

# Extraordinary Nursing Practice



# Extraordinary Nursing Practice:

*Multiple Roles, Caring Practices*

Edited by

Zane Robinson Wolf and

Mary Ellen Wright

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Extraordinary Nursing Practice: Multiple Roles, Caring Practices

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I dedicate this book to my loving family: my husband, Charles J. Wolf, my children, Jessica Wolf Donnelly, Zana Wolf DeProspro, and Kerrin C. Wolf, and my grandchildren, Ciara Anne Dasher, Rory Ellen Dasher, Elizabeth Celia Wolf, Robinson Michael Wolf, and Zane Leo DeProspro.

I dedicate this book to my loving husband David Cook, my children Mary Lou Wilson, Thomas Robertson, and Victoria Hood, and my sweet grandchildren, Maddie Grubbs, Clara Wilson, Henry Wilson, and Annie Lou Hood.

We dedicate this book to all nurses across the globe.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	xi
List of Tables.....	xii
Foreword .....	xiii
<i>Bonnie Barnes, DHL(hc), FAAN</i>	
Preface.....	xv
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN</i>	
<i>Mary Ellen Wright, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, FIAAN, FAAN</i>	
Acknowledgments .....	xix
Chapter 1 .....	1
Extraordinary Nursing Caring Practices, Multiple Roles	
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN</i>	
<i>Mary Ellen Wright, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, FIAAN, FAAN</i>	
Chapter 2 .....	25
Critical Care Nurses: Extraordinary Nursing in Volatile Practice Situations	
<i>Catherine Stubin, PhD, RN, CNE, CCRN-K</i>	
<i>Luciene Mendonca-Cali, PhD, RN</i>	
Chapter 3 .....	39
Community Health Nursing: Extraordinary Nursing Caring for Persons	
Using Folkloric Health and Wellness Practices	
<i>Charlotte Barry, PhD, RN, FAAN</i>	
<i>Rudolf Cymorr Kirby P. Martinez, PhD, RN</i>	
<i>Katherine E. Heinze, PhD, RN</i>	
Chapter 4 .....	60
Psychiatric-Mental Health Advanced Practice Nurses: Extraordinary	
Nurses' Caring in Primary Care Practice`	
<i>Beth King, PhD, APRN, PMHCNS-BC, PMHNP-BC</i>	
<i>Lisa Alberts, DNP, APRN-BC, PMHNP-BC</i>	
<i>Sara E. Banzhaf, DNP, APRN-NP, PMHNP-BC</i>	

Chapter 5 .....	81
Palliative Care Nursing of Children: Extraordinary Nursing	
Caring for Children Experiencing Serious, Chronic, or Medically	
Complex Illnesses and Their Families	
<i>Beth Fisher, DNP, APRN, CPNP, CPON, CHPPN</i>	
<i>Mary Ellen Wright, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, FIAAN, FAAN</i>	
Chapter 6 .....	94
Chief Nurse Executive and Chief Nursing Officer:	
Extraordinary Nurse Leadership	
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN</i>	
<i>Mary O'Connor, PhD, RN, CENP, FACHE, FAONL</i>	
Chapter 7 .....	132
Nurses Caring for People Experiencing Homelessness: Extraordinary	
Nursing in Community Settings	
<i>Anna Brown Simon, DNP, MSN, RN, BA, BSN, CRNP</i>	
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN</i>	
Chapter 8 .....	156
Medical-Surgical Nursing: Extraordinary Nursing in Medical-Surgical	
Nursing Situations	
<i>Claudia Grobbel, DNP, RN, CNL</i>	
<i>Lynda Poly-Droulard, EdD, MSN, MEd, RN, CNE</i>	
Chapter 9 .....	185
Women's Health Nurses and Nurse Midwives: Extraordinary Nursing	
Serving the Health Needs of Women	
<i>Mary Ellen Wright, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, FIAAN, FAAN</i>	
<i>Casey Hopkins, PhD, APRN, WHNP-BC</i>	
<i>Lisa Miller, PhD, FNP</i>	
<i>Susan Cheek-Williams, CNM</i>	
Chapter 10 .....	203
School Nursing Excellence	
<i>Raquel Brown, PhD, RN, CNE</i>	
<i>Shirley Gordon, PhD, RN, NCSN, AHN-BC, HWNC-BC</i>	



