

## **Personal Philosophy in Nursing:**

Have you defined your personal philosophy of nursing?

Whether you realize it or not, many factors influence your perceptions of this important profession.

Each person has intrinsic beliefs that play a role in their own philosophies. When considering how to write a personal philosophy of nursing, first think about what is important to you.

Your beliefs are a product of:

- Your interactions with patients,
- Patient families and other healthcare professionals,
- The knowledge you obtained from the classroom.

Defining your philosophy provides you with a deeper connection to those beliefs and the values that initially led you into the profession. It can also help you strengthen your knowledge, attitude, and skills

### **Defining a Personal Philosophy of Nursing**

“Nursing theory”, as defined by Peggy L. Chinn and Maeona K. Kramer (authors), is “a creative and rigorous structuring of ideas that project a tentative, purposeful, and systematic view of phenomena”.

In other words, as a current or aspiring nurse, you have beliefs about what nursing means to you. Those beliefs affect your decisions, actions, and reactions.

Because your theories and philosophies affect the choices you make every day, it is only right to identify them.

One place to start is with your leadership styles.

Some people are more aware of their underlying beliefs while some uncover them through the exercises described in this article.

What is your personal philosophy of nursing? It is the sum of your beliefs; what it is, what it is not, and what it can be.

### **A Personal Philosophy of Nursing for Students**

You deeply relate to the values, skills, and traits that you feel a nurse must embody.

*In a profession as important as nursing, being in touch with your “why” is crucial.*

Studying to become a nurse would indicate you have found your life’s purpose. Your “why” directly relates to that purpose. But do you really know why you are seeking to begin a career in nursing specifically?

Defining a personal philosophy of nursing is your way of uncovering what fuels your passion for this exciting profession.

Understanding this “why” will help you become connected mentally and emotionally to your work. It is no secret that connection plays a significant role in nursing.

Your personal nursing philosophies may mirror your general philosophies on life. The fact is, “philosophy” is just another word for beliefs.

*So then, what do you believe in? What is your nursing values and beliefs statement?*

When you answer that, you will begin to uncover your deeper philosophies.

### **How to Write a Personal Philosophy of Nursing**

It is very common for nursing students to be assigned the task of writing a personal philosophy of nursing.

Preceptors and instructors often hand down this assignment to get their students thinking in new ways. It’s also helpful in preparing new nursing graduates for their first job interviews.

However, students may not feel that they have developed a philosophy yet. This can create confusion for students who have yet to become working nurses.

This assignment is relevant because it requires students to think critically about the profession they plan to enter.

*Each person likely already has a philosophy, they just have yet to formally define it.*

Begin defining your personal philosophy of the nursing profession by first answering the questions below:

1. What is nursing?
2. Why is it important to me?
3. What does a nurse bring to society?
4. Who makes a great nurse?
5. What qualities and skills are important for nurses?
6. Which values should every nurse have?
7. What mistakes should a nurse never make?

Creating this list will prompt you to begin clarifying your personal philosophy of nursing.

Once you have answered these questions, the odds are you will be feeling very connected to your beliefs.

This will make it easier for you to combine them into an overall philosophy. Expanding your individual answers into a complete philosophy can be accomplished through the following exercise:

#### *STEP 1*

**Begin by defining exactly what nursing means to you personally.**

This is not a formal definition; seek to weave your answers from above into explanatory sentences.

#### *STEP 2*

**Include one story (or more) that elaborates on some of your values, traits, and skills.**

Consider describing how and why you embody them with examples of philosophy of nursing from your life.

#### *STEP 3*

**Discuss how you personally intend to impact society through your nursing.**

Some personal nursing philosophy examples include using your nursing to better-privileged communities or to make an impact in home care environments.

*STEP 4*

**Close by highlighting the values, traits, and skills that mean the most to you.**

If you can, tie these qualities into your past, current or planned future experiences.