

Sheila Collins
and Edith Parker

NEW
EDITION

Essentials of Nursing An Introduction

Second Edition



The Essentials of Nursing

Essentials of Nursing
An Introduction

Editorial Board

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Sheila Collins, OBE, BA(Hons), RGN, RSCN, RNT, FRCN is an Associate Lecturer to the postgraduate certificate course in the education of adults at The University of Surrey, Guildford. She was formerly the Director of Nursing Education at The Princess Alexandra School of Nursing, The London Hospital, a member of the Committee on Nursing (1970–72) under the Chairmanship of Professor (now Lord) Asa Briggs, and a member of the Advisory Committee on Training in Nursing of the European Commission. She was a member of the English National Board and a member of the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting from 1979 to 1983. She has travelled widely in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada, not only to study and to lecture, but also to represent the Royal College of Nursing (of which she was twice Deputy President) and to assist in the work of the International Council of Nurses.

Series Editors

Patricia Hunt, RGN, RSCN, SCM, RNT, Dip Adv Ed is Director of Nurse Education at West Berkshire School of Nursing and was previously Senior Tutor at Bristol and Weston School of Nursing. She is an external examiner for London University, the Diploma in Nursing and member of the Course Planning Team for the CNNA Diploma/Degree in Nursing at Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education. She is a member of Advisory Committees at Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education and Bracknell College of Further Education. She is involved in the early stages of establishing links between West Berkshire School of Nursing and Bulmershe College of Higher Education, Reading. Other interests include membership of the distance learning Open Tec Steering Committee for Continuing Nurse Education with Barnet and Manchester Colleges with the Manpower Services Commission.

Bernice Sendell, BA(Hons), RGN, SCM, RNT is Assistant Director of Nurse Education at the Bristol and Weston School of Nursing. She is a member of the course liaison/management groups for the BA(Hons) Degree in Nursing and for the Diploma in Nursing, and is a member of the Advisory Committee for the Cert Ed (FE), all at Bristol Polytechnic. Other interests include membership of the Editorial Advisory Group for a professional journal and steering committee membership for two distance learning projects (at the Distance Learning Centre, South Bank Polytechnic, and the Continuing Nurse Education Open Tec at Barnet and Manchester Colleges with the Manpower Services Commission).

Gill Garrett, BA, RGN, RCNT, Dip N (Lond), Cert Ed (FE), RNT, FP Cert was previously Nurse Tutor at the Bristol and Weston School of Nursing. She is a freelance writer and lecturer in health and community studies, and a Member of the RCN Working Party Improving Care of the Elderly in Hospital.

Helen Lewer, BSc(Hons), RGN, RSCN, RNT is a Tutor at the Nightingale School of Nursing, St Thomas's Hospital, London. In 1980 she was awarded a scholarship through the Florence Nightingale Memorial Committee to study paediatric nurse training in the USA and Canada.

Hazel Ball, RGN, SCM, MTD is Director of Nursing Services, Midwifery and Paediatrics, Nottingham Health Authority (Teaching), and was previously Divisional Nursing Officer (Midwifery and Gynaecology) in central Derbyshire. She is a member of the Association of Supervisors of Midwives and was a member of the General Nursing Council.

Alan Parrish, RNMS, RGN, RNMH is past Director of Nursing Services at St Lawrence's Hospital, Caterham, Surrey. He is now Nurse Adviser to the Society of Mental Handicap Nursing at the Royal College of Nursing for the United Kingdom.

Consultants and Advisers

Anne Betts, BSc(Hons), RGN, RNT is a course tutor and Lecturer in Biological Sciences at the Institute of Advanced Nursing Education, The Royal College of Nursing. She is an Editorial Board member of *Good Health*.

Marigold Potter, BA, RGN, Dip N, Dip N Ed, RNT is a specialist tutor for care of the elderly at The Princess Alexandra School of Nursing at The London Hospital, London.

June Jolly, RGN, RSCN is Nurse Adviser with the Lisa Sainsbury Foundation. She is an Honorary member of NAWCH (The National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital) and author of *The Other Side of Paediatrics—The Everyday Care of Sick Children*, published by Macmillan in 1981.

Ann Stewart, BA, RGN, SCM, MCD was, until June 1983, Educational Supervisor at the Central Midwives Board, and is a Member of the Council of the Royal College of Midwives. She is now Professional Officer for Midwifery Education Training and Practice at The English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting.

Janet Nevitt, RSCN, RGN, RCNT, RNT was, until June 1986, a Tutor at The Princess Alexandra School of Nursing at The London Hospital.

Geoff Bourne, RMN, RGN, RNT is an Education Officer at The English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting and was previously Senior Tutor at The Princess Alexandra School of Nursing, at The London Hospital.

