Introduction to Nursing

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Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, the students will be able to:

- Discuss contemporary factors influencing the development of nursing.

- Identify the essential aspects of nursing.

- **Identify four major areas within the scope of nursing practice.**

- **Describe the roles of nurses.**

- **Discuss the criteria of a profession and professionalization of nursing.**

Introduction

Nursing has had a significant effect on people's lives. As rapid change continues to transform the profession of nursing and health care system. Today, nurses bring knowledge, leadership, spirit, and vital expertise to expanding roles that afford increased participation, responsibility, and rewards.

Contemporary nursing practice

An understanding of contemporary nursing practice includes a look at definitions of nursing, recipients of nursing, scope of nursing, settings of nursing practice, nurse practice acts, and current standards of clinical nursing practice.
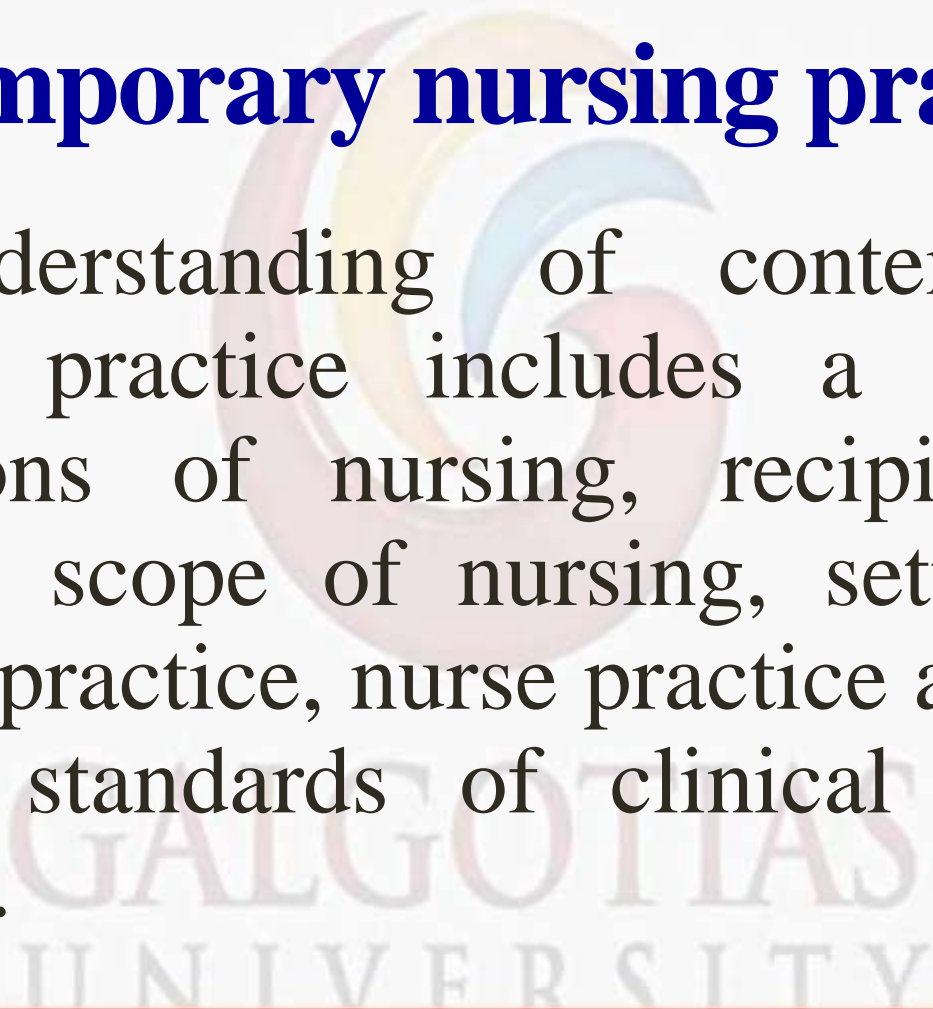
Definitions of Nursing

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Florence Nightingale

"The act of utilizing the environment of the patient to assist him in his recovery" (Nightingale, 1860). **Nightingale** considered a clean, well-ventilated, and quite environment essential for recovery.

Verginia Henderson

"The unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to peaceful death)".

Canadian Nurses Association (CNA)

Described nursing practice as a dynamic, caring, helping relationship in which the nurse assists the client to achieve and obtain optimal health.