Chapter 11 .....	222
Addiction Nurses: Extraordinary Nursing Caring for Persons with Substance Use Disorder	
<i>Mary Ellen Wright, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, FIAAN, FAAN</i>	
<i>Kendra Allison, PhD, RN</i>	
Chapter 12 .....	243
Nurses Elected to Legislative Positions in State and Federal Governments and the Collective Voices of Professional Nursing Organizations: Extraordinary Nursing	
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN</i>	
Chapter 13 .....	268
Nurse Scientists: Extraordinary Nursing in Theory Testing and Knowledge Generation	
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN</i>	
Chapter 14 .....	291
Rural Health Nurses: Extraordinary Nursing of Caregivers of Persons with Dementia in Rural Communities Addressing Family and Friend Support	
<i>Dorothy Dunn, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, AHN-BC, CDP</i>	
Chapter 15 .....	307
Global Health Nursing: Extraordinary Nursing During Mission Trips	
<i>Mary L. Wilby, PhD, MSN, MPH, RN, CRNP, ANP-BC</i>	
<i>M. Arlene LeMin, DNP, MSN-Ed., RN, CNOR, RNFAE</i>	
Chapter 16 .....	351
Nurse Educators: Extraordinary Nursing in Academic and Clinical Roles	
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE ANEF, FAAN</i>	
Chapter 17 .....	379
Nurses Serving in the Armed Forces: Extraordinary Nurses Safeguarding Those in Harm's Way	
<i>Lt. Col. Regina D. Owen, DNP, PMHNP-BC, USAF</i>	
<i>Connie Braybrook, DNP, PMHNP-BC, CDR, NC</i>	
<i>Danette Cruthirds PhD, MSN, CRNA, LTC (ret.), AN</i>	

Chapter 18 .....	410
Nurse Anesthesiologists: Extraordinary Nursing for Persons Needing Anesthesia Care	
<i>Christopher Giberson, PhD, MBA, CRNA</i>	
<i>Zane Robinson Wolf, PhD, RN, CNE, ANEF, FAAN</i>	
Chapter 19 .....	429
Pediatric Nurses: Extraordinary Nursing for Children with Multisystem, Chronic Conditions	
<i>Janice A. Selekman, DNSc, RN, NCSN, FNASN (ret.)</i>	
<i>Kathleen Monforto, PhD, RN</i>	
Glossary .....	458
Contributors and Affiliations .....	464
Index .....	467

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Fig. 17-1</b>	<i>The Sacred Twenty</i> .....	382
<b>Fig. 17-2</b>	<i>Army Nursing Leader Capabilities Map</i> .....	385
<b>Fig. 17-3</b>	<i>Navy Nurse Corps Career Pathway</i> .....	389
<b>Fig. 17-4</b>	<i>USAF Nurse Corps Officer Career Progression</i> .....	393
<b>Fig. 19-1</b>	<i>The Pediatric Nursing Excellence Model</i> .....	451

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 3-1</b>	<i>Questions and Explanations Building Nursing Situations .....</i>	42
<b>Table 3-2</b>	<i>Questions and Concepts Guiding the Nursing Situation .....</i>	53
<b>Table 10-1</b>	<i>NASN Special Interest Groups and Awards.....</i>	217
<b>Table 12-1</b>	<i>PSNA Priorities and Legislative Victories.....</i>	250
<b>Table 15-1</b>	<i>Mission Trip Checklist for Mission Trip Group Leaders.....</i>	313
<b>Table 15-2</b>	<i>Intraoperative Educational Modules on Pediatric Cardiac Care for Host Nurse Training During Surgical Mission Trips.....</i>	326
<b>Table 17-1</b>	<i>Army Nurse Corps Areas of Concentration.....</i>	386

## FOREWORD

BONNIE BARNES, DHL(HC), FAAN

It is no secret that I am not a nurse. Being an Honorary Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, I love attending the Academy's annual policy conference and learning about advancements in policy, education, and leadership. But I admit to often feeling slightly overwhelmed by the brainpower and expertise of the many nurses in the room. At the 2023 conference, I was delighted to be seated next to Zane Wolf at dinner. Knowing Zane only by reputation, I asked her what she was working on at the time. When she told me she and Mary Ellen Wright were writing a book about "extraordinary nursing," I sat up a little straighter. Aha! A subject I know a little about and might be able to converse articulately about with Zane, my "dinner partner." After all, since 1999, I have dedicated my life to honoring and celebrating the compassionate care of extraordinary nurses through The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses. My husband, Mark, and I started DAISY to pay tribute to the incredible care we experienced during my stepson Patrick's 8-week hospitalization with the auto-immune disease ITP. With Patrick's wife, Tena, when Patrick died, all we wanted to do was to say thank you to nurses and to give other patients and families a way to express their gratitude to their nurses for the difference they make in their healthcare experiences. So we created a meaningful recognition program for extraordinary care that today honors nurses in many thousands of healthcare facilities and nursing schools internationally.