Essentials of Nursing

An Introduction

Sheila Collins
Edith Parker

with contributions from

Barbara McNulty
Jennifer Raiman
Veronica Chapman
Jill Macleod Clark
Stephen Kirkham
Daphne Hill

SECOND EDITION


MACMILLAN

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The Contributors

Barbara J. McNulty, RGN, SCM, FRCN, works in Wales as a counsellor with particular concern for the bereaved. Her interest in the problems of families caring for dying patients at home, and the needs of those patients, led her to joining St Christopher's Hospice in 1967 when it first opened, and here she pioneered and developed the Home Care Service. She has written several articles on death and bereavement for American and British nursing journals.

Jennifer Raiman is a Macmillan Research Fellow at the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at The London Hospital. She is currently co-ordinating the development of senior medical and nursing lectureships in palliative medicine and continuing care on behalf of the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund for which she is Education Adviser. She has undertaken a series of research projects focusing on the assessment and observation of pain and associated symptom control in malignant disease.

Veronica Chapman, BA, RGN, DipN(London), RNT, is Senior Tutor (Professional Development and Post-basic Training) at Maidstone School of Nursing, and has an honorary appointment at the University of Kent at Canterbury. She was previously a tutor in the Princess Alexandra School of Nursing, The London Hospital, and later in the Staff Development Department of the Nightingale School, St Thomas' Hospital, London.

Jill Macleod Clark, BSc, PhD, RGN, is Lecturer in the Department of Nursing Studies at King's College, University of London, and is currently involved in research concerned with developing methods of teaching communication skills in nursing.

Stephen Kirkham, MA, MB, BChir, MRCP, is the Medical Director of Pilgrim's Hospice, Canterbury, Kent, and has previously held both practice and research posts at St Christopher's Hospice, Sydenham, and St Joseph's Hospice, Hackney.

Daphne Hill, RNMH, RGN, RCNT, RNT, is a Senior Nurse Tutor at the school of Nursing, St. Lawrence's Hospital, Caterham. Her ideas have contributed the basis of the discussion of the care of mentally handicapped people throughout this book and throughout the series.

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Foreword to the series

This series of textbooks offers a fresh approach to the study of nursing. The aim is to give those beginning a career in nursing, and those already qualified, opportunities for reflection in order to broaden their approach to nursing education and to identify their own nursing values. The text includes material currently required by those preparing for qualification as a nurse and offers a basis for developing knowledge by individual studies. It should also assist qualified nurses returning to nursing, and those wishing to gain further insight into the nursing curriculum.

The authors of each book in the series are from widely differing nursing backgrounds, and, as experienced teachers of nursing or midwifery, they are well aware of the difficulties faced by nursing students searching for meaning from a mass of factual information. The nurse has to practise in the real world, and in reality nursing students need to learn to practise with confidence and understanding. The authors have therefore collaborated to illustrate this new perspective by making full use of individual nursing care plans to present the knowledge required by the nursing student in the most appropriate and relevant way. These textbooks can therefore be used in a wide variety of nursing programmes.

The practice of nursing—as a profession and as a career—and the education of the nurse to fulfil her role are both affected by national and international trends. The Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Act 1979 in the United Kingdom, the Treaty of Rome and the European Community Nursing Directives 1977, as well as the deliberations and publications of the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organization, all make an impact upon the preparation and the practice of the nurse throughout the world.

Nursing values may not have changed over the past hundred years, but society and both the patterns of life and care have changed, and are constantly changing. It is particularly important, therefore, to restate the essentials of nursing in the light of current practice and future trends.

Throughout this series the focus is on nursing and on the individual—the person requiring care and the person giving care—and it emphasises the need for continuity between home and hospital care. *Neighbourhood Nursing—A Focus for Care*—the Report of the Community Nursing Review under the chairmanship of Julia Cumberlege (HMSO, 1986) has drawn attention to this need. The developing role of the nurse in primary care and in health education is reflected throughout this series. The authors place their emphasis on the whole person, and nursing-care studies and care plans are used to promote understanding of the clinical, social, psychological and spiritual aspects of care for the individual.

Each book introduces the various aspects of the curriculum for general nursing: the special needs of (1) those requiring acute care; (2) of the elderly; (3) of children; (4) of the mentally ill; and (5) of the mentally handicapped. The latter is a new text in the *Essentials of Nursing*—edited by a well-known and respected nurse for the mentally handicapped and with contributors experienced in differing aspects of caring for people with mental handicap. The text on maternity and neonatal care, written by a midwifery teacher, provides the material for nursing students and would be helpful to those undertaking preparation for further health-visiting education.