Certain themes are common to many of these definitions

- **Nursing is caring.**

- **Nursing is an art.**

- **Nursing is a science.**

- **Nursing is client centered.**

- Nursing is holistic.

- Nursing is adaptive.

- Nursing is concerned with health promotion, health maintenance, and health restoration.

- Nursing is a helping profession.

American Nurses Association (ANA)

"direct, goal oriented, and adaptable to the needs of the individual, the family, and the community during health and illness" (ANA, 1973).

- **In 1980, the (ANA) changed this definition of nursing to this** "**Nursing is the diagnosis and treatment of human responses to actual or potential health problems".**

- **The Recipients of Nursing** are sometimes **called** consumers,sometimes patients,and sometimes clients.

- **A consumer is an individual, a group of people, or a community that uses a service or community. People who use health care products or services are consumers of health care.**

- **A patient is a person who is waiting for or undergoing medical treatment and care. The word patient comes from a Latin word meaning "to suffer" or "to bear". Traditionally, the person receiving health care has been called a patient.**

- **A client** is a person who engages the advice or services of another who is qualified to provide this service. The term **client** presents the **receivers of health care** as collaborators in the care, that is, as people who are also responsible for their own health.

Nurses provide care for **three types of clients:** individuals, families, and communities. **Nursing practice involves four areas:** promoting health and wellness, preventing illness, restoring health, and care of the dying.
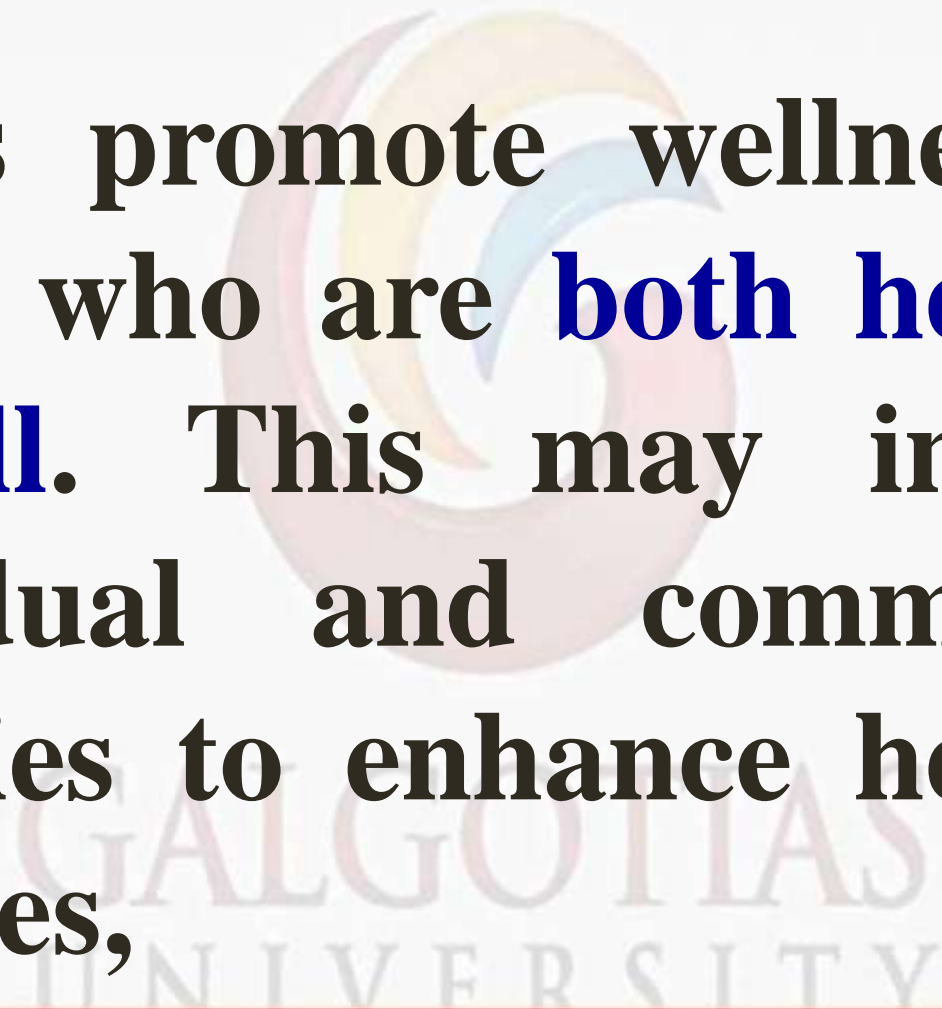
Promoting Health and Wellness

- **Wellness** is a state of well-being. It means engaging in attitudes and behavior that enhance the quality of life and maximize personal potential.

