

Nursing Theories List

Nursing theories list serves as a reference tool for nurses, educators, researchers, and students to explore and understand the foundational concepts and perspectives that shape the nursing profession.

Grand theories

Nursing theory	Founder/ Developer	Year developed	Main concepts/Principles
Theory of human caring	Jean Watson	1979	Emphasizes the importance of the nurse-patient relationship and caring as central to nursing practice. Focuses on promoting healing through authentic presence, compassionate care, and therapeutic touch.
Theory of health as expanding consciousness	Margaret A. Newman	1970s	Explores the concept of health as a process of expanding consciousness, transcending illness to achieve higher levels of awareness and well-being. Emphasizes the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit in the healing process and the importance of holistic nursing care.
Behavioral system model	Dorothy E. Johnson	1959	Views individuals as behavioral systems, seeking balance and equilibrium. Emphasizes nursing interventions aimed at helping individuals maintain stability in their biological, psychological, and social domains.

Middle-range theories

Nursing theory	Founder/ Developer	Year developed	Main concepts/Principles
Theory of comfort	Katherine Kolcaba	1990s	Its primary objective is to provide clients with comfort, aiming to initiate three stages of comfort: relief, ease, and transcendence.
Self-care deficit theory	Dorothea Orem	1950s to 2001	Centers on the concept that patients desire to care for themselves but may require assistance. Nurses empower patients to perform self-care activities independently, gradually transitioning them towards increased autonomy as they progress.
Theory of goal attainment	Imogene M. King	1960s	Focuses on the nurse-patient relationship and the mutual goal-setting process to achieve optimal health outcomes. Emphasizes the importance of communication, interaction, and goal clarity in facilitating goal attainment.

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Theory of cultural care diversity and universality	Madeleine Leininger	1960s	Explores the importance of cultural competence in nursing practice and the need to provide care that respects and accommodates cultural diversity. Emphasizes the significance of understanding and integrating cultural beliefs, practices, and values into nursing care to provide culturally congruent care.
Practice theories			
Nursing theory	Founder/ Developer	Year developed	Main concepts/Principles
Tidal model	Phil Barker	1990s	Integrates nursing and psychiatry to support individuals experiencing distress through the 10 Commitments, including valuing the patient's voice, fostering genuine curiosity, and guiding patients toward self-discovery and empowerment.
Cultural care theory	Madeleine Leininger	1950s	Emphasizes aligning nursing care with the patient's cultural beliefs and values to provide culturally congruent care. Incorporates the individual's religious beliefs, cultural practices, and values into nursing interventions.
Health promotion model	Nola J. Pender	1982	Focuses on promoting health and preventing illness by addressing individuals' perceptions of health, modifying behavior, and encouraging self-efficacy.
Theory of bureaucratic caring	Marilyn Anne Ray	1981	Extends the concept of caring to the organizational level, emphasizing caring relationships among nurses, patients, and the healthcare system. Focuses on fostering a caring environment within bureaucratic structures to promote healing and well-being.
Theory of integral nursing	Barbara Dossey	1985	Integrates traditional nursing knowledge with holistic, mind-body-spirit approaches to promote healing and well-being. Emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of human experience and the importance of addressing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions in nursing care.
Theory of unpleasant symptoms	Lorraine M. Wright	2000s	Addresses the management of unpleasant symptoms experienced by patients with chronic illnesses. Focuses on assessing, understanding, and alleviating symptoms to improve quality of life and promote comfort.

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Theory of thriving	Elizabeth Ann Manhart Barrett	2008	Focuses on promoting thriving, rather than merely surviving, in individuals experiencing health challenges. Emphasizes resilience, personal growth, and empowerment in navigating health crises and achieving optimal well-being.

Additional comments