ethics of nursing. Each of the nine provisions of the code is applicable to and of distinct importance in guiding holistic nursing practice as defined in the Scope and Standards. These provisions are noted in **Box 2-2**.

### **Box 2-2 ANA Code of Ethics**

**Provision 1:** The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.

**Provision 2:** The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population.

**Provision 3:** The nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient.

**Provision 4:** The nurse has authority, accountability, and responsibility for nursing practice; makes decisions; and takes action consistent with the obligation to promote health and to provide optimal care.

**Provision 5:** The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.

**Provision 6:** The nurse, through individual and collective effort, establishes, maintains, and improves the ethical environment of the work setting and conditions of employment that are conducive to safe, quality health care.

**Provision 7:** The nurse, in all roles and settings, advances the profession through research and scholarly inquiry, professional standards development, and the generation of both nursing and health policy.

**Provision 8:** The nurse collaborates with other health professionals and the public to protect human rights, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.

**Provision 9:** The profession of nursing, collectively through its professional organizations, must articulate nursing values, maintain the integrity of the profession, and integrate principles of social justice into nursing and health policy.

Reproduced from American Nurses Association. (2015). Code of ethics with interpretative statements. Silver Spring, MD: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics-For-Nurses.html>

### **Core Value 2: Holistic Nurse Self-Reflection, Self-Development, and Self-Care**

Self-reflection, self-development, and self-care, as well as personal awareness and continual focus on being an instrument of healing, are significant requirements for holistic nurses. Holistic nurses reflect in and on action to become aware of values, beliefs, feelings, perceptions, and judgments that may affect actions, and they also reflect on their experiences to obtain insight for future practice and to become more authentic and mindful. Holistic nurses value themselves and mobilize the necessary resources to develop and care for themselves. They endeavor to integrate self-awareness, self-care, and self-healing into their lives by incorporating practices such as self-assessment, meditation, yoga, good nutrition, energy therapies, movement, creative endeavors, support, and lifelong learning. Holistic nurses honor their unique patterns and the development of the body, the psychosocial and cultural self, the intellectual self, the energetic self, and the spiritual self. Nurses cannot facilitate healing unless they are in the process of healing themselves. Through continuing education, practice, and self-work, holistic nurses develop the skills of authentic and deep self-reflection and introspection to understand themselves and their journey. It is seen as a lifelong process.

Holistic nurses strive to achieve harmony and balance in their own lives and assist others to do the same. They create healing environments for themselves by attending to their own well-being, letting go of self-destructive behaviors and attitudes, and practicing centering and stress-reduction techniques. By doing this, holistic nurses guide others on their healing journey and serve as role models to others, be they clients/patients, colleagues, or personal relations.

Holistic nurses have played instrumental roles in creating and implementing self-care programs to increase health and well-being for clients/patients and families, communities, healthcare staff, and nurses themselves. Recent research on the effects of holistic self-care programs for nurses and nursing students demonstrates that such programs foster good health behaviors;

resilience; improved nurse–patient communication, care, and satisfaction; and improved work environments and may help sustain the nursing profession.

### **Core Value 3: Holistic Caring Process**

Holistic nurses provide care that recognizes the totality of the human being (the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotion, spirit, society, culture, relationships, context, and environment). This is an *integrated* as well as a comprehensive approach. Although physical symptoms are treated, holistic nurses also focus on how the individual cognitively perceives and emotionally deals with the illness; the illness's effect on the person's family, social relationships, and economic resources; the person's values and cultural and spiritual beliefs and preferences regarding treatment; and the meaning of this experience to the person's life. In addition, holistic nurses may also incorporate several modalities (e.g., cognitive restructuring, stress management, visualization, aromatherapy, therapeutic touch) with conventional nursing interventions. Holistic nurses focus on care interventions that promote healing, peace, comfort, and a subjective sense of well-being for the person.

The holistic caring process involves six often simultaneously occurring steps: assessment, diagnosis (pattern, problem, need identification), outcomes, therapeutic care plan, implementation, and evaluation. Holistic nurses apply the holistic caring process in all settings with individuals and families across the life span, population groups, and communities.

Holistic nurses incorporate a variety of roles into their practice, including expert clinician and facilitator of healing; consultant, coach, and collaborator; educator and guide; administrator, leader, and change agent; researcher; and advocate. Holistic nurses strongly emphasize partnership with individuals throughout the entire decision-making process. Holistic assessments include not only physical, functional, psychosocial, mental, emotional, cultural, and sexual aspects but also the spiritual, transpersonal, and energy

field assessments of the whole person. Energy assessments are based on the concept that all beings are composed of energy. Congestion or stagnation of energy in any realm creates disharmony and disease. Holistic nurses use understanding of energy anatomy and electromagnetic fields in both their assessments and the healing process. Spiritual assessments not only glean religious beliefs and practices but also query a person's meaning and purpose in life and how that may have changed due to the present health experience. Spiritual assessments also include questions about an individual's sense of serenity and peace, what provides joy and fulfillment, and the source of strength and hope.

Holistic assessment data are interpreted into patterns, challenges, and needs from which meaning and understanding of the health and disease experience can be mutually identified with the person. Holistic nurses first ask an individual, "What do you think is going on (happening) with you?" and then, "What do you think would help?" Another important responsibility of the holistic nurse is to help the person identify risk factors such as lifestyle, habits, beliefs and values, personal and family health history, and age-related conditions that influence health and then to find and use opportunities to increase well-being. The focus is on the individual's goals, not the nurse's.