- **Nurses promote wellness in clients who are both healthy and ill. This may involve individual and community activities to enhance healthy lifestyles,**

such as improving nutrition and physical fitness, preventing drug and alcohol misuse, restricting smoking, and preventing accidents and injury in the home and workplace.

Preventing Illness

The goal of illness preventing programs is to maintain optimal health by preventing disease. Nursing activities that prevent illness include immunizations, prenatal and infant care, and prevention of sexually transmitted disease.

Restoring Health

- focuses on the ill client and it extends from early detection of disease through helping the client during the recovery period .

Nursing Activities

Include the following;

- **Providing direct care** to the ill person, such as administering medications, baths, and specific procedures and treatments.

- **Performing diagnostic** and assessment procedures, such as measuring blood pressure and examining feces for occult blood.
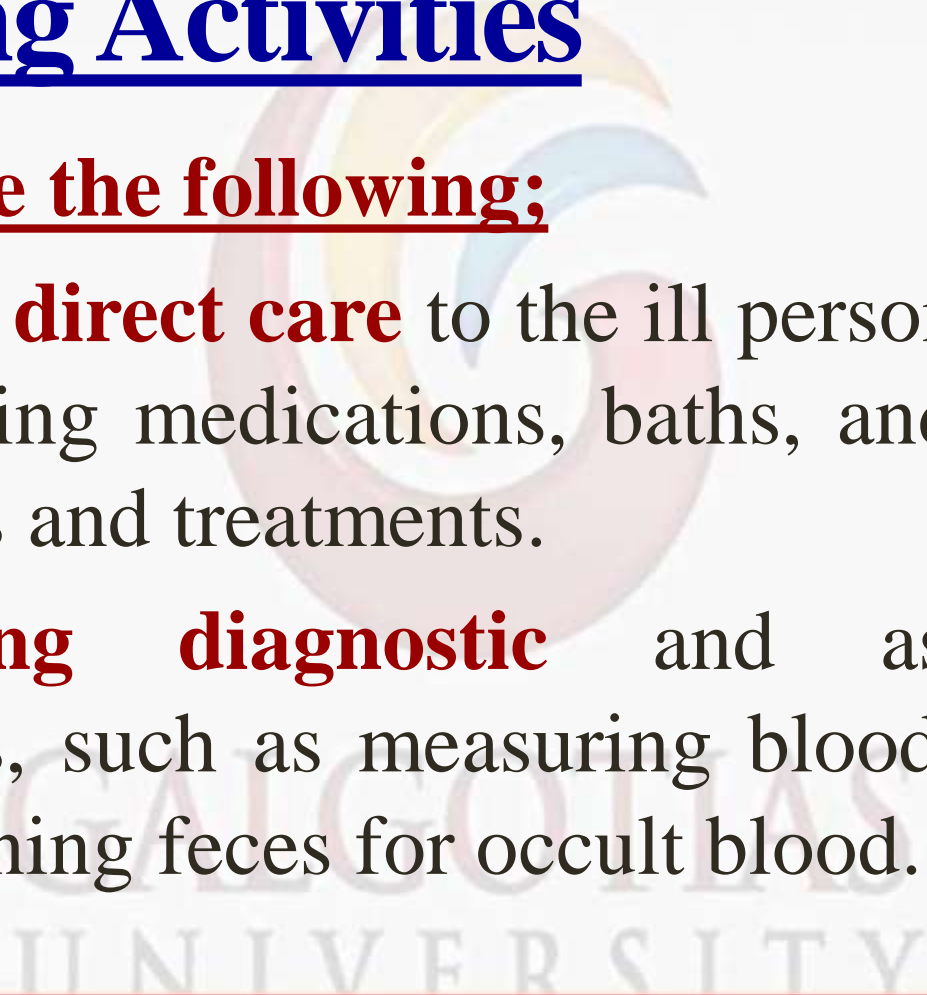
- **Consulting** with other health care professionals about client problems.

- **Teaching clients** about recovery activities, such as exercises that will accelerate recovery after a stroke.