Coming back to the Academy dinner, Zane told me about the scholarly nature of the book Mary Ellen and she were working on. I talked about the thousands of DAISY Award recipients' nomination stories that reveal how nurses are extraordinary in the eyes of the people they touch. These stories are very often emotional descriptions of what a nurse did for a patient or family during the worst days of their lives, providing above-and-beyond care that the patient will never forget. Or the unexpected attention a faculty member paid to a struggling nursing student that enabled that student to overcome barriers and finish school, going on to become a skillful, compassionate nurse. Or what a nurse manager or other leader did for her/his team to support them, to fight for them through difficult times of the pandemic, understaffing, and other challenges.

DAISY honors nurses wherever they practice, wherever they are in their careers, and these extraordinary Honorees' impact is profound throughout our society. So at dinner, Zane and I could feel the strong connection between the theoretical framework for extraordinary nursing, the research-based descriptions of extraordinary nurses that Mary Ellen and she delve into in this book, and the very personal descriptions of how the recipients of nurses' care view and describe extraordinary nursing in DAISY Award nominations.

I was surprised and truly honored when Zane and Mary Ellen asked me to write this foreword. Even with decades of learning through DAISY about what makes nursing extraordinary, I have learned from their work. This book helped me understand extraordinary nursing from an academic perspective—providing an understanding that is brought to life by the DAISY exemplars the authors include in the book. The DAISY Foundation is dedicated to helping the public and policy-makers value nursing's unique and vital role in our society by making extraordinary nursing more visible, even to people who have not yet experienced it personally. This book will help many more nurses understand what it means to be an extraordinary nurse, no matter where or in what capacity or specialty you practice. I sincerely hope you will find it as illuminating and inspiring as I do.

P.S. I sincerely thank the Academy for somehow putting Zane and me together at dinner! What a gift!

## PREFACE

ZANE ROBINSON WOLF,  
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The idea for a book on Extraordinary Nursing Practice surfaced on the last day of the 2023 Summer Academy of the Anne Boykin Institute for the Advancement of Caring in Nursing. The Academy's theme, *Aesthetics-Representing Caring Values through Art*, focused on the dialog that year, with conversations centered on caring science as framed by aesthetics.

Consistent with the action orientation of the last day of Summer Academies, the group reflected on the next steps as inspired by the conversations. The idea of a book on extraordinary nursing practice emerged. We decided to highlight various roles of nursing and exemplars of extraordinary nursing in selected nursing situations, framed in Boykin and Schoenhofer's Nursing as Caring theory, Carper's ways of knowing, and Locsin's technological knowing as caring.

Our goals for this book on Extraordinary Nursing: Multiple Roles, Caring Practices are:

- To explore extraordinary nursing practice as performed by nurses in various roles.
- To describe the complexities of nursing roles through the perspectives of relevant literature, stories or nursing situations, and patterns of knowing.
- To analyze how applying a nursing theory to illustrate different nursing roles contributes to understanding the diversity of nursing practice in health care systems and communities.
- To identify professional organizations that recognize the extraordinary performance of excellent nurses through specialty certification, awards, and project funding.

Nurses make an impression when responding to many multifaceted situations in which patients, clients, nurses, and groups demonstrate a need

for caring. We know that people experiencing extraordinary nursing recognize the nurses who created an extraordinary experience for them. Nurses' performance excels, stands out as an example of a caring response in a nursing situation, and supports the culture of patient-centered care.

The first chapter sets the stage for the chapters on specific roles by exploring extraordinary nursing practice of nurses in various positions. Literature on excellent, extraordinary nursing is reviewed. Concepts from a nursing theory and a knowledge taxonomy guide interpretations of the nursing stories or situations by extraordinary nurses and illuminate them. A definition of extraordinary nursing practice is presented. The book is enhanced by a Glossary of evidenced-based terms used throughout the book.

The chapters on different roles are supported by literature including classic and theoretical work and research citations. They follow a consistent format overall and vary by length and creativity of contributors. Stories in the chapters illustrate the specific roles explored. They are termed nursing situations, written as narratives by nurses that performed each role or observers that witnessed the situations. The nursing situations are interpreted briefly using components of Nursing as Caring theory (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2001/2003). Carper's (1978) taxonomy on ways of knowing (empirics or science of nursing, aesthetics or art of nursing, personal knowledge in nursing, ethics or moral), and technological knowing (Locsin, 2005; Locsin, 2016) are applied to briefly interpret each nursing situation. The nursing situations shed light on the experiences of nurses implementing each role when employed in various positions.

