

## NURSING PROCESS: A CRITICAL THINKING TOOL

### **ASSESSMENT.** Collecting and recording data to provide the information needed to:

- Predict, detect, prevent, manage, and eliminate health problems.
- Predict, detect, prevent, manage, and eliminate risk factors.
- Clarify expected outcomes (measurable expected results or benefits of care).
- Identify interventions to achieve outcomes, promote health, and attain optimum function and independence

### **DIAGNOSIS.** Analyzing and synthesizing data to draw conclusions to:

- Identify signs and symptoms that may indicate the need for referral to a more qualified professional (report these immediately)
- Identify patterns, generate a list of suspected problems, and rule out presence of health problems.
- Clarify actual and potential health problems and underlying contributing factors
- Identify risk (related) factors
- Determine resources, strengths, use of healthy behaviors
- Recognize health states that are satisfactory but could be improved.
- Reflect on thinking** to determine whether: (1) Patient participation in the process has been at an optimum level, (2) Data is accurate and complete, (3) Assumptions have been identified, (4) Conclusions are based on facts (evidence), rather than guesswork, and (5) Alternate conclusions, ideas, and solutions have been considered. (This applies to *all the phases*, but is placed here because it requires analysis, which is the focus of this phase.)

### **PLANNING.** Ensuring that the patient has an individualized, comprehensive plan by clarifying expected outcomes, individualizing interventions, and making sure the plan is adequately recorded. The plan should be designed to:

- Detect, prevent, and manage the health problems and their underlying contributing factors.
- Focus on priority problems and risk factors (those that *must* be managed to achieve the overall outcomes of care).
- Promote optimum function, independence, and health.
- Coordinate care and include patients as partners in decision-making and care.
- Achieve the desired outcomes safely, efficiently, and cost-effectively.
- Provide teaching to help patients make informed decisions.
- Make a record that can be used to monitor progress and communicate care.

### **IMPLEMENTATION.** Putting the plan into action by:

- Assessing appropriateness of interventions and deciding whether the patient is ready.
- Prioritizing, delegating, and coordinating care as indicated, including patients as partners in decision-making and care.
- Preparing the environment and equipment for safety, comfort, and convenience.
- Performing interventions, then reassessing to determine initial responses.
- Making immediate changes as needed.
- Charting to monitor progress and communicate care.
- Updating the plan as needed.

### **EVALUATION.**

- Assess patient status to determine whether expected outcomes have been met and what factors promoted or inhibited the success of the plan.
- Plan for ongoing assessment, improvement, and patient independence.
- Discharging the patient or modifying the plan as indicated.