- **Rehabilitating** clients to their optimal functional level following physical or mental illness, injury, or chemical addiction.

- **Care of the Dying**

This area of nursing practice **involves comforting and caring for people of all ages who are dying.** it includes helping clients live as comfortably as possible until death and helping support person cope with death.

Settings for Nursing

In the past, the acute care hospital was the main practice setting open to most nurses. Today many nurses work in hospitals, but increasingly they work in clients homes, community agencies, ambulatory clinics, long-term care, health maintenance organization (HMOs), and nursing practice centers.

- Nurses have different degree of nursing autonomy and nursing responsibility in the various settings. They may provide **direct care, teach clients and support persons,** serve as nursing advocates and agents of change, and help determine health policies affecting consumers in the community and in hospitals.

Standards of Clinical Nursing Practice

- **Establishing and implementing standards of practice are major functions of a professional organization. The standards:**

- **Reflect the values and priorities of the nursing profession.**

- **Provide direction for professional nursing practice.**

- **Provide a framework for the evaluation of nursing practice.**

- **Define the profession's accountability to the public and client outcomes for which nurses are responsible.**

(ANA) Standards of Clinical Nursing Practice:

- **Assessment:** the nurse collects patient health data.

- **Diagnosis:** the nurse analyzes the assessment data in determining diagnoses.

- **Outcome identification:** The nurse identifies expected outcomes individualized to the patient.

- **Planning:** the nurse develops a plan of care that prescribes interventions to attain expected outcomes.

- **Implementation:** the nurse implements the interventions identified in the plan of care.

- **Evaluation:** the nurse evaluates the patients progress toward attainment of outcomes.
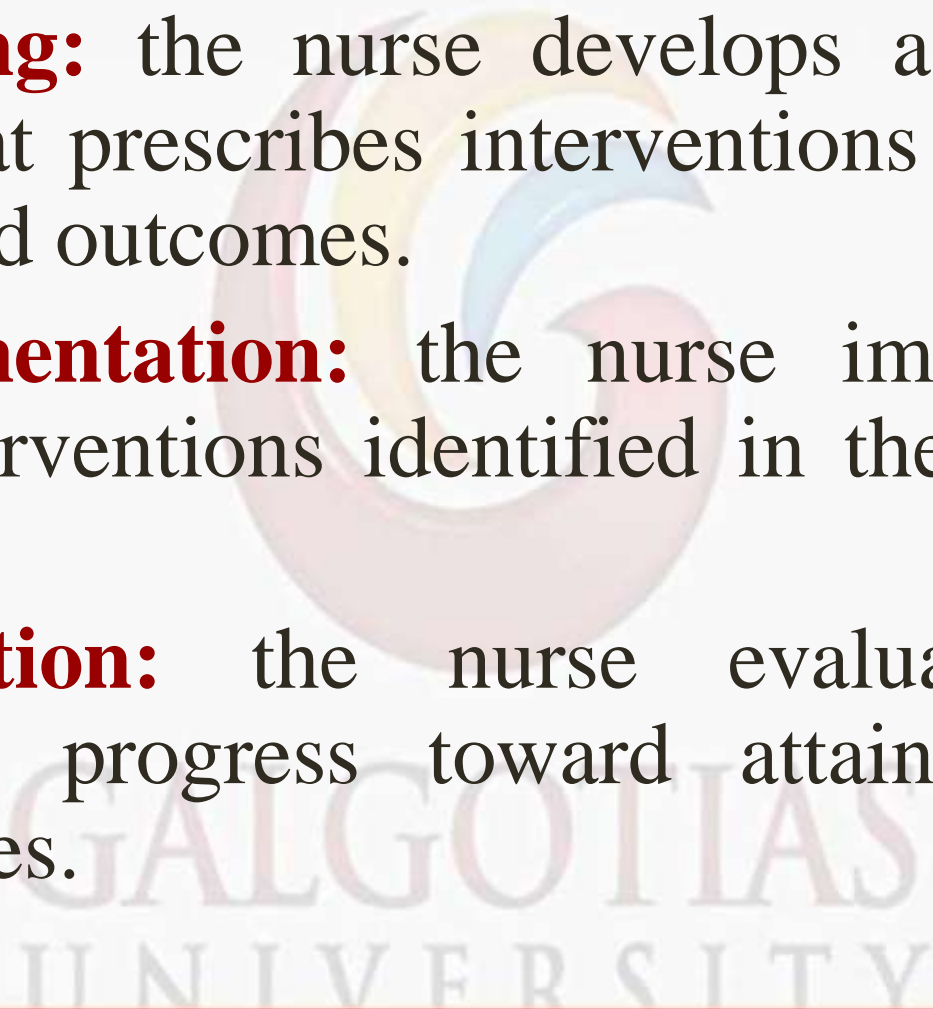
Roles and Functions of the Nurse Caregiver