The basic premise of Nursing as Caring theory (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2001/2003) is that all people are innately caring as humans. People grow in caring and develop caring ways throughout their lives; they have many opportunities to express themselves as caring individuals. An essential concept of the theory is the nursing situation; it is a shared lived experience in which the caring that unfolds between the nurse and the person nursed and enhances both as they live and grow as caring people.

Within each nursing situation, a nurse or a group of nurses attends to a call for nursing and creates caring responses that nurture the person's individual qualities, such as a patient or nurse who is cared for. Both nurture each other as caring people, moment to moment during a relationship, and learn about each other as caring individuals.

Extraordinary nurses are extraordinary caring people who develop caring competencies throughout their careers. In addition to the descriptions of the roles examined in this book, the nursing situations and discussions of



them offer readers more details about nursing practices and reveal the meaningfulness of nursing.

Although extraordinary nurses receive awards and funding for research that recognize their exceptional performance, their greatest achievements may be in the interpersonal relationships they develop, short-term, long-term, or in the moment, through a commitment to the people for whom they answer the call for nursing. Their roles confirm the critical place and contributions of nursing practice in health care systems and in the community. Extraordinary nursing practice is:

...defined as intentional, transformative, awe-inspiring professional work that enhances the dance of caring people to live caring and grow in caring. Nursing is exclusive; it is unique because of the people served and what is important to those individuals *in the moment*, the nursing situation in which the caring is expressed. Nursing practice is based on knowledge, values, and clinical experience. Extraordinary nurses know what to do in situations that others might judge as hazardous, or when performing ordinary or commonly performed, taken-for-granted nursing activities. They hear and answer the call for nursing in the complex contexts of everyday nursing work and demonstrate uncommon competence when interconnecting, caring for, and centered on the problems or issues discerned during the call. Extraordinary nurses co-create interdependent relationships and experiences with patients, family, and community members that help them to know the people in the situation and act on what is important to them. As situations develop, contingent on varied, particular changes, the practices of nurse caring unfold in time. When nurses *get it right* for patients and others, they are satisfied, even joyful, with their caring work (Aasbø, et al., 2018; Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2021; Hirschhorn, 2006; Lake et al., 2021; MacLeod, 1994; Williams, 2010).

We decided to end each chapter with reflection questions. We thought that the book could be used as a required textbook for undergraduate and graduate nursing courses. The book also can inform nurses and the public of the different roles of nursing with examples of caring that may encourage retention in nursing, advocate for nursing practice, and reinvigorate the meaning of nursing.

We are thankful to our colleagues who wrote each chapter and to those who provided the nursing situations or who inspired nursing situations. As we look toward the future, we think that book series could continue to explore different nursing roles and their extraordinary examples.

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# CHAPTER 1

## EXTRAORDINARY NURSING WORK: CARING PRACTICES, MULTIPLE ROLES

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MARY ELLEN WRIGHT,  
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### Learning Outcomes

1. Examine the characteristics of extraordinary nursing practices.
2. Describe the commitment of nurse leaders and professional and global organizations to providing external recognition of nursing excellence.
3. Explore concepts of Nursing as Caring theory and ways/patterns of knowing as applied to nursing situations.

### Introduction

This chapter explores extraordinary nursing practices. It examines the related literature on extraordinary nursing work, offers a brief narrative on extraordinary nurses' characteristics, and defines extraordinary nursing work conceptually based on content analysis. Next, it frames extraordinary nursing practices in the theoretical perspectives and components of the Nursing as Caring theory (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2001/2003). The taxonomy on ways of knowing by Carper (1978) is also incorporated into the book's theoretical framework; a description of technological knowing is added (Locsin, 2005; 2016). Lastly, the future of nursing is anticipated. The profession's crucial place in health care systems is confirmed due to the effect of caring practices provided by nurses and all health care providers

for all humans. A Glossary is added to clarify the meaning of terms and concepts and found at the end of the book.

## **Contexts and Roles of Extraordinary Nursing Practices**

Extraordinary nursing work is often noticeable in the caring practices nurses perform in multiple, diverse workplaces; yet some practices are less obvious, even hidden, and seldom heralded. In each setting, nurses use their professional knowledge in nursing situations when answering the calls for nursing from patients and others (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2001/2003). They acquire more knowledge through experience when intentionally engaging in the work before them and creating solutions to problems. They provide nursing services as individuals who are caring, live in caring, and ideally grow in caring (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 1993). Similarly, patients, families, and communities are cared for and live and grow in caring.