Therapeutic plans of care respect the person's experience and the uniqueness of each healing journey. The same illness may have very different manifestations in different individuals. A major aspect of holistic nursing practice, in addition to competence, is intention. That is, the nurse intends for the wholeness, well-being, and highest good of the person in every encounter and intervention. This intention honors and reinforces the innate capacity of people to heal themselves. Therefore, holistic nurses respect that outcomes may not be those expected and may evolve differently based on the person's individual healing process and health choices. Holistic nurses endeavor to detach themselves from the outcomes. The nurse does not produce the outcomes; the individual's own healing process produces the outcomes, and the nurse facilitates this process. An important focus of the holistic nurse is on guiding

individuals and significant others to use their inner strength, wisdom, knowing, and resources through the course of healing.

Holistic nurses consistently provide appropriate and evidence-based information (including current knowledge, practice, and research) regarding the health condition and various treatments and therapies and their side effects. Holistic care always occurs within the scope and standards of practice of registered nursing and in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

A holistic nurse supports the integration of Complementary Integrative Health Approaches (CIHA) into conventional health care to enable the patient to benefit from the best of all treatments available. In their provision of holistic care, nurses employ practices and therapies from CIHA and conventional approaches, thus creating a focus on integrative health (Mariano, 2019). AHNA has developed a position statement on the role of nurses in the practice of CIHA (AHNA, 2016a).

Most complementary health approaches fall into one of two subgroups—natural products or mind and body practices (NCCIH, 2015). *Natural products* include substances found in nature such as a variety of herbal medicines (also known as botanicals), vitamins, minerals, whole diet therapies, and other "natural products." Many are sold over the counter as dietary supplements. (Some uses of dietary supplements—e.g., taking a multivitamin to meet minimum daily nutritional requirements or taking calcium to promote bone health—are not thought of as CIHA.) CIHA natural products also include probiotics—live microorganisms (usually bacteria) that are similar to microorganisms normally found in the human digestive tract and that may have beneficial effects. Probiotics are available in foods (e.g., yogurts) or as dietary supplements.

Mind–body practices focus on the interactions among the brain, mind, body, and behavior, with the intent to use the mind to affect physical functioning and promote health.

Mind and body practices include a large and diverse group of procedures or techniques administered or taught by a trained practitioner or teacher. The 2012 NHIS showed that yoga, chiropractic and

osteopathic manipulation, meditation, and massage therapy were among the most popular mind and body practices used by adults. Other mind and body practices include acupuncture, relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises, guided imagery, and progressive muscle relaxation), tai chi, qi gong, Therapeutic Touch, Healing Touch, hypnotherapy, and movement therapies (such as Feldenkrais method, Alexander technique, Pilates, Rolfing Structural Integration, and Trager psychophysical integration).

The two broad areas discussed—natural products and mind and body practices—capture most complementary health approaches. However, some approaches may not neatly fit into either of these groups—for example, the practices of traditional healers, Ayurvedic medicine, Traditional Chinese medicine, homeopathy, and naturopathy. (NCCIH, 2015/2018)

Other therapies frequently incorporated into holistic nursing practice include the following interventions: meditation; relaxation therapy; breath work; music, art, and aroma therapies; energy-based touch therapies such as therapeutic touch, healing touch, and Reiki; acupressure; massage; guided imagery; hypnosis; animal-assisted therapy; biofeedback; prayer; reflexology; diet; herbology; and homeopathy. Other interventions frequently employed in holistic nursing practice in addition to conventional nursing interventions include anxiety reduction and stress management, calming techniques, emotional support, exercise and nutrition promotion, smoking cessation, patient contracting, resiliency promotion, forgiveness facilitation, hope installation, presence, journaling, counseling, cognitive therapy, emotional freedom technique, self-help, spiritual support, coaching, health education, consultation and referral, community health development, and environmental management (NIC 2013).

Because nearly 80 percent of all U.S. health-care issues are stress related, holistic nurses empower individuals by teaching them techniques to reduce their stress. Many interventions used

in holistic nursing elicit the relaxation response (e.g., breath work, meditation, relaxation, imagery, aromatherapy and essential oils, and diet). People can learn these therapies and use them without the intervention of a healthcare provider. This allows people to take an active role in the management of their own health care. Holistic nurses also can teach families and caregivers to use these techniques for loved ones who may be ill (e.g., simple foot or hand massage for older clients/patients with dementia). In addition, individuals are taught how to evaluate their own responses to these modalities.

In addition, individuals are taught how to evaluate their own responses to these modalities. Holistic nurses may prescribe as legally authorized. They instruct individuals regarding drug, herbal, and homeopathic regimens, and, just as important, they consult on the side effects and interactions between medications and herbs. They consult, collaborate, and refer, as necessary, to both conventional allopathic providers and to holistic practitioners. They provide information and counseling to people about alternative, complementary, integrative, and conventional healthcare practices. Very importantly, holistic nurses facilitate negotiation of services as they guide individuals and families between conventional Western medicine and alternative systems. Holistic nurses, in partnership with the individual and others, evaluate whether care is effective and whether changes in the meaning of the health experience occur for the individual.

Holistic nurses also take a lead in incorporating a holistic caring perspective and integrating healing strategies into practice and systemwide programs and organizations.

#### **Core Value 4: Holistic Communication, Therapeutic Relationship, Healing Environment, and Cultural Care**

Creation of a therapeutic relationship through holistic communication, and the context for its expression—an optimal healing environment—is an enduring tradition in holistic nursing use of self in interacting with another” (Thornton & Mariano, 2016, p. 465). Incorporating the

processes and constructs of therapeutic communication, it acknowledges the infinite, spiritual, and energetic nature of being, the centrality of heart centeredness, and the incorporation of intention, self-knowledge, transcendent presence, and intuition in our interactions.