- **Caregiver** **encompasses the physical, psychosocial, developmental, cultural, and spiritual levels. The nursing process provides nurses with a framework for providing care. a nurse may provide care directly or delegate it to other caregivers.**

Communicator

- **Communication** is integral to all nursing roles. Nurses communicate with the client, support persons, other health professionals, and people in the community.

Teacher

As **a teacher**, the nurse helps clients learn about their health and the health care procedures they need to perform to restore or maintain their health.

Client advocate

- A client advocate acts to protect the client. In this role the nurse may represent the client's needs and wishes to other health professionals, such as relaying the client's wishes for information to the physician. They also assist clients in exercising their rights and help them speak up for themselves.

Counselor

- **Counseling** is the process of helping a client to recognize and cope with stressful psychological or social problems, to develop improved interpersonal relationships, and to promote personal growth. It involves providing emotional, intellectual, and psychological support.

Change agent

- The nurse acts as a **change agent** when assisting others, that is, **clients, to make modifications in their own behavior.** Nurses also often act to make **changes in a system, such as clinical care,** if it is not helping a client return to health. Nurses are continually dealing with change in the health care system.

Leader

- **A leader influences others to work together to accomplish a specific goal. The leader role can be employed at different levels: individual client, family, groups of clients, colleagues, or the community.**
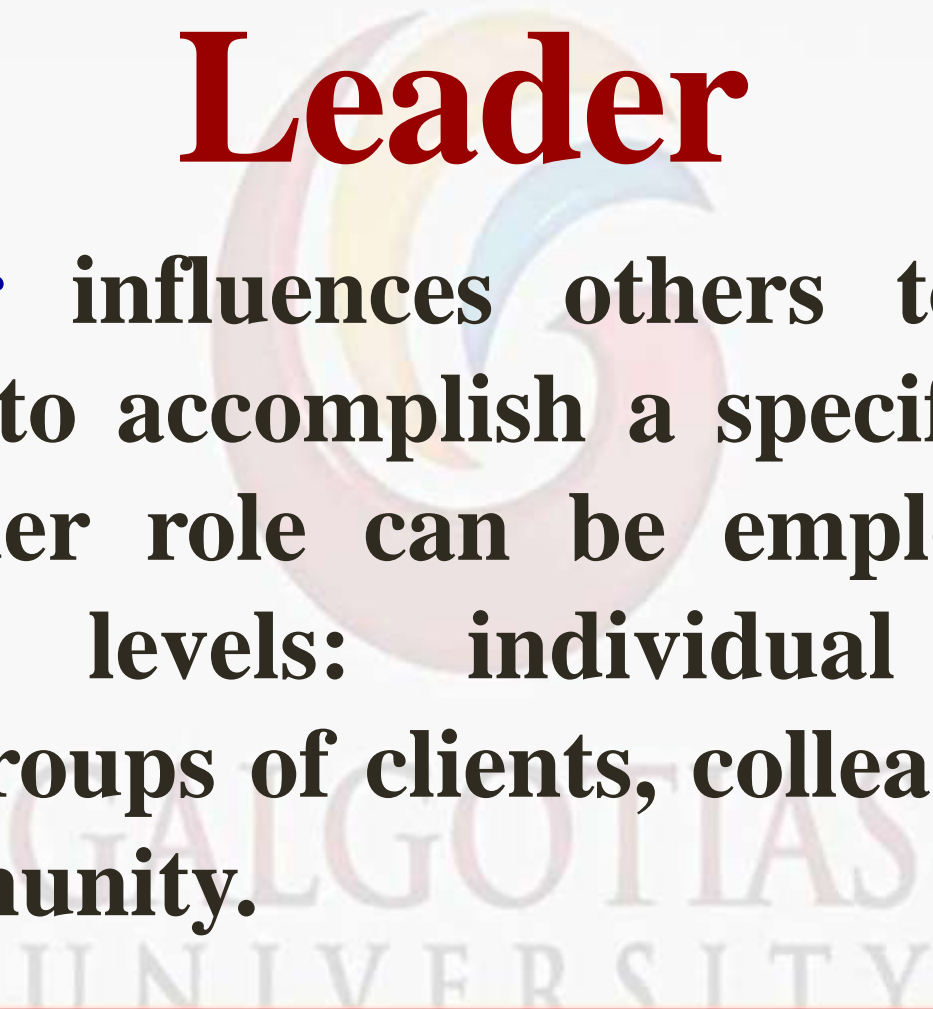
Manager