Nurses' clinical practices constitute relationship-based, moral, caring practices (Kollerup et al., 2023). Traditional nursing practices include the many behaviors and tasks associated with holistic, bedside care. Nursing practices are demonstrated through a multitude of roles whereby nurses live caring as they care for people of many ages and circumstances. For example, staff nurses, clinical nurse specialists, and nurse practitioners care for patients in different specialties, such as internal medicine, critical care, women's health, and pediatrics in primary care and acute care settings. Nurse leaders care for nursing staff in hospitals, sub-acute institutions, and long-term care facilities, as chief nurse administrators, program directors, midlevel administrators, and charge nurses. Nurse teachers instruct nursing staff in many health care institutions and nursing students in academic organizations as they transmit the values and skills of the nursing profession. Nurses also care for patients at the end of life in hospices and settings by providing palliative care for older people and individuals with cancer and other diseases. Nurses answer the call for nursing from neonates, children, and all people across the lifespan.

Nurses work outside of hospitals in the community. They visit patients at home post hospitalization and when needing rehabilitation care; they offer public health services supporting the health of populations and outreach health care services after disasters and during mission trips. Nurses are policy makers, endorsers, and transmitters in consultation with professional and governmental organizations and legislatures. Nurse scientists create and replicate research and generate and test theories pertinent to the profession and discipline of nursing; they function in clinical and academic settings.

## **Extraordinary Nursing: Ordinary and Extraordinary Situations**

Nurses provide essential health care services to the global community. They implement the profession's social compact daily (Fowler, 2015), caring for patients, families, groups, and communities in ordinary and extremely risky circumstances. Caring services are one element of nursing's social compact as is the expectation of giving hazardous service in situations that are unusual for other occupations (Fowler, 2015).

An example of hazardous work highlights the societal importance of nurses' work. Newscasts showed the dedicated, devoted, and substantive commitment of nurses as they cared for patients and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. They confronted great uncertainty. They met the challenges of the extremely stressful nursing work needed to care for seriously ill and dying patients and remotely connected families. Nurses showed up in spite of fears about infecting their own families. Their heroism often attracts attention in the face of epidemics, natural disasters, wars, and terroristic events but less noticeably in everyday nursing situations where excellence also prevails.

## **Focusing on Transformative, Excellent Nurses and Nursing Practices: Related Literature**

It was important to search for and analyze the literature on extraordinary nurses and nursing practices. The challenge was to profile extraordinary nurses by describing their specific characteristics because behaviors that indicate superior nursing practice need to be shared and emulated. Also, accounts of nursing excellence must be broadly disseminated so that this part of the nursing profession's story is told.

A review of the literature was conducted to frame the discussion on extraordinary nursing work. Summon, CINAHL, PubMed, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global databases were searched with no date delimiter, except for limiting the search to the 12 most recent years in the last database. *Extraordinary, nursing, practice, research, and ordinary* were search terms used in various combinations. *Transformative, excellence, and story* were added later with the term *students* excluded. Surprisingly, little literature was located. As the parts of the chapter were developed and the search for examples of extraordinary and excellent nurses continued, additional references were found.

## External Recognition of Nursing Excellence: Its Importance

Although many nurses appreciate the extraordinary nurses with whom they work and can describe their excellent characteristics, they typically share anecdotes with colleagues that are not recorded. However, one article encouraged submissions of accounts in praise of nurses. *The Standard*, a journal produced by the College of Nurses of Ontario Canada (2012; 2023), publishes stories in praise of nurses. The stories are an opportunity to share outstanding nursing care performed by extraordinary nurses. They are submitted by patients and families who share descriptions of nursing excellence.

The DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Award is a recognition program for excellent nurses. Through this program, the Family of J. Patrick Barnes honors “..the super-human work nurses do for patients and families every day” (DAISY Foundation, para 1). Anyone who experiences or observes extraordinary compassionate care provided by a nurse is invited to thank that nurse (Barnes et al., 2016). Since 1999, J. Patrick Barnes’s family has connected with healthcare institutions and nursing schools in the United States and 35 countries and territories. The Award impacts nurse satisfaction, retention, teamwork, and other organizational outcomes.

The DAISY Award celebrates the art of nursing, expresses gratitude for a nurse’s performance, and provides meaningful recognition to nurses (Lefton, 2012). Criteria for extraordinary nursing work are determined by the workplace and nomination forms are available. Nominees describe their extraordinary nurses’ excellence. The DAISY Award shows that the nurse honoree stands out among peers. The award is very important to recipients in the moment of acknowledgment and some nurses may reminisce about the award throughout their lives (Lefton, 2012).