The holistic nurse's communication ensures that each individual experiences the presence of the nurse as authentic, caring, compassionate, and sincere. This is deep listening, or as some say, "Listening with the heart and not just the ears." It is done with conscious intention and without preconceptions, busyness, distractions, or analysis. It takes place in the now within an atmosphere of shared humanness—human being to human being. Through presence or being with in the moment, holistic nurses provide each person with an interpersonal encounter that the individual can experience as a connection with one who is giving undivided attention to his or her needs and concerns. Holistic nurses actively engage in the therapeutic use of self. Communication techniques used by holistic nurses to build therapeutic relationships include but are not limited to unconditional regard, respect, deep and active listening, active observing, demonstrating empathy and concern, instilling hope, mindfulness, relaxation, stress management, goal management, crisis intervention, negotiation, and problem solving.

Using these techniques, holistic nurses convey to the individual receiving care the belief in his or her worth and value as a human being, not solely as a recipient of medical and nursing interventions.

The holistic nurse recognizes the importance of context in understanding the person's health experience, including family history and community relationships, culture, health, social roles, interdependence, and self-concept. Space and time are allowed for exploration. Each person's health encounter is truly seen as unique and may be contrary to conventional knowledge and treatments. Therefore, the holistic nurse must be comfortable with ambiguity, paradox, and uncertainty. This requires a perspective that the nurse is not the expert regarding another's health and illness experience but is actually a learner.

Holistic nurses have a knowledge base of the use and meanings of symbolic language and use

interventions such as imagery, creation of sacred space and personal rituals, dream exploration, narrative, story, journaling, and aesthetic therapies such as music, color, visual arts, and dance. They encourage and support others in the use of prayer, meditation, and other spiritual and symbolic practices for healing purposes.

A cornerstone of holistic nursing practice is assisting individuals to find meaning in their experience. Regardless of the person's condition, the meaning that individuals ascribe to their situation can influence their response to it. Holistic nurses attend to the subjective world of the individual. They consider meanings such as the person's concerns in relation to health and family economics, as well as deeper meanings related to the person's purpose in life. Regardless of the technology or treatment, holistic nurses address the human spirit as a major force in healing. Each person's perception of meaning is related to all factors in health-wellness-disease-illness.

Holistic nurses realize that suffering, illness, and disease are natural components of the human condition and have the potential to teach us about ourselves, our relationships, and our universe. Every experience is valued for its meaning and lesson.

Holistic nurses have a particular obligation to create a therapeutic healing environment that values holism, caring, social support, and integration of conventional and complementary/integrative approaches to healing. They seek to create caring cultures and environments where individuals, both clients/patients and staff, feel connected, supported, and respected. A particular perspective of holistic nursing is the nurse as the healing environment and an instrument of healing. Holistic nurses shape the physical environment (e.g., light, fresh air, pleasant sounds or quiet, neatness and order, healing smells, earth elements), and they provide a relationship-focused environment by creating sacred space through presence and intention where another can feel safe, unfold, and explore the dimensions of self in healing. The focus on healing environments is extended to the creation of caring cultures and communities where families, populations, and nations can feel connected, supported, and respected. Holistic nurses have an integral role in revising

and transforming organizational cultures into authentic healing healthcare systems and in trying to remove the political and financial barriers to the inclusion of holistic care in the healthcare system.

Culture, beliefs, and values are inherent components of a holistic approach. Concepts of health and healing are based in culture and often influence people's actions to promote, maintain, and restore health. Culture also may provide an understanding of a person's concept of illness or disease and appropriate treatment. Holistic nurses possess knowledge and understanding of numerous cultural traditions and healthcare practices from various racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds. However, holistic nurses honor the individual's understanding and articulation of his or her own cultural values, beliefs, and health practices rather than relying on stereotypical cultural classifications and descriptions. The nurse then uses these understandings to provide culturally competent care that corresponds with the beliefs, values, traditions, and health practices of people. Holistic nurses ask individuals, "What do I need to know about you culturally in caring for you?" This understanding is then used in the creation of a healing environment and in promoting communication and cultural care that is responsive to the beliefs, values, traditions, and health practices of all persons.

Holistic healing is a collaborative approach. Of particular importance to holistic nurses is the human connection with ecology. Holistic nurses actively participate in building an ecosystem that sustains the well-being of all life. This includes raising the public's consciousness about environmental issues and stressors that affect not only the health of people but also the health of the planet.

### **Core Value 5: Holistic Education and Research**

Holistic nurses possess an understanding of a wide range of norms and healthcare practices, beliefs, and values concerning individuals, families, groups, and communities from a variety of racial, ethnic, spiritual, and social backgrounds. This rich knowledge base reflects their formal academic and continuing education preparation. Their knowledge also includes a wide diversity of

practices and modalities outside of conventional Western medicine. Because of this, holistic nurses have a significant effect on people's understanding of healthcare options and alternatives, thus serving as both educators and advocates.

In addition, holistic nurses provide much-needed information to individuals on health promotion, including such topics as healthy lifestyles, risk-reducing behaviors, preventive self-care, stress management, living with changes secondary to illness and treatment, and opportunities to enhance well-being.

Holistic nurses value all the ways of knowing and learning. They assess health literacy and individualize learning, appreciating that science, intuition, introspection, creativity, aesthetics, and culture produce different bodies of knowledge and perspectives. They help others to know themselves and access their inner wisdom to enhance growth, wholeness, and well-being.

