

Developmental Disability Nursing

POSITION STATEMENT

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY NURSING

People who have developmental disabilities are entitled to care. Care is a defining feature of nursing and it is unique to the Nursing discipline. Care involves concern for individuals and their rights, the demonstration of appropriate knowledge and skills. Care entails acceptance of the concepts of choice, lifestyle options and the ability to make appropriate judgments between apparently conflicting rights such as independence and protection.

Developmental disability nursing is a specialised area of nursing which focuses on promoting skills and meeting the needs of the client through partnership, and in a social context which includes family and significant others in care planning. Developmental disability nursing is a complex interpersonal process embodying a concept of caring which is designed to be therapeutic in specific ways.

This involves a holistic approach to care, which emphasises the clients abilities, relationships with family, significant others and the nurse. Including partnerships, rights, self-determination, independence and decision-making within the context of their clients' life situations.

Developmental disability nurses recognise the need for flexibility, adaptability, sensitivity and responsiveness, as they shape their practice to the dynamically changing needs of the clients, family, significant others and the community. Each person with a developmental disability is entitled to excellence in nursing care and such care demands a sound philosophy and knowledge base, which recognises the rights, self-determination and independence of each individual.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY NURSING PRACTICE

Developmental disability nursing practice occurs across a variety of settings and the functions of nursing proceed through a series of complex relationships. Factors that affect the work of the nurse include; the interpersonal dynamics, the nurse's level of knowledge and the skills that the nurse demonstrates.

The profession of nursing can be said to be mandated by society to provide a service that is beneficial to members of the community. Therefore nurses are charged to practice nursing in accordance with laws, values, standards and expectations of society and the profession. The purpose of developmental disability nursing practice is to fulfill the professional obligation to provide a means of improving quality care for clients with developmental disability.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY NURSES

A developmental disability nurse is a nurse, registered with the appropriate authority in their country of practice, who works with individual clients, their families, significant others or the community, in any context where issues concerning developmental disability present. Developmental disability nurses are accountable for their own nursing practice.