The award celebrates nurses’ impact on others. Nominations for the DAISY Award and winning the award signify that the actions nurses took had an impressive effect on patients, family members, students, colleague nurses, and others. In addition to the personal experience of receiving a DAISY Award, other effects are experienced. To increase understanding about the meaningful recognition associated with a DAISY Award, Lefton (2012) conducted descriptive qualitative study using content analysis. The content analysis at first established initial themes on 50 DAISY nominations; patterns of behavior considered recognition-worthy were identified. Next, 710 nominations were analyzed followed by 2,195 nominations, or explicit descriptions, on blinded DAISY Award recipients and were analyzed using analytic software. Also, 42 randomly selected honorees were interviewed to determine the individual impact of the award regarding this meaningful recognition. Chief nursing officers ( $n = 21$ ) were also



interviewed about perceptions of the cultural influences resulting from the award resulting from nurse recognition.

The value of nursing was elevated through this world-wide grant program. Lefton's (2012) study triangulated data sources and the findings showed the richness and benefit of this nurse-centric, philanthropic initiative. As an exploration of the art of nursing, the findings of the DAISY Award, available through Lefton's study, illustrate that nursing care is made up of behaviors that complement tasks. For example, *genuine compassion and caring* was the highest rank theme. *Reeks of professionalism* and *contagious positive attitude* followed. The study validates the moments of a nursing situation in which the nurse's assessment skills and sense of the clinical and psychological needs of patients, families, and peers invite a response to meet those needs in a way that was meaningful to the people nursed. The DAISY Award impacts nurses' self-esteem, strengthens the bonds among healthcare team members, and increases patients' and families' satisfaction with care, all crucial outcomes.

Another study supported the contributions of the DAISY Award. A retrospective qualitative study was conducted on DAISY Award nominations. Clavelle et al. (2019) analyzed comments from the 2016 database of 52,711 DAISY recognition narratives. They invited 3 organizations using an IPC technology platform to record DAISY Award nominations and signed a data use agreement. A total of 1,577 narratives were selected and screened; those with fewer than 5 words were eliminated, with 971 comments analyzed. Patented AI technology was used for analysis, with several natural language processing and machine learning techniques for sentiment classification. Insights were categorized into predetermined themes; behaviors were verified by expert linguists. Five core or major themes and various behaviors were reported: courtesy and respect (highest ranked, 22 behaviors,  $n = 622$ , 64%), skill and knowledge (7 behaviors, 10%,  $n = 98$ ), reliability/scheduling (7 behaviors, 6%,  $n = 58$ ), explanation (7 behaviors, 5%,  $n = 52$ ), and listening (6 behaviors, 3%,  $n = 31$ ).

The 971 behaviors described the many characteristics observed and recorded by reporters such as patients, family members, nurses, and physicians (Clavelle et al., 2019). The highest ranked core theme, *courtesy and respect*, suggests that as nurses practice they live the ethical principle of respect for human dignity.

In addition, the Lefton's (2012) and Clavelle et al.'s (2029) studies, other initiatives promote the value of praising extraordinary nursing. Excellent nursing practice has been a long-term focus of the profession and is of global interest (Manyazewal et al., 2022). One of the characteristics of Magnet® Status nursing organizations has been the recognition of excellence in

nursing practice (Aiken & Patrician, 2000; Curtis, 2023). Many institutions have acknowledged nurse excellence during Nurses' Week and through other events.

Additionally, the American Nurses Association (n.d.) supports The Pathway Nurse of the Year Award™ in recognition of the excellent contributions of a nurse leader, a direct care nurse, and a nurse partner globally in Pathway-designated organizations. Different states have implemented the 100 Great Nurses Award (Great 100 Nurses Foundation, n.d.). Nurse heroes show concern for humanity, contribute to the nursing profession, and mentor others.

In contrast to the recognition of nursing staff excellence, chief nurse executives (CNEs) were concerned about the lack of evidence for measuring the outcomes of the CNE role (Adams et al., 2009). They developed a knowledge-based framework for clarifying role expectations and measuring the performance of CNEs and for transforming their practice to achieve excellence. The model merged concepts of leadership, environments, and outcomes so that CNE success could be evaluated. The model is known as MILE ONE (model of interrelationship of leadership, environments, and outcomes for nurse executives). CNEs' influence on the professional practice/work environments and patient and organizational outcomes was targeted.

The model was applied to a project in a community hospital with a clinical interdisciplinary documentation redesign project as a target (Adams et al., 2010). Staff champions and nurses engaged in initiatives because of the support of leaders. They "owned" organizational outcomes. One staff nurse felt revitalized by the staff-led project teams that demanded excellence.