The authors wish to acknowledge their gratitude for the assistance they have received from members of the Editorial Board, and from all those who have contributed to their work—patients and their relatives, students, qualified nurses and colleagues—too numerous to mention by name. To all those nurse teachers who have read some of the texts, offering constructive criticism and comment from their special knowledge, we offer our grateful thanks. Lastly, we thank Elizabeth Horne, for her contribution to the physiology material in the text, and to Mary Waltham for her help with this second edition.

Preface to the Second Edition

The second edition owes much to the helpful and constructive comments from users, and from reviewers of the first edition.

New material has been added in Chapter 1, including the UKCC Competencies required for registration, and Guidelines on the Code of Practice, and an introduction to the use of nursing models with further references and reading. Chapter 3 has been completely revised, and in the review of preventing infection reference is made to auto-immune deficiency syndrome—AIDS. Additional information is introduced in Chapter 4 with reference to the hospice care of the terminally ill, and the most recent information on theories of pain mechanisms and the treatment of pain in Chapter 5. Minor corrections occur throughout each chapter.

The book has been re-titled *Essentials of Nursing—An Introduction*—to indicate more clearly that it forms the basis for each of the other books in the series—to which the new text *Mental Handicap* has now been added.

The emphasis remains throughout this book—as with each one in the series—on the need for the student to develop her own knowledge in order to achieve competence by practice under skilled supervision.

1987

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Edith Parker

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The authors extend their thanks to the contributors and in particular to Daphne Hill for her help with the approach to the care of the mentally handicapped; to Anne Betts for her assistance in reading and commenting on the text; and to nursing students and colleagues for their advice and encouragement.

A note on the series style

Throughout this book, in keeping with the other titles in this series, the term *nursing student* has been used to mean *both* student or pupil nurses *and* trained nurses who are undertaking post-basic training or who are keeping up to date with the recent literature. For clarity and consistency throughout the series the nurse is described as *she*; this is done without prejudice to men who are nurses or nursing students. Similarly, the patient is sometimes referred to as *he*, when the gender is not specifically mentioned.

Care plans, which are used throughout the books in this series, are indicated by a coloured corner flash to distinguish them from the rest of the text.

Introduction

This is the introductory textbook to *The Essentials of Nursing*, and is concerned with both nursing and the nursing student. It forms an introduction to the studies which will necessarily follow if the student is to become a qualified nurse. Such studies will include the knowledge to be applied in practising the art of nursing, and those which encourage the development of personal values and attitudes which may be expressed in skilled nursing care. To deepen her understanding of the scientific basis of nursing and in planning the care of her patients, the student will be guided by her teachers in the practice of skills, and the reading and resource materials essential for self-directed learning.

Definition of Nursing

Nursing has been defined in many different words by nurses themselves, by historians, in government reports and by national and international organisations.

A well known nurse educator Virginia Henderson gave her definition in a publication for the International Council of Nurses — *Basic Principles of Nursing Care*.

‘Nursing is primarily assisting the individual (sick or well) in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to a peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, will or knowledge. It is likewise the unique contribution of the nurse to help the individual to be independent of such assistance as soon as possible.’

Each nurse and each nursing student has to define the meaning of the word nursing for herself, in her own words, if her course and her career as a nurse is to be successful.

Activity

1. Having decided to learn to become a nurse—how do *you* define the word ‘nursing’?
2. What is a nurse?
3. List the characteristics of a nurse; which do *you* consider to be important?

Nurses and patients are people

Nursing is essentially a service given by one person to another person. It is often a team activity when different individuals contribute to the nursing care of one or more patients. There are similarities and differences between one nurse and another, and between one patient and another. The nursing student will learn to appreciate that each person is a unique individual, with his own personal values, beliefs, needs and preferences. It is important, when planning nursing care, to consider carefully what is appropriate for this particular person, and not to assume that all patients have the same needs, or that any *one* plan is suitable for everybody, or for every occasion. Every patient is an individual, and each nurse and nursing student offers differing abilities and aptitudes in different settings to different individuals.

The person

An individual’s personality is unique. It is the sum total of everything about the person — the way he acts, thinks, feels, and the opinions and attitudes he holds, which may or may not be consistent with his actual behaviour. This uniqueness is in the colour of eyes, hair, skin and basic body structure, and it is expressed by his choice of clothing and belongings. The interaction between inherited, cultural and environmental influences, helps to shape the individual’s personality and particular way of forming relationships with others, and making decisions about his lifestyle and practices.

The awareness a person has developed about himself, and thus the confidence he has in forming and developing relationships, depends to a large extent on his self-esteem, and how this is established and maintained.