- **The nurse manages the nursing care of individuals, families, and communities. The nurse manager also delegates nursing activities to other nurses, and supervises and evaluates their performance.**

- **Managing requires knowledge about organizational structure and dynamics, authority and accountability, leadership, delegation and supervision and evaluation.**
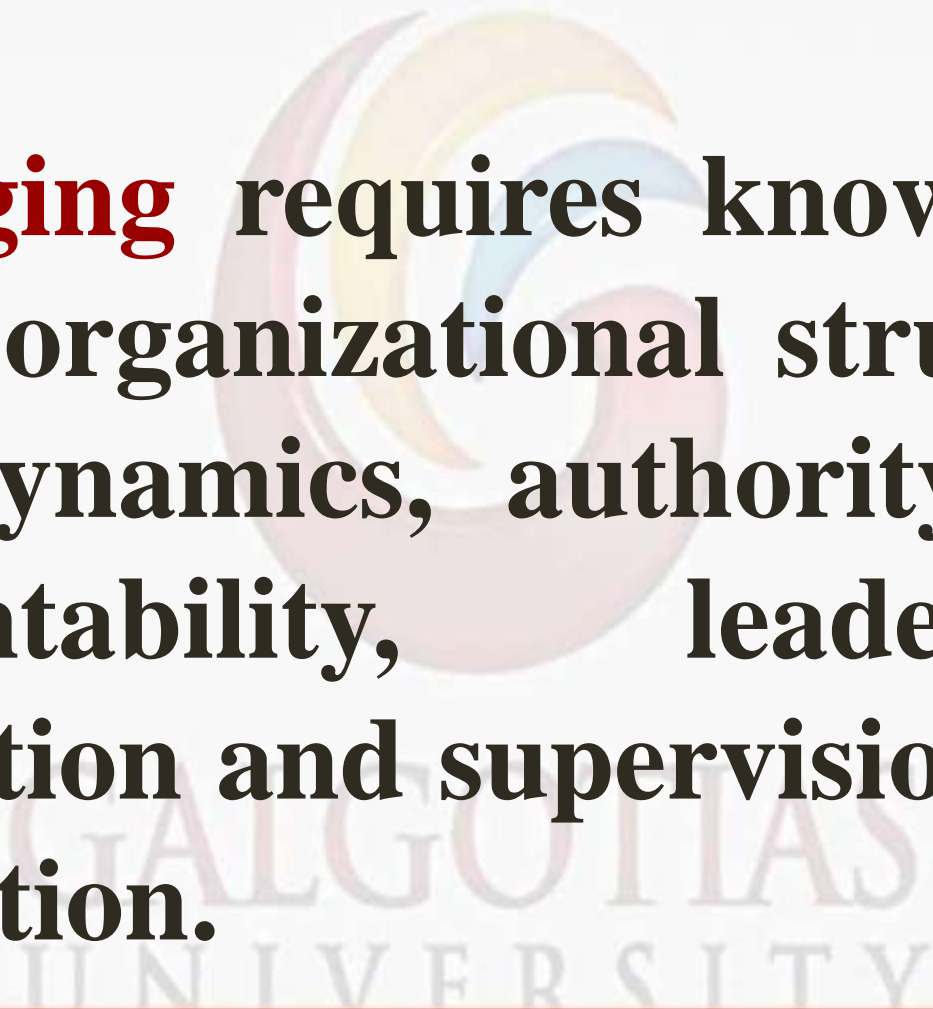
Case manager

- **Nurses case managers** work with the multidisciplinary health care team to measure the effectiveness of the case management plan and to monitor outcomes. Each agency or unit specifies the role of the nurse case manager.