In another example of a commitment to nursing excellence, a shared governance model was created for registered nurses (RNs) in long-term care settings (Lyons et al., 2008). As a small percentage of nursing staff in these settings, with most holding administrative positions, RNs do not provide the direct nursing care for residents. The authors shared an example when a professional practice model was implemented over 4 years in a long-term care setting; RN autonomy and quality outcomes increased. These changes were attributed to meetings during which RNs discussed resident care and practice issues.

The authors (Lyons et al., 2008) next applied the Everyday Excellence framework to target RN professional development and institutional development of a culture promoting RN clinical decision making. Components of the model were based on literature, prominent nursing care quality initiatives, and nursing home excellence. Literature on eldercare was reviewed, specifically on nursing home quality and value statements about care

initiatives. The assumptions of the framework were that RNs working in nursing homes could create, implement, and sustain practice models based on eight principles of excellence. The principles of excellence are valuing, envisioning, peopling, securing, learning, empowering, leading, and advancing excellence. The Everyday Excellence Framework includes principles, definitions, and components to guide RNs to address the challenges of resident care.

Additional examples demonstrate an ongoing concern of nurses with addressing excellent nursing practice. Some authors assume that extraordinary nurses' competence is similar to basic nursing practice abilities. For example, one study used a cross-sectional design study to describe the basic nursing competencies of intensive care unit nurses (Lakanmaa et al., 2015). The Intensive and Critical Care Nursing Competency Scale (ICCNCS) was administered; nurse respondents ( $N = 431$ ) self-assessed their competence. Two domains and their subdomains represented survey items; the *Clinical competence* domain's items included principles of nursing care, clinical guidelines, and nursing interventions and the *Professional competence* domain included ethical activity and familiarity with health care laws, decision-making, development work, and collaboration.

Autonomy in nursing care best explained nurses' basic competence, with overall clinical competence, directly related to nursing care, as good (Lakanmaa et al., 2005). The highest self-confidence rating for patient care, according to principles of nursing care or ethical standards, included justness, patient centeredness, recognition of abnormal vital signs, need of pain care, changes in skin condition, and need of fluid therapy. Attitude and value base were rated as excellent. This study's findings and the items on the ICCNCS suggest that although the competence of ICU nurses might be considered ordinary, that term may only be an "imaginative title" (Hill & Michael, 1996, p. 245).

Another study shared that achievement of professional excellence was important for hospital administrators and nurse academics. Researchers conducted a Delphi study (Paans et al., 2017) on characteristics that distinguished excellent nurses; they noted inconsistencies in the literature on how extraordinary nursing was conceptualized and interpreted. They referenced a lack of literature on the topic. The researchers first conducted focus group interviews to examine experienced nurses' perspectives and opinions on competencies that differentiated an excellent nurse. Six focus group interviews were conducted; three with nurses ( $n = 9$ ) working in hospitals and three with nurses ( $n = 24$ ) employed in mental health settings. A grounded theory method assisted researchers to aggregate and analyze verbatim transcriptions of audio recordings. The preliminary profile on characteristics

distinguishing an excellent nurse included domains and items for the Delphi study process. Two survey rounds obtained scaled responses from panelists (Phase I = 27 members, Phase II = 26 members). The Round II survey excluded two items and organized items into appropriate domains. The findings of focus group interviews and Delphi panel observations resulted in describing nine attributes or characteristics of the excellent nurse. The profile's attributes are analytical, communicative, cooperative, coordinating, disseminate knowledge, empathetic, evidence driven, innovative, and introspective.

Paans et al. (2017) explained that an excellent professional nurse was not necessarily an expert. The excellent nurse combines experience and knowledge and strives to gain experience in a shorter period of time by learning to act in a resourceful manner. An excellent nurse "...responds and performs appropriately in complex situations (e.g., stressful or unexpected situations) by employing an ensemble of particular competencies" (p. 8). Being empathic and having effective communication skills and interpersonal competence were essential for professional excellence. "Being cooperative, inspiring colleagues, disseminating knowledge, and aiming to improve quality care contribute to the feeling of power" (p. 8) in professional excellence.

More research is needed so that the characteristics of extraordinary nurses are described. Nursing students might be encouraged and inspired by the stories of nurses. Their stories celebrate successful nursing practices and the realities and promises of the profession.

### **Extraordinary, Excellent Nurses**

The following narrative description was formed based on an inductive analysis of empirical citations, peer reviewed articles, and news accounts (e.g., DAISY Award, CURE Magazine). A 3-column matrix was created with theme, citation, and interpretive statement column headings.