Holistic nurses may offer guidance and support to individuals and families in their healthcare choices and decisions, especially regarding conventional biomedical and integrative health approaches. Therefore, they must be knowledgeable about the best evidence available for both conventional approaches and CIHA. In addition to developing evidence-based practice using research, practice guidelines, and expertise, holistic nurses strongly consider the person's values and healthcare actions, customs, behaviors, and beliefs.

The American Holistic Nurses Association embraces and supports all research that has holism as a foundation (AHNA, 2016b). Holistic nursing research is based on a philosophy of holism, or belief in the union of body-mind-emotion-spirit-energy-environment. The focus of holistic nursing research is understanding holistic phenomena, determining the effectiveness of holistic interventions, and developing an evidence base for holistic nursing practice.

Holistic nurses conduct and evaluate research in diverse areas such as:

- outcome measures of various CIHA (e.g., therapeutic touch, prayer, aromatherapy, imagery);
- instrument development to measure holistic phenomena; caring behaviors and dimensions;



spirituality; self-transcendence; cultural competence; intuition; presence; mindfulness; and more;

- client/patient responses to holistic interventions in health, illness, and wellness;
- explorations of client/patients' lived experiences with various health, illness, and life phenomena;
- health decision making;
- health and wellness promotion and illness prevention;
- theory development in healing, wholeness, caring, intentionality, well-being, compassion, social and cultural constructions, empowerment, and more;
- healing relationships and healing environment;
- teaching and evaluation of holism;
- identification of attributes and skills that influence health (e.g., presence).

It is critical that holistic nursing continue to advance the scientific knowledge base of evidence for holistic practice. Healthcare professionals need such quality information to provide comprehensive evidence and outcome-based care that promotes a focus on healing and recognizes the importance of compassion and caring. The varied settings in which holistic nurses practice offer many opportunities to conduct meaningful research to improve healthcare consumer outcomes. The AHNA has incorporated an active research agenda by assisting and mentoring members in research endeavors, granting research awards, identifying and reporting on research that focuses on holistic healing phenomena and modalities, and applying research in practice.

## Standards of Holistic Nursing Practice

There are 17 standards in *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*—6 for practice and 11 for professional performance (ANA & AHNA, 2019). Each standard addresses competencies for both the registered nurse and the graduate-level-prepared and advanced practice

registered nurse (APRN). Because each standard has numerous competencies, *only one or two competency examples per standard are included in the following sections.*

## Overarching Philosophical Principles of Holistic Nursing

Holistic nurses express, contribute to, and promote an understanding of the following: a philosophy of nursing that values growth, development, and healing as desired outcomes; the human health experience as a complex, dynamic relationship of health, wellness, illness, disease, and well-being; the scientific foundations of nursing practice; and nursing as an art. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the philosophical principles of holistic nursing are embedded in every standard of practice and standard of professional performance.

## Standards of Practice for Holistic Nursing

### Standard 1. Assessment

*The holistic registered nurse collects comprehensive data pertinent to the healthcare consumer's health or the situation.*

**Competencies.** The holistic registered nurse:

- Collects comprehensive data, including but not limited to demographics, social determinants of health, health disparities, and physical, functional, psychosocial, emotional, cognitive, sexual, cultural, age-related, environmental, spiritual or transpersonal, economic and energy field assessments in a systematic, ongoing process with compassion, unconditional acceptance, and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of every person.
- Assesses the healthcare consumer's health and cultural practices, values, beliefs, preferences, meanings of health, wellness, illness, disease, well-being, lifestyle patterns, family issues, and perceived risk behaviors and context.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Explores the meanings of the symbolic language expressed in dreams, images, symbols, narratives, sensations, rituals, and prayers as part of the healthcare consumer’s experience.
- Uses advanced assessments, knowledge, and skills to maintain, enhance, or improve health conditions and facilitate growth and development.

The advanced practice holistic registered nurse:

- Initiates diagnostic tests and procedures relevant to the healthcare consumer’s current status.

### **Standard 2. Diagnosis**

*The holistic registered nurse analyzes assessment data to determine the actual or potential diagnosis or issues expressed as challenges, problems, or needs.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Formulates the diagnosis, health challenges, or issues from comprehensive holistic assessment data.
- Validates the diagnosis, health challenges, or issues with the healthcare consumer, family or significant other, group, community, population, and other healthcare providers when possible and appropriate.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Utilizes complex data and information obtained during interview, examination, and diagnostic procedures in identifying diagnoses.

The advanced practice holistic registered nurse:

- Formulates a differential diagnosis based on the holistic assessment, history, examination, and diagnostic test results.

### **Standard 3. Outcomes Identification**

*The holistic registered nurse identifies expected outcomes for a plan individualized to the healthcare consumer or the situation. (The holistic nurse values*

*the evolution and the process of healing as it unfolds. Unfolding outcomes may not be immediately evident, due to the nonlinear nature of the healing process, so both expected or anticipated and evolving or emerging outcomes are considered.)*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Defines expected outcomes in terms of the healthcare consumer’s values and beliefs, preferences, culture, age, spiritual practices, ethical considerations, environment, or situation.
- Partners with the healthcare consumer to identify realistic goals based on the person’s present and potential capabilities and quality of life.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Identifies expected outcomes incorporating healthcare consumer satisfaction, the person’s understanding and meanings in his or her unique patterns and processes, quality of life, cost, practice effectiveness, and continuity and consistency among providers.

