## Overview of Major Nursing Theories

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<th>Theorist</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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| Florence Nightingale (1860)  
  *Notes on Nursing: What It Is Not* (1860) | To help those responsible for caring for sick to “think how to nurse.”  
  Theory addresses fundamental needs of the sick and basic principles of good health care. | **Person:** Individual with vital reparative processes to deal with disease.  
  **Environment:** External conditions that affect life and the individual’s development. Focus is on ventilation, warmth, odors, and light.  
  **Health:** Focus is on the reparative process of getting well.  
  **Nursing:** Goal is to place the patient in the best condition for good health care. |
| Hildegard E. Peplau (1952)  
  *Interpersonal Relations in Nursing* (1952) | To develop an interpersonal interaction between client and nurse. | **Person:** An organism striving to reduce tension generated by needs.  
  **Environment:** Implicitly defined; the interpersonal process is always included, and the psychodynamic milieu receives attention, with emphasis on the client’s culture and mores.  
  **Health:** Ongoing human process that implies forward movement of personality and other ongoing human processes in the direction of creative, constructive, productive, personal, and community living.  
  **Nursing:** Interpersonal therapeutic process that “functions cooperatively with other human processes that make health possible for individuals in communities. Nursing is an educative instrument, a maturing force that aims to promote forward movement of personality.” |
| Virginia Henderson (1955)  
  *The Nature of Nursing* (1955) | To assist the client in gaining independence as rapidly as possible. | **Person:** Individual requiring assistance to achieve health and independence or a peaceful death. Mind and body are inseparable.  
  **Environment:** All external conditions and influences that affect life and development.  
  **Health:** Equated with independence, viewed in terms of the client’s ability to perform 14 components of nursing care unaided: breathing, eating, drinking, maintaining comfort, sleeping, resting, clothing, maintaining body temperature, ensuring safety, communicating, worshiping, working, recreation, and continuing development.  
  **Nursing:** Assists and supports the individual in life activities and the attainment of independence. |
| Faye Glenn Abdellah (1960)  
  *Patient-Centered Approaches to Nursing* (1960) | To deliver nursing care for the whole individual. | **Person:** The recipient of nursing care; having physical, emotional, and sociologic needs that may be overt or covert.  
  **Environment:** Not clearly defined. Some discussion indicates that clients interact with their environment, of which the nurse is a part. |
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<td>Faye Glenn Abdellah (cont.)</td>
<td>Health: Implicitly defined as a state when the individual has no unmet needs and no anticipated or actual impairments. Nursing: Broadly grouped in “21 nursing problems,” which center around needs for hygiene, comfort, activity, rest, safety, oxygen, nutrition, elimination, hydration, physical and emotional health promotion, interpersonal relationships, and development of self-awareness. Nursing care is doing something for an individual.</td>
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<td>Ida Jean Orlando (1961)</td>
<td>To interact with clients to meet immediate needs by identifying client behaviors, nurse’s reactions, and nursing actions to take.</td>
<td>Person: Unique individual behaving verbally and nonverbally. Assumption is that individuals are at times able to meet their own needs and at other times are unable to do so. Environment: Not defined. Health: Not defined. Assumption is that being without emotional or physical discomfort and having a sense of well-being contribute to a healthy state. Nursing: Professional nursing is conceptualized as finding out and meeting the client’s immediate need for help. Medicine and nursing are viewed as distinctly different.</td>
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<td>Lydia E. Hall (1964)</td>
<td>To provide professional nursing care to people past the acute stage of illness.</td>
<td>Person: Client is composed of body, pathology, and person. People set their own goals and are capable of learning and growing. Environment: Should facilitate achievement of the client’s personal goals. Health: Development of a mature self-identity that assists in the conscious selection of actions that facilitate growth. Nursing: Caring is the nurse’s primary function. Professional nursing is most important during the recuperative period.</td>
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<td>Ernestine Weidenbach (1964)</td>
<td>To assist individuals in overcoming obstacles that prevent meeting health care needs.</td>
<td>Person: Any individual who is receiving help (care, instruction, or advice) from a member of the healthcare profession or from a worker in the field of health. Environment: Not specifically addressed. Health: Not defined. Concepts of nursing, client, and need for help and their relationships imply health-related concerns in the nurse-client relationship (Marriner-Tomey &amp; Alligood, 2002, p. 245). Nursing: Functioning human being who acts, thinks, and feels. All actions, thoughts, and feelings underlie what the nurse does.</td>
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<td>Myra Estrin Levin (1973)</td>
<td>To use conservation activities aimed at optimal use of client’s resources.</td>
<td>Person: A holistic being. Environment: Broadly, includes all the individual’s experiences. Health: The maintenance of the client’s unity and integrity. Nursing: A discipline rooted in the organic dependency of the individual human being on her or his relationships with others.</td>
