



Guidelines for Good Professional Practice in Anthroposophic Nursing

Introduction

The International Anthroposophic Nursing Forum, representing national professional Anthroposophic nursing organizations, has adopted these Guidelines in order to make the ethical and qualitative standards for good nursing practice known to those who require professional Anthroposophic nursing, to cooperating professions, and in the field of research in nursing.

Anthroposophic nursing developed together with Anthroposophic medicine at the beginning of the 20th century. Anthroposophic medicine was established by Rudolf Steiner, PhD, and Ita Wegman, MD, at the School of Spiritual Science established at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, in 1923. The Medical Section of the School coordinates, develops and documents the world-wide activities in Anthroposophic medicine. Within the Medical Section, the International Anthroposophic Nursing Forum represents the interests of professional nursing. At present, Anthroposophic nursing is available in hospitals, medical practices, home-care services, homes for the elderly, curative education and social therapy centres and sanatoria. Around the world, Anthroposophic nursing is now available in c. 20 countries.

The basis of Anthroposophic nursing is to know and understand human beings in sickness and health and in their natural and social environment. Sickness is considered to arise from an imbalance between and among functions and forces, health to be the restoration of the physical powers of integration. Anthroposophic nursing supports the process of permanent integration both in the everyday life of healthy people and during such temporary or lasting imbalances as arise in sickness or due to disabilities. The study of these provides the basis for the nursing process. Nursing methods based on experience and in accord with the current state of knowledge in nursing research are applied in taking a nursing history, providing nursing services, and doing an evaluation. They may be complemented or broadened by methods specific to Anthroposophic nursing and medicine.

The aim with Anthroposophic medicine is to encourage patients' personal responsibility and self-development in sickness and in health. Anthroposophic nursing supports this aim by taking over nursing tasks which patients are unable to do themselves, to explore and encourage patients' independence and resources, implement medical orders for patients' benefit, provide for the integration of biographical events and medical treatments in patients' everyday life. Nursing creates space for new opportunities to be brought to realization when sickness, disability and death are part of life.



Professional Anthroposophic nursing always requires government-approved nursing qualifications. Anthroposophic nurses must thus meet the national nursing standards in the given country.

To be recognized or certified as an expert in Anthroposophic nursing, nursing personnel must meet the principles listed below.

Ethical principles in Anthroposophic nursing

Anthroposophic nursing has a scientific basis, the methods and knowledge of which are generally accessible, as in the case of Anthroposophic medicine. A second basis is experience and practice in nursing and therapeutic work gathered by experts in Anthroposophic nursing and originally especially in collaboration with Ita Wegman, MD, from the time when anthroposophic medical centres were first established in the 1920s.

The ethical principles for Anthroposophic nursing listed below are in the spirit of the Medical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum, taking into account and recognizing the professional ethics of the International Council of Nurses (ICN).

Anthroposophic nurses recognize the connection between natural forces and moral powers and take account of them with regard to actions directed to the inside or outside. They see every human being as a unique spiritual entity in continuous development.

This has consequences at three levels.

1) Consequences for the relationship between patient and carer

- The patient and the social sphere of which he or she is part plays an active role in the care process. Anthroposophic nurses consider it their function to support that social sphere and the development of healthy and beneficial conditions.
- Sickness, disability and death have significance in the biography of the individual and for the community of which he or she is part.
- The relationship between patient and nurse is based on independent agreements concerning the acceptance and provision of nursing services. No one is refused appropriate care, with their dignity respected.

2) Consequences for collegial relationships among nurses and other health-care professions

- The nurse is constantly mindful of her/his commitment to truth in every situation in life.



- Nurses are aware of the limits of their knowledge and skills. They welcome and foster collaboration with colleagues and other care professions. Nurses follow the directions given by members of the medical profession unless these go against the ethical principles listed here.
- Nurses recognize the gap between the individual and the social life and take this into account to their professional relationships.

3) Consequences for the relationship between nurse and patient on one side and the earth and nature on the other

- The effects of nursing interventions on social and ecological systems are given consideration with regard to sustainable use of resources.
- The fact that human beings have today become the main cause of sickness and death and the natural and the social environment are also in need of care and healing, represents a global challenge and responsibility for health care professions.
- The flora and fauna and their genetic material should not be considered to be capital or property subject to market logics but as life-forms with which human beings are in mutual relationship and dependence at many levels.