### **Standard 4. Planning**

*The holistic registered nurse develops a plan outlining primary strategies and suggested alternatives to attain expected outcomes.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- In partnership with the healthcare consumer, family, and others, develops an individualized plan considering the characteristics or situation, including values, beliefs, knowledge and understanding, spiritual and health practices, preferences, choices, developmental level, coping style, culture and environment, and available technology.
- Establishes practice settings, safe space, and time for both the nurse and healthcare consumer, family, and significant others to explore suggested, potential, and alternative options.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Identifies assessment strategies, diagnostic strategies, therapeutic interventions, therapeutic effects, and side effects that reflect

current evidence, including data, research, literature, expert practice-based knowledge, and the healthcare consumer's experiences.

- Uses linguistic and symbolic language, including but not limited to word associations, dreams, storytelling, and journals, to explore with individuals the possibilities and options.

The advanced practice holistic registered nurse:

- Integrates assessment strategies, diagnostic strategies, and therapeutic interventions reflecting current evidence-based knowledge and practice.

### **Standard 5. Implementation**

*The holistic registered nurse implements the identified plan. (Sometimes the plan is not directed to clinical care but administrative, educational, or other foci.)*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Partners with the healthcare consumer, family, significant others, and caregivers as appropriate to implement the holistic plan in a safe, realistic, effective, efficient, timely, person-centered, and equitable manner.
- Uses self as an instrument of healing.

The graduate-level-prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Uses advanced knowledge of pharmacology, psychoneuroimmunology, nutritional supplements, homeopathic remedies, herbal remedies, and a variety of CIHA.
- Uses systems, organizations, and community resources to lead effective change and implement the plan.

The advanced practice holistic registered nurse:

- Uses prescriptive authority, procedures, referrals, treatments, and therapies in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

### **Standard 5A. Coordination of Care**

*The holistic registered nurse coordinates care delivery.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Organizes the components of the holistic care plan.

- Assists the healthcare consumer to identify options for conventional and/or alternative care.

The graduate-level-prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Provides leadership in the coordination of interprofessional holistic health care for integrated delivery of healthcare consumer services to achieve safe, effective, efficient, timely, patient-centered, and equitable care.
- Synthesizes holistic data and information to prescribe and provide necessary system and community support measures, including modifications of environments.

The advanced practice holistic registered nurse:

- Serves as the healthcare consumer's primary care provider and coordinator of holistic healthcare services in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.

### **Standard 5B. Health Teaching and Health Promotion**

*The holistic registered nurse employs strategies to promote holistic health and wellness and a safe environment.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Provides opportunities for the healthcare consumer to identify needed holistic health-care promotion, disease prevention, and self-management topics.
- Uses health promotion and health teaching methods in collaboration with the healthcare consumer's values, beliefs, health practices, developmental level, learning needs, readiness and ability to learn, language preference, spirituality, culture, and socioeconomic status.
- Assists others to access their own inner wisdom that may provide opportunities to enhance and support growth, development, and wholeness.

The graduate-level-prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Synthesizes empirical evidence on risk behaviors, gender roles, learning theories,

behavioral change theories, motivational theories, translational theories for evidence-based practice, epidemiology, and other related theories and frameworks when designing holistic health education information and programs.

### **Standard 6. Evaluation**

*The holistic registered nurse evaluates progress toward attainment of goals and health outcomes.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Conducts a holistic, systematic, ongoing, and criterion-based evaluation of the goals and outcomes in relation to the structure, processes, and timeline prescribed in the plan.
- Determines, in partnership with the health-care consumer and other stakeholders, the patient-centeredness, effectiveness, efficiency, safety, timeliness, and equitability of the strategies in relation to the responses to the plan and attainment of expected and unfolding outcomes. Other defined criteria (e.g., Quality and Safety Education for Nurses) may be used as well.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Synthesizes evaluation data from the health-care consumer, community, population, and/or institution to determine the effectiveness of the plan.
- Evaluates, in partnership with the health-care consumer, the accuracy of the biomedical and nursing diagnoses and the effectiveness of the interventions in relationship to the client's/patient's attainment of expected and evolving outcomes and changes of meaning in the client's/patient's healing experience.

## **Standards of Professional Performance**

### **Standard 7. Ethics**

*The holistic registered nurse practices ethically.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Integrates the *Code of Ethics for Nurses With Interpretive Statements* (ANA, 2015b) to guide

nursing practice and articulate the moral foundation of nursing.

- Advocates for equitable consumer healthcare, particularly regarding the rights of vulnerable or underserved populations, by such activities as:
  - Acting on behalf of individuals, families, groups, and communities as requested or required by law.
  - Seeking to eliminate barriers to care, such as affordability and accessibility.
- Commits to self-reflection, self-assessment, self-development, and self-care strategies to enhance physical, psychological, intellectual, sociological, and spiritual well-being.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Provides information on the risks, benefits, and outcomes of healthcare regimens to allow informed decision making by the health-care consumer, including informed consent and informed refusal.
- Actively contributes to creating an ecosystem that supports well-being for all life.

### **Standard 8. Culturally Congruent Practice**

*The holistic registered nurse practices in a manner that is congruent with cultural diversity and inclusion principles.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Demonstrates cultural awareness and sensitivity by seeking knowledge of health beliefs and practices that are representative of the cultural values, beliefs, practices, and traditions of individuals, families, groups, and communities for whom they care.
- Understands that a lack of cultural awareness and a failure to provide care that is culturally congruent with the worldview of a person can greatly increase the stresses experienced by health-care consumers and caregivers alike.
- Uses skills and tools that are appropriately vetted for the culture, literacy, and language of the population served.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Advances organizational policies, programs, services, and practices that reflect respect, equity, and the values of diversity and inclusion.
- Leads interprofessional teams to identify and act on the cultural and language needs of the consumer.