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| Dorothy E. Johnson (1980)     | To reduce stress so the client can recover as quickly as possible. | **Person:** A system of interdependent parts with patterned, repetitive, and purposeful ways of behaving.  
**Environment:** All forces that affect the person and that influence the behavioral system.  
**Health:** Focus on person, not illness. Health is a dynamic state influenced by biologic, psychological, and social factors.  
**Nursing:** Promotion of behavioral system, balance, and stability. An art and a science providing external assistance before and during system balance disturbances. |
| Martha E. Rogers (1970)       | To assist the client in achieving a maximum level of wellness. | **Person:** Unitary man, a four-dimensional energy field.  
**Environment:** Encompasses all that is outside any given human field. Person exchanging matter and energy.  
**Health:** Not specifically addressed, but emerges out of interaction between human and environment, moves forward, and maximizes human potential.  
**Nursing:** A learned profession that is both science and art. The professional practice of nursing is creative and imaginative and exists to serve people. |
| Dorothea E. Orem (1971)       | To provide care and to assist the client to attain self-care. | **Person:** Biopsychosocial being capable of self-care. Includes physical, psychological, interpersonal, and social aspects of human functioning.  
**Environment:** Internal and external stimuli. Requisites for self-care have their origins in human beings and the environment.  
**Health:** State of wholeness or integrity of human beings, including physical, mental, and social well-being.  
**Nursing:** A creative effort of one human being to help another human being. Consists of three nursing systems: wholly compensatory, partially compensatory, and supportive/educative. |
| Imogene M. King (1971)        | To use communication to help the client reestablish a positive adaptation to his or her environment. | **Person:** Biopsychosocial being.  
**Environment:** Internal and external environment continually interact to assist in adjustments to change.  
**Health:** A dynamic life experience with continued goal attainment and adjustment to stressors.  
**Nursing:** Perceiving, thinking, relating, judging, and acting with someone who comes to a nursing situation. |
| Joyce Travelbee (1971)        | To assist individuals, families, communities, and groups to prevent or cope with illness and regain health. | **Person:** A unique, irreplaceable individual who is in a continuous process of becoming, evolving, and changing.  
**Environment:** Not explicitly defined.  
**Health:** Health includes the individual’s perceptions of health and the absence of disease. |
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<td>Joyce Travelbee (cont.)</td>
<td>Nursing: An interpersonal process whereby the professional nurse practitioner assists an individual, family, or community to prevent or to cope with the experience of illness and suffering and, if necessary, to find meaning in these experiences.</td>
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| Betty Neuman (1972)  
*The Neuman Systems Model* | To address the effects of stress and reactions to it on the development and maintenance of health. | Person: A client system composed of physiologic, psychological, sociocultural, and environmental variables.  
Environment: Internal and external forces surrounding humans at any time.  
Health: Health or wellness exists if all parts and subparts are in harmony with the whole person.  
Nursing: A unique profession concerned with all variables affecting an individual’s response to stressors. |
| Sister Callista Roy (1970)  
*Roy Adaptation Model* | To identify the type of demands placed on a client and the client’s adaptation to the demands. | Person: A biopsychosocial being and the recipient of nursing care.  
Environment: All conditions, circumstances, and influences surrounding and affecting the development of an organism or groups of organisms.  
Health: The person encounters adaptation problems in changing environments.  
Nursing: A theoretical system of knowledge that prescribes a process of analysis and action related to the care of the ill or potentially ill person. |
| Jean Watson (1979)  
*Nursing: Human Science and Human Care* | To focus on curative factors derived from a humanistic perspective and from scientific knowledge. | Person: A valued being to be cared for, respected, nurtured, understood, and assisted; a fully functional, integrated self.  
Environment: Social environment, caring, and the culture of caring affect health.  
Health: Physical, mental and social well-being.  
Nursing: A human science of people and human health; illness experiences that are mediated by professional, personal, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical human care transactions. |
| Rosemarie Rizzo Parse (1981)  
*Man–Living–Health: Theory of Nursing* | To focus on humans as living unity and humans’ qualitative participation with health experience. | Person: A major reason for nursing’s existence, evidenced by a “pattern of patterns of relating.”  
Environment: “Man and environment interchange energy to create what is in the world, and man chooses the meaning given to the situations he creates.”  
Health: A lived experience that is a process of being and becoming.  
Nursing: “Nursing practice is directed toward illuminating and mobilizing family interrelationships in light of the meaning assigned to health and its possibilities as language in the cocreated patterns of relating.” |
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR NURSING THEORIES

References

Nightingale F. Notes on nursing: What it is and what it is not. London: Harrison, 1860.