According to these principles, the whole earth and human civilization are a third party in the relationship between care providers and recipients.

Training, certification and ongoing further training in Anthroposophic nursing

Training

Training in Anthroposophic nursing follows the successful completion of training as a nurse according to the national system and regulations. Courses which provide the basis of Anthroposophic nursing as part of the general professional training will be accredited when training in Anthroposophic nursing. The latter consists in a theoretical and a practical part and concludes with an assessment.

The theoretical part will be given in foundation courses in Anthroposophic nursing according to the guidelines of the International Anthroposophic Nursing Forum in the Medical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum.

Practical training consists in working under supervision for at least one year at a clinic, department or nursing centre, which are recognized by the International Anthroposophic



Nursing Forum. Practical training may also be done at other nursing centres if mentored by a tutor recognized by the Forum.

Anthroposophic Nursing Certificate

The International Anthroposophic Nursing Forum in the Medical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum will be able to issue an Anthroposophic nursing certificate if the above criteria are met or a comparable certificate has been issued by a national Anthroposophic nursing association.

Ongoing further training in Anthroposophic nursing

Anthroposophic nurses recognize the need for ongoing further training in both general and Anthroposophic nursing.

Further training in Anthroposophic nursing involves both ongoing self-education carried out in full freedom, and critical dialogue and peer review with colleagues, for instance in further training groups.

Anthroposophic nursing practice

Professional framework

The professional framework of an Anthroposophic nurse is defined mainly by his or her professional qualification and possible specialization(s). Anthroposophic nurses therefore work as employees or self-employed within and as part of the national health-care system in public or private establishments or as independent professionals.

Anthroposophic nurses work within the guidelines of their professional organizations in the country concerned. This relates to the whole nursing process and its documentation. The above-mentioned Guidelines are integrated into the knowledge and methods that apply to Anthroposophic nursing.

Anthroposophic nurses follow their profession according to national laws, guidelines, standards and the Code of Ethics for Nurses by the International Council of Nurses (ICN).

Finally Anthroposophic nurses take the following into account in assessing, planning, giving and evaluating nursing services:



- the current state of knowledge in their field
- the nursing-care resources available in the given situation
- the will of the patient concerning all nursing procedures.

People in need of care and their families will be informed on the necessary nursing procedures, the foreseeable evolution and possible problems. Nursing procedures will only be used once the individual requiring them or family members have been informed on their effects and possible side-effects and have given explicit consent. Nursing procedures will also be discussed and agreed upon with the physician in charge.

Anthroposophic nurses work in collaboration with other health-care professionals in advising all strata of the population on the basis for a healthy lifestyle and the prevention of disease.

Anthroposophic nurses participate in national and international nursing research projects, especially in the field of Anthroposophic nursing.

Relations with members of the medical profession and therapists

Anthroposophic nurses work on the basis of Anthroposophic medicine and the view taken in this of the human being and of disease. Training in Anthroposophic nursing provides practical experience with Anthroposophic medicines and therapies. Both permit collaboration at a deeper level with health professionals in the field of Anthroposophic medicine.

Anthroposophic nurses actively contribute their expertise and outlook in the medical team. This broadens insight into the significance which sickness, suffering and treatment have for patients in their sphere of life.

Anthroposophic nurses follow medical directions carefully, providing they are qualified for this and the direction does not go against the professional ethics of Anthroposophic nursing.

All relevant information on the patient's condition and performed and planned nursing procedures is made available in a suitable form to everyone involved in the therapeutic process.

Anthroposophic nurses take part in or initiate multi-professional case conferences, further training events and research projects.



Concluding remark

These professional guidelines represent the minimum requirement for good Anthroposophic nursing practice. As time goes on they must be adapted to the evolving professional self-image, awareness of quality and Anthroposophic nursing practice.

These Guidelines were adopted by the International Anthroposophic Nursing Forum in the Medical Section of the School of Spiritual Science and the currently existing national Anthroposophic nursing organizations world-wide on 17th September 2008.

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