The advanced practice holistic registered nurse:

- Promotes shared decision-making solutions in planning, prescribing, and evaluating processes when the healthcare consumer's cultural preferences and norms may create incompatibility with evidence-based practice and the values, beliefs, and norms of the biomedical culture.

### **Standard 9. Communication**

*The holistic registered nurse communicates effectively in a variety of formats in all areas of practice.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Assesses one's own communication skills and effectiveness in encounters with individuals, families, significant others, and colleagues.
- Uses communication styles and methods that demonstrate intention, centering, presence, caring, respect, deep listening, authenticity, and trust.
- Contributes the holistic nursing perspective in interactions with others and discussions with the interprofessional team.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Provides leadership for establishing, improving, and sustaining collaborative relationships to achieve safe, quality care for healthcare consumers.
- Functions as a role model and leader in creating healthy work environments that facilitate and support effective communication and healing.

### **Standard 10. Collaboration**

*The holistic registered nurse collaborates with the healthcare consumer, family, and other key stakeholders in the conduct of holistic nursing practice.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Identifies the expertise and contribution of diverse disciplines, approaches to health care, and key stakeholders.
- Clearly articulates the holistic nurse's role and responsibilities within the team.
- Engages in teamwork and team-building processes.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Facilitates the negotiation of holistic, complementary, alternative, integrative, and conventional healthcare services for continuity of care and program planning.

### **Standard 11. Leadership**

*The holistic registered nurse leads within the professional practice setting and the profession.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Mentors colleagues for the advancement of holistic nursing practice, the profession, and quality holistic health care.
- Engages at local, state, national, and international levels to expand the knowledge and practice of holistic nursing and awareness of holistic health issues.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Influences decision-making bodies to improve holistic integrative care, the professional practice environment, and holistic healthcare consumer outcomes.
- Articulates the ideas underpinning holistic nursing philosophy, placing these ideas in a historical, philosophical, and scientific context while projecting future trends in thinking.

### **Standard 12. Education**

*The holistic registered nurse attains knowledge and competence that reflect current nursing practice and promotes futuristic thinking.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Participates in ongoing educational activities related to nursing, holism, and interprofessional knowledge bases and professional topics.

- Demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning through self-reflection and inquiry for learning and personal growth.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Uses current healthcare research findings and other sources of evidence to expand clinical knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment; to enhance holistic role performance; and to increase knowledge of professional issues and changes in national standards for practice and trends in holistic care.

### **Standard 13. Evidence-Based Practice and Research**

*The holistic registered nurse integrates evidence and research findings into practice.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Utilizes the best available evidence, which includes nursing theories and research findings, to guide practice.
- Incorporates evidence from experience, intuition, research, and population responses to care when initiating changes in nursing practice.
- Participates in research related to holistic nursing.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Contributes to nursing knowledge by conducting or synthesizing research that discovers, examines, and evaluates current practice, knowledge, theories, philosophies, context, criteria, and creative approaches to improve holistic healthcare outcomes.
- Disseminates research findings through activities such as presentations, publications, consultations, and journal clubs for a variety of audiences (including nursing, other disciplines, and the public) to improve holistic care and further develop the foundation and practice of holistic nursing.

### **Standard 14. Quality of Practice**

*The holistic registered nurse contributes to quality nursing practice.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Ensures that holistic nursing practice is safe, effective, efficient, equitable, timely, patient centered, and grounded in holism.
- Uses creativity and innovation to enhance holistic nursing care.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Engages in development, implementation, evaluation and/or revisions of policies, procedures, and guidelines to improve holistic healthcare quality.
- Evaluates the practice environment and quality of holistic care rendered in relation to existing evidence and feedback from individuals, families, and significant others.

### **Standard 15. Professional Practice Evaluation**

*The holistic registered nurse evaluates one’s own and others’ nursing practice.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Engages in self-reflection and self-evaluation of practice on a regular basis, identifying areas of strength as well as areas in which professional development and personal growth would be beneficial.
- Reflects on his or her practice and how his or her own personal, cultural, and/or spiritual beliefs, experiences, biases, education, and values may affect care given to individuals, families, and communities.

The graduate-level–prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Applies knowledge obtained from advanced preparation, as well as current research and evidence-based information, to clinical decision making at the point of care to achieve optimal holistic health outcomes.

### **Standard 16. Resource Utilization**

*The holistic registered nurse utilizes appropriate resources to plan, provide, and sustain evidence-based nursing services that are holistic, safe, effective, and fiscally responsible.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Assists the healthcare consumer, family, significant other, and caregivers in identifying and securing appropriate and available services to address needs across the healthcare continuum.
- Addresses discriminatory healthcare practices and the impact on resource allocation.

The graduate-level-prepared holistic registered nurse:

- Designs innovative solutions to use resources effectively and maintain quality.
- Engages organizational and community resources to formulate and implement inter-professional plans.

### **Standard 17. Environmental Health**

*The holistic registered nurse practices in an environmentally safe and healthy manner.*

The holistic registered nurse:

- Assesses the practice environment for factors that support or threaten health and healing, such as sound, odor, vibration, light, clean air, shelter, water, and food to ensure that the basic health and safety needs within our own world and that of healthcare consumers are met.
- Promotes a safe and healthy practice environment that reduces environmental health risks for self, workers, and healthcare consumers to support resilience and protect them from harm.

