

Guiding Principles for Correctional Nursing Practice

Today's correctional nursing practice also builds on previously published tenets and principles of correctional nursing (ANA 2013) and tenets that guide nursing practice (ANA 2015b). A single concise collection of seven guiding principles for correctional nursing practice reflects the evolution of the correctional nursing specialty and those tenets and principles.

1. Patient-centered care is at the core of correctional nursing practice.

- Nursing practice in the correctional setting respects dignity and diversity of each patient and considers the patient, the patient's family, population, and society while respecting established safety and security guidelines.
- Correctional nurses consider the patient's prior health, personal health goals, culture, life circumstances, the importance of family, and plans for future community living when developing a therapeutic care plan.
- Correctional nurses advocate for the patient's healthcare needs.

2. The nursing process is fundamental to correctional nursing practice.

- Correctional nurses use the nursing process to plan and provide individualized care to their patients.
- Critical thinking guides each step of the nursing process, problem solving, and decision-making.
- Correctional nurses customize the therapeutic care plan and patient education to help patients promote their own health.
- Correctional nurses use theory and evidence-based knowledge of human experiences and responses to collaborate with patients to assess, diagnose, identify outcomes, plan, implement, and evaluate care.
- Nursing interventions are intended to produce beneficial effects, contribute to quality outcomes, and above all, do no harm.
- Correctional nurses evaluate the effectiveness of their care in relation to identified outcomes and use evidence-based practice to improve care (ANA 2015b).

3. Professional nurses know their correctional nursing role.

- Correctional nurses demonstrate excellence in clinical practice through proficient use of the nursing process, strong health assessment skills, and clinical competence based on the principles of evidence-based practice (ANA 2015a).
- Correctional nurses recognize their primary role in correctional settings is delivery of nursing services.
- Correctional nurses demonstrate caring behaviors consistent with their professional role as a correctional nurse. The therapeutic relationship between

the correctional nurse and patient is based on the prevention of illness, lessening discomfort and suffering, and promotion of health and health education.

- Professional boundaries exist between correctional nurses and other disciplines within the correctional settings, as well as between correctional nurses and their patients.
- Correctional nurses must have knowledge of laws, prison reform, and the constitutional rights of the incarcerated population. Knowledge of the litigation process may assist correctional nurses in understanding and managing their practice.

4. Correctional nurses recognize the value of teamwork and collaboration by establishing partnerships.

- Correctional nurses participate in teams and committees to identify problems and find solutions within correctional settings.
- Correctional nurses collaborate with other healthcare disciplines to meet the holistic needs of their patients, which may include the physical, psychosocial, and spiritual aspects of care.
- Correctional nurses reach out to community/public health, re-entry and/or specialty care professionals to provide for continuity of the individual's therapeutic care plan.
- Correctional nurses build strong relationships with correctional officers for maintenance of a safe, clean, and secure environment for incarcerated persons, staff, and visitors.
- Correctional nurses engage in collaborative interpersonal team planning based on mutual trust, respect, open discussion, and shared decision-making, recognizing the value and contributions of each team member.

5. A strong link exists between the professional work environment and the professional nurse's ability to provide quality care and achieve optimal outcomes.

- Correctional nurses recognize that the obligations of their practice do not diminish or change because of the environment in which they practice.
- Correctional nurses have an ethical obligation to maintain and improve healthcare practices, avoid cynicism, and foster a health work environment (ANA 2015a).
- Evidence suggests that negative, demoralizing, and unsafe conditions in the workplace contribute to patient care errors, ineffective care delivery, and conflict and stress among health professionals. This is an important factor in patient safety, quality, care and treatment, best patient outcomes, advocacy, job satisfaction, recruitment, and retention.

6. All correctional nurses promote quality patient care.

- Correctional nursing practice is guided by nurse administrators and leaders who foster professional and personal development through application of fair and

equitable policies and procedures. Sensitive to employee needs, they promote knowledge of the specialty's scope and standards of practice and encourage continuing education, certification, and participation in professional organizations.

- Correctional nurses are responsible for overseeing the delivery of health care and hold an important role in developing, directing, and guiding other members of the healthcare team as specified by licensure.
- Correctional registered nurses assume leadership responsibilities for a variety of licensed and unlicensed staff members.

7. Correctional nurses demonstrate compassion and caring within secure facilities.

- Correctional nurses use truthful and respectful communication when interacting with patients.
- Correctional nurses employ intentional and nonjudgmental listening during patient encounters.
- Correctional nurses provide care that is age appropriate and culturally competent.
- Correctional nurses practice strategies for self-awareness and moral actions to transform the intent to do the right thing into reality. This includes moral ownership, moral efficacy, and moral courage (Gentile 2010).