Research consumer

- **Nurses often use research to improve client care. In a clinical area, <u>nurses need to:</u>**

- **Awareness of the process and language of research.**

- **Be sensitive to rights of human subjects.**

- **Identification of significant researchable problems.**

- **Be a discriminating consumer of research findings.**

Expanded career roles

- **such as those of nurse practitioner, clinical nurse specialist, nurse midwife, nurse educator, nurse researcher, and nurse anesthetist, all of which allow greater independence and autonomy.**

Criteria of a profession

- **Profession** defined as an occupation that requires extensive education or calling that requires special knowledge, skill, and preparation.
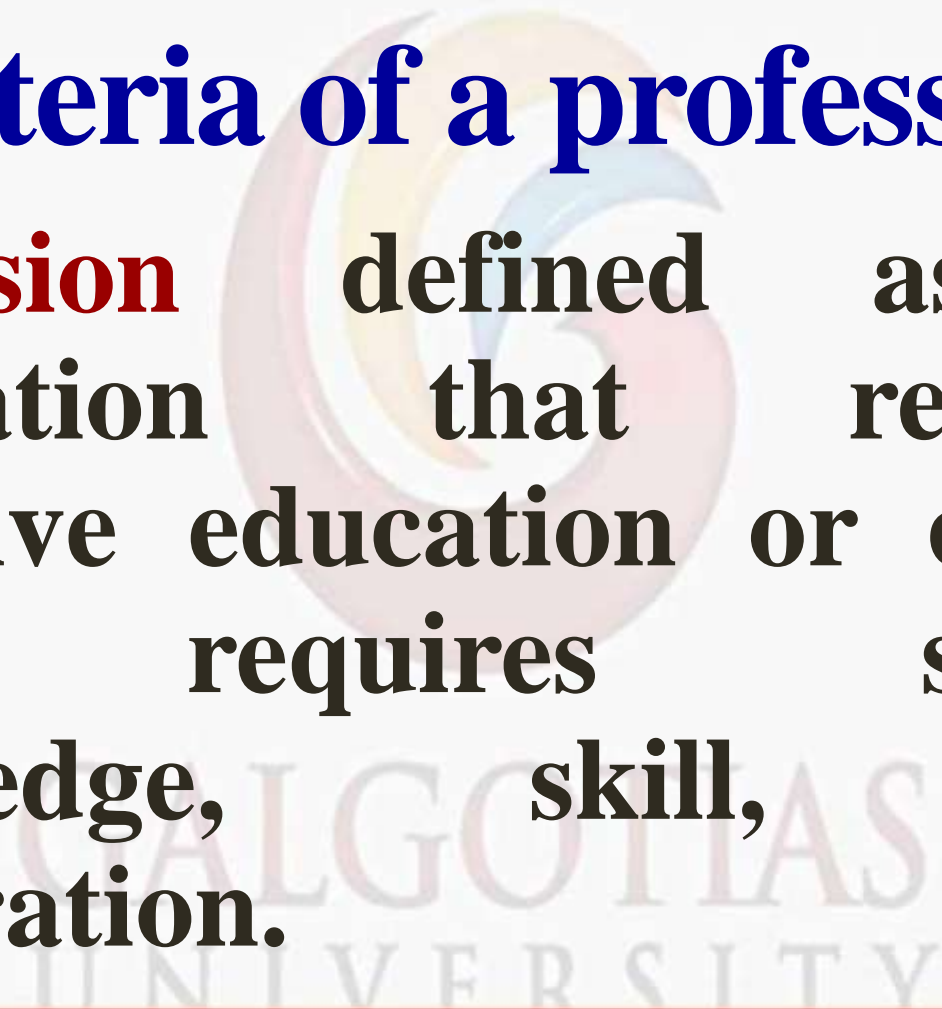
- **A profession is generally distinguished from other kinds of occupations by:**

a. **Its requirement of prolonged, specialized training.**

b. **An orientation of the individual toward service, either to a community or to an organization.**