The graduate-level-prepared holistic registered nurse, including the APRN:

- Ascertains the impact of social, political, and economic influences on the environment and human health exposures.
- Acts as a leader, collaborator, consultant, and change agent in evaluating global health issues related to environmental health and safety; designing holistic plans of care that address all effects of environmental changes on the health and welfare of individuals, groups, and communities; and assisting in reducing or eliminating environmental hazards.

## **Settings for Holistic Nursing Practice**

Holistic nurses practice in numerous fields and settings, including but not limited to:

Ambulatory outpatient settings

Acute care hospitals

Long-term and extended care facilities, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities

Home care settings

Complementary and integrative care centers

Women's health and birthing centers

Hospice palliative care

Psychiatric mental health facilities

Private practitioner offices

Schools

Rehabilitation centers

Religious parishes

Community health and primary care centers

Student and employee health clinics

Managed care organizations

Independent, self-employed private practice

Telehealth and cyber care services

Correctional facilities

International and travel nursing

Military

Professional nursing and healthcare organizations

Informatics

Administration

Staff development

Universities and colleges

There are increasing numbers of holistic nurses who hold leadership roles as clinicians, educators, authors, and researchers in university-based schools of nursing, practice environments, nursing, and other professional organizations. Holistic

nursing practice also occurs when there is a request for consultation or when holistic nurses advocate for care that promotes health and prevents disease, illness, or disability for individuals, communities, or the environment. A holistic nurse may choose not to work in a critical care setting but provide consultation regarding self-care or stress management to nurses practicing in that area. Or holistic nurses may practice in preoperative and recovery rooms, instituting a pre- and postsurgical program for individuals that teaches them meditation and positive affirmation techniques while incorporating a homeopathic regimen for trauma and cell healing. Employment or voluntary participation of holistic nurses also can influence civic activities and the regulatory and legislative arenas at the local, state, national, or international levels.

Because holistic nursing focuses on the wellness, wholeness, and development of the whole person, holistic nurses also practice in health enhancement settings such as spas, gyms, and wellness centers. With all populations and in any setting, nurses can empower patients/clients/families by teaching them self-care practices for a healthier lifestyle. In addition, there are numerous entrepreneurial possibilities for holistic nurses to develop integrative care programs in hospitals, home care, primary care practices, occupational and school settings, and the community.

Because holistic nursing is a worldview, a way of being in the world, and not just a modality, holistic nurses can practice in any setting and with individuals throughout the life span. As the public increasingly requests holistic and CIHA services and a comprehensive, humanistic emphasis on the whole person, there will be a greater need for holistic nurses in a wider array of settings, because “Holistic nursing takes place wherever healing occurs” (Mariano, 2009, p. 6).

## Educational Preparation and Certification for Holistic Nursing Practice

Holistic nurses are registered nurses who are educationally prepared for practice from an approved school of nursing and are licensed to practice in

their individual state, commonwealth, or territory. The American Holistic Nurses Credentialing Corporation (AHNCC) conducted an examination of nursing education from the basic to the advanced level. This process included reviewing state licensure requirements, exploring best practices in education, and analyzing the AACN Essentials of Baccalaureate, Master’s and Doctorate of Nursing Practice education in nursing. The comparative analysis of these with the AHNA Core Values and *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* resulted in the development of the Foundations, Competencies, and Curricular Guidelines for Basic to Doctoral Holistic Nursing Education (Erickson et al., 2017). The holistic registered nurse’s experience, education, knowledge, and abilities establish the level of competence. *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* identifies the scope of practice of holistic nursing and the specific standards and associated measurement criteria of holistic nurses at both the basic and advanced levels (ANA and AHNA, 2019). Regardless of the level of practice, all holistic nurses integrate the previously identified five core values.

A registered nurse may prepare for the specialty of holistic nursing in a variety of ways. Educational offerings range from associate’s degree, baccalaureate, and graduate courses and programs to continuing education programs with extensive contact hours.

## Basic Practice Level

The education of all nursing students preparing for registered nurse (RN) licensure includes basic content on physiological, psychological, emotional, and some spiritual processes with populations across the life span and conventional nursing care practices within each of these domains. In addition, basic nursing education incorporates experiences in a variety of clinical and practice settings from acute care to community. However, the educational focus is most frequently on specialties often emanating from the biomedical disease model and cure orientation. In holistic nursing, the individual across the life span is viewed in context as an integrated totality of body, mind, emotion, environment, society, energy, and



spirit, with the emphasis on wholeness, well-being, health promotion, and healing using both conventional and complementary/alternative practices. Because of the lack of intentional focus on integration, unity, and healing, the educational exposure of most nursing students is not adequate preparation for assuming the specialty role of a holistic nurse.

Increasingly, schools of nursing are embracing holistic nursing practices and CIHA and adding them to their curricula, responding to consumer use of CIHA and consumer demand for health professionals who are knowledgeable about holistic practices. The most recent version of *Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice* (AACN, 2008) includes language on preparing the baccalaureate generalist graduate to practice from a holistic, caring framework; engage in self-care; develop an understanding of complementary and alternative modalities; and incorporate patient teaching and health promotion, spirituality, and caring, healing techniques into practice. This acknowledges that nursing recognizes the importance of healing principles and practices in health care and the need for nurses to learn them in the educational process.