***Narrative on extraordinary nurses.*** The extraordinary work of nurses transforms patients' lives by accomplishing more than anticipated, according to patients and families. Their transformative practices are described as awe-inspiring; they *go above and beyond* expectations. Excellent nurses are independent, courageous, and confident and they function with personal integrity. Their work is intentional and action-oriented and demonstrates a high degree of responsibility in the care of patients. Like nurses described as expert or experienced, they are repositories of clinical expertise (MacLeod, 1995, p. 365, citing Lathlean, 1987).

Extraordinary nurses are cognitively adept. Although not visible, their intellectual ability can be assumed when responding to patient situations. Extraordinary nurses' clinical competence is highly sophisticated, multifaceted, and based on science, art, and experience.

These nurses are vigilant as they watch over patients. For example, nurses' monitoring skills help them sense that *something is going wrong*; their internal, early warning system is often mentioned in acute care situations. Extraordinary nurses pay attention to details about patients shaped by a holistic orientation; their focus is fine-tuned. Because of this expertise they save lives.

Extraordinary nurses build and maintain relationships with patients, families, and community members. They are effective, skilled communicators grounded in respect for the dignity of people served. Their attributes are patience, kindness, tactfulness, calmness, and gentleness. The artistry and creativity of excellent nurses is known through their ability to see potential outcomes for more than routine or typical goals for patients during moments of care.

Extraordinary nurses' care is patient centered. Their exceptional support is compassionate, comforting, nurturing, and helpful and affects patients' physical and emotional stability. These nurses know nursing care. Their knowledge, although not necessarily exclusive, is based on the empirical, aesthetic, ethical, personal, and technological knowledge and other sources of knowledge accumulated through study and by caring for former and current patients. Most likely their personal knowledge comes from their work with patients, augmented by reflection on actual work experiences.

The nursing care provided by extraordinary nurses affects patients' well-being. Changes are physical, emotional, and spiritual. The outcomes of people cared for may be more individualized and particular than the important, system-oriented outcomes of satisfaction with patient care and patient safety. Patients and others are transformed through nurses' amazing efforts.

The following conceptual definition is offered as an attempt to represent the nursing practices substantiated through the work of extraordinary nurses.

**Conceptual definition.** Extraordinary nursing practice is defined as intentional, transformative, awe-inspiring professional work that enhances the dance of caring people to live caring and grow in caring. Nursing is exclusive; it is unique because of the people served and what is important to those individuals *in the moment*, the nursing situation in which the caring is expressed. Nursing practice is based on knowledge, values, and clinical experience. Extraordinary nurses know what to do in situations that others might

judge as hazardous, or when performing ordinary or commonly performed, taken-for-granted nursing activities. They hear and answer the call for nursing in the complex contexts of everyday nursing work and demonstrate uncommon competence when interconnecting, caring for, and centered on the problems or issues discerned during the call. Extraordinary nurses co-create interdependent relationships and experiences with patients, family, and community members that help them to know the people in the situation and act on what is important to them. As situations develop, contingent on varied, particular changes, the practices of nurse caring unfold in time. When nurses *get it right* for patients and others, they are satisfied, even joyful, with their caring work (Aasbø et al., 2018; Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2001; Hirschhorn, 2006; Lake et al., 2021; MacLeod, 1994; Williams, 2001).

### **Nursing As Caring: Orientation and Definitions**

The Nursing as Caring theory by Boykin and Schoenhofer (2001) proposes that all people as humans are caring and that, through nurturing relationships evolving in time, both nurses and patients live caring and grow in caring and are whole in the moment. According to this theory, nurses recognize calls for nursing in other people, such as when they are vulnerable because of despair, illness, suffering, complex problems, or other challenges. The context of caring is lived in relational responsibilities that are nurturing. See the Glossary at the end of the book for definitions of important terms.

Nurses respond to people intentionally during nursing situations wherein person-to-person caring service is provided. The purpose and the possibility of nursing situations is that, when nurturing people, there are reciprocal opportunities for both caregivers and cared for to grow in caring. The nurse invites the person to be nursed to share that which matters to him or her at that moment.

Consistent with Caring as Nursing theory, caring is:

...the intentional and authentic presence of the nurse with another who is recognized as person living caring and growing in caring. Here, the nurse endeavors to come to know the other as caring person and seeks to understand how that person might be supported, sustained, and strengthened in his or her unique process of living caring and growing in caring. (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2001, p. 13)

The nursing situation, the locus of nursing, is defined as a shared lived experience in which the caring between the nurse and the nursed enhances personhood (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 2001). Through the experiences of nurses responding to the call for nursing, they develop relationships with