c. **Ongoing research**

d. **Code of ethics.**

e. **Autonomy.**

f. **Professional organization**

Two terms related to profession need to be differentiated

Professionalism

Refers to professional character, spirit, or methods. It is a set of attributes, a way of life that implies responsibility and commitment.
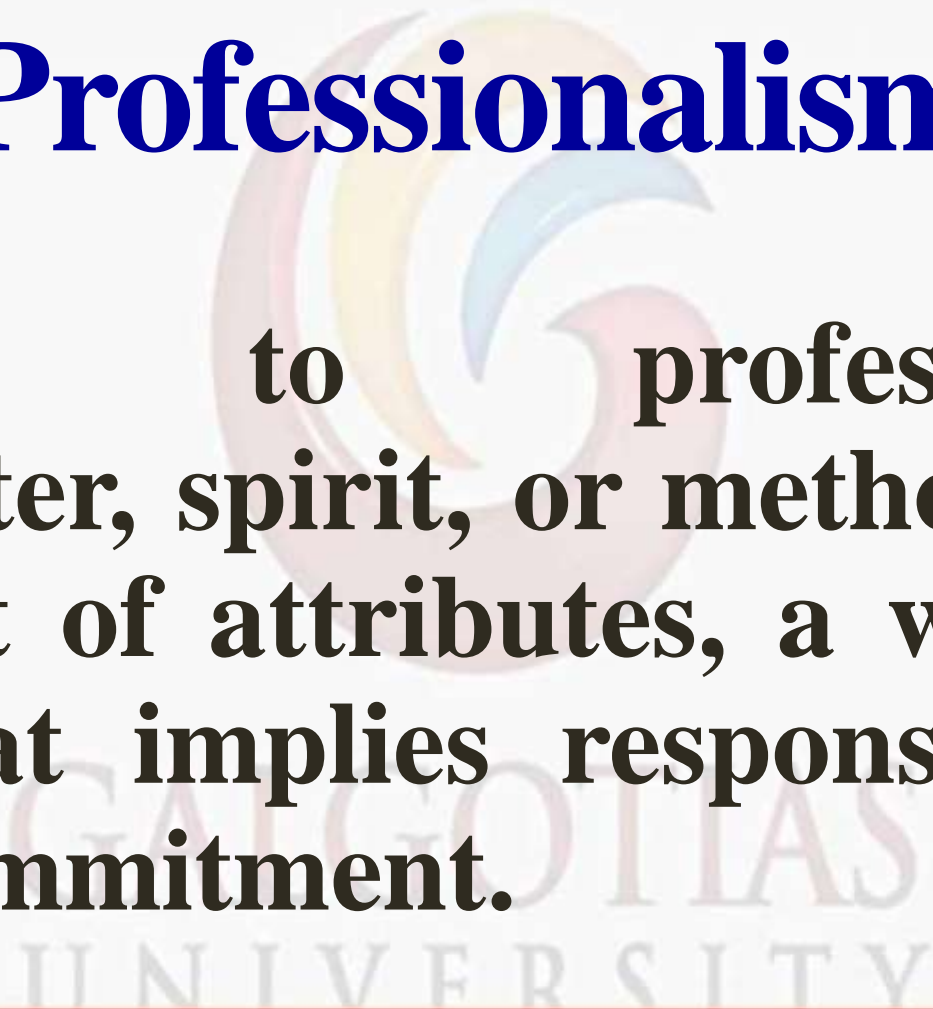
Professionalization

Is the process of becoming professional, that is, of acquiring characteristics considered to be professional.

- **Factors Influencing Contemporary Nursing Practice:**

*Economics

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Consumer Demands

- Consumers of nursing services (the pubic) have become an increasingly effective force in changing nursing practice. On the whole, people are better educated and have more knowledge about health and illness than in the past. Consumers also have become more aware of others needs for care. the ethical and moral issues raised by poverty an neglect have made people more vocal about the needs of minority groups and the poor.

Family Structure

- New family structures are influencing the need for and provision of nursing services. More people are living away from the extended family and the nuclear family, and the family breadwinner is no longer necessarily the husband.

Science and Technology:

- Advance in science and technology affect nursing practice. **For example,** people with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) are receiving new drug therapies to prolong life and delay the onset of AIDS- associated diseases. Nurses must be knowledgeable about the action of such drugs and the needs of clients receiving them.

Information and Telecommunications

- The information Internet has already impacted health care, with more and more clients becoming well informed about their health concerns.

Legislation

- **Legislation** Laws enacted by any legislative body are called **statutory laws. Legislation** about nursing practice and health matters affects both the public and nursing. Changes in legislation relating health also affect nursing. **For example, the Patient Self Determination Act (PSDA)** requires that every competent adult be informed in writing on admission to a health care institution about his or her rights to accept or refuse medical care and to use advance directives.

Demography

- **Demography is the study of population, including statistics about distribution by age and place of residence, mortality (death) and morbidity (incidence of disease).**

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