## **Advanced Practice Level**

As with the basic level, there are a variety of ways through both academic and professional development that registered nurses can acquire the additional specialized knowledge and skills that prepare them for advanced holistic nursing practice. These nurses are expected to hold a master's or doctoral degree and demonstrate a greater depth and scope of knowledge, a deeper integration of information, increased complexity of skills and interventions, and notable role autonomy. They provide leadership in practice, teaching, research, consultation, advocacy, and policy formation in advancing holistic nursing to improve the holistic health of people. Several schools of nursing that offer graduate programs in holistic nursing have a stable or growing number of applicants. Current advanced practice nurses are increasingly gaining specialized knowledge preparing them as holistic nurses

through post-master's programs, continuing education offerings in holistic nursing care, and certificate programs throughout the country that focus on specific modalities and on the essence of holism.

## **Continuing Education for Basics and Advanced Practice Levels**

The AHNA is a provider and approver of continuing education and is recognized by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Continuing educational programs, workshops, and lectures in holistic nursing and complementary/integrative medicine have been popular nationwide, with AHNA or other bodies granting continuing education units.

The AHNA endorses certificate programs in specific areas. These include Holistic Integrative Healing, Reflexology, Imagery, Aromatherapy, Healing Touch, Spirituality, Craniosacral Therapy, Holistic Stress Management, Integrative Healing Arts, Coaching, Whole Health Education, and RN Patient Advocate. It also approves continuing education offerings in holistic nursing as well as providing the AHNA home study course, Foundation of Holistic Nursing. Other programs in distinct therapies such as acupuncture, Reiki, homeopathy, massage, imagery, healing arts, holistic health, Chinese Oriental Medicine, nutrition, Ayurveda, therapeutic touch, healing touch, herbology, chiropractic, and so on are given nationally as degrees, certificates, or continuing education programs by centers, specialty organizations, or schools.

## **Certification**

Competency mechanisms for evaluating holistic nursing practice as a specialty exist through a national certification and recertification process overseen by the AHNCC. The AHNCC offers four certifications: Holistic Nurse, Board Certified (HN-BC), which requires a minimum of a diploma or associate degree in nursing from an accredited school; Holistic Baccalaureate Nurse, Board Certified (HBN-BC), which requires a baccalaureate

degree in nursing from an institution regionally accredited by the Association of Schools and Colleges; and Advanced Holistic Nurse, Board Certified (AHN-BC), and Advanced Practice Holistic Nurse (APHN-BC, APRN), which require a master's degree in nursing from an institution regionally accredited by the Association of Schools and Colleges. Further, the AHNCC provides endorsement for schools of nursing meeting the specifications put forth in *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA & AHNA, 2019). In addition, holistic nurses often are certified in specific complementary integrative modalities such as imagery, Reiki, aromatherapy, healing touch, biofeedback, and reflexology.

## Implications

### Self

1. What attributes do I have that reflect the core values of holistic nursing?
2. What contributions can I make as a holistic nurse to the wholeness and betterment of humankind?

### Clinical Practice

1. Given their education and experience, holistic nurses are the logical leaders in holistic and integrative care and must advance that position.
2. Monitoring state boards of nursing for evidence of their recognition and support of holistic, integrative nursing practice and requirements that include CIHA, holistic nursing has the challenge of working with the state boards to incorporate this content into the National Council Licensure Examination, thus ensuring the credibility of this practice knowledge.

### Education

1. There is an urgent need for integration of holistic, relationship-centered, caring healing philosophies into nursing curricula.

2. With the increased use of CIHA by the American public, both students and faculty need knowledge of these therapies and skill in their use.

## Research

1. Exploration of research modalities and approaches that are congruent with the holistic paradigm
2. Examination of how the standards of holistic nursing practice are being implemented in healthcare settings
3. Secure funding for their holistic research to identify and describe outcomes of CIHA and therapies, such as healing, well-being, and harmony, and to develop instruments to measure these outcomes

## Policy

1. Working with Medicare and other third-party payers, insurance groups, boards of nursing, healthcare policy makers, legislators, and other professional nursing organizations to ensure that holistic nurses are appropriately reimbursed for services rendered
2. Active participation in healthcare reform and the political arena as leaders in the movement to ensure quality, value, an increased focus on wellness, patient-centered humanistic care, and access and affordability for all

## Conclusion

The specialty practice of holistic nursing is generally not well understood. Therefore, each holistic nurse must educate other nurses, healthcare providers and disciplines, and the public about the role, value, and benefits of holistic nursing, whether it be in direct practice, education, management, or research. Holistic nurses articulate the ideas underpinning the holistic paradigm and the philosophy of the caring, healing relationship. Jean Watson reminds us that society and the public are searching for something deeper in terms of realizing self-care, self-knowledge, and

self-healing potentials. Nurses need to acknowledge the human aspects of practice—attending to people and their experience rather than just focusing on the biomedical orientation and disease. Watson concludes that “nurses have a covenant with the public to sustain caring. It is our collective responsibility to transform caring practices into the framework that identifies and gives distinction to nursing as a profession” (Mariano 2005, p. 12). In a 2019 interview, Mariano expressed hope that eventually all nurses will be holistic nurses; holism will be introduced in all educational levels; and that all nurses will learn self-care, integrative approaches, energy work,

and care of the whole person. “By incorporating holistic principles and practices, nurses will find more meaning and purpose in their work and life” (Hart, 2019, p. 2). *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* is a means through which holistic nurses are educating the profession and others about the values, principles, and practice requirements of this specialty.

Note: This chapter is derived from *Holistic Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 3rd ed. (2019), C. Mariano, Revision Workgroup member and primary contributor 1st and 2nd editions. Printed with permission of the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA).

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## Resources

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