

The Role of Nurse Educator in the Health Team

by

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The changing trend in nursing care has brought an alteration in the role of the nurse educator also. Her functions and activities have to be synchronized to meet the health needs of the present society. The nurse prepared twenty five years ago, to give service to the sick and injured, is not competent to meet the health demands of present day unless she keeps herself informed of the new concepts and techniques. Accordingly the role of the nurse educator is considered as very significant in preparing the nurses to function efficiently in the health team in the changing world.

The nurse educator is a pivot in the health team. Her role is a dual one. On the one hand, she is a practitioner of her speciality, of imparting knowledge and skill to the nursing students, and on the other she is responsible for the promotion of the nursing education and the nursing profession.

The aim of nursing is to help the people to attain, retain and regain health. To meet the above goal the nurse educator has to prepare nurses to function as nurse practitioners for health promotion, disease prevention and rehabilitation. A nurse has also to be competent to take care of the ill, the injured and the infirm by creating therapeutic environment. The part played by the nurse educator is an essential one, namely the preparation of nurses, which she does by following a planned curriculum in a formal way. The nurse educator is also responsible to assist in the planning and implementation of curriculum of nursing. As a member of the faculty, she has to contribute positively to the intellectual and personal development of the students. One of her vital functions is to see that the students possess the professional etiquette that can be developed during the education period. She is also expected to help her pupils to unfold their potentialities and channelise these towards the right direction. She has to mould and give right shape to the new young buds entering the nursing profession. For that, a proper stimulating environment has to be provided by her to develop the positive attitudes towards nursing among the students.

A nurse educator is a change agent for the student nurses. The first change that should result in the student is an extended and increased fund of information and its depth of understanding. A teacher's aim should be to help the students to go from where they are to where they want to go. To help the students

to have meaningful experience the teacher must know the pupil as a person. It is also necessary that the teacher must strive to know herself. A teacher has to set proper examples to effect the pupil's attitudes. Some change will occur in students when the nurse educator will try to increase the student's ability to use her new knowledge and understanding in solving the patient's health problems and in meeting the health needs of the individual as well as of the community. She is also expected to enlarge the student's intellectual curiosity and her sense of satisfaction in a worthwhile accomplishment. Education can do this by fostering curiosity about what lies ahead and how they can progress by using and building upon the things they have already learnt. As a part of this broad responsibility to work for the growth of students, the nurse educator has a particular responsibility to improve her own personal and professional competence. This can be achieved only if she possesses a thorough knowledge of her own discipline and keeps abreast with latest developments. A teacher is, in a way, also a student throughout life and there is no end to education. She can live with this ideal by continuing her education, by attending seminars, refresher courses and workshops. Higher pursuits can only be achieved if one is of an inquisitive mind and keeps in touch with the latest books and current literature. The advances in technology and sciences have brought tremendous change in the medical field which has its impact on nursing as well. The present day nurse requires complex skills and practices especially in problem solving approach.

A nurse educator's responsibility towards the nursing profession cannot either be overlooked. For professional growth can be possible only she is an active member of the professional organization. Further, she can play an effective role in public health teaching. She can be the person who can educate the public in inculcating the right attitudes of health promotion and prevention of disease. Thus, she can propagate the adage "An ounce of prevention may well be worth a pound of cure". The knowledgeable nurse with her mastery and skill can also identify the health problems to solve these through health education. The nurse educator, as a member of the health team, can motivate the people to seek health and help them to identify deviations from health. She also assists them to enhance their coping mechanisms that exist for man's overcoming threats to health and adapt to circumstances that require alteration in life style.

To accomplish the above purpose, a nurse educator

can organize and run health clinics and also assist the public with the same type of needs to form associations of heart cases, diabetics, expectant mothers, pre-school children, school health services, elderly persons, parent teachers associations, industrial workers (especially for accident prevention) and weight watchers. She is also in a better position to coordinate her activities with the physician. The clinics are a boon for the learning experience of the student nurses. By organizing and conducting these programmes thus, she becomes an indispensable member of the health team and an active member of the nation at large.

The relationship of nurse educator with other health team members is of a helping nature and to be a successful and a proud member of the health team, she should ask herself the following questions. How can I create a helping relationship? How can I be considered as trustworthy, dependable and consistent by other persons? Can I communicate my ideas clearly and concisely? Can I let myself experience positive attitudes i.e., attitudes of warmth, loving care, interest and respect towards other persons! Finding answers to these questions will assist her to have her rightful place¹.

She also has to participate in conducting inservice education programmes for the nursing personnel and the ancillary staff. She should not hesitate to help the fresh medical graduates to understand the changing concepts of nursing.

The domain of nurse educator's functions is quite vast and it demands an untiring and ungrudging work by her. She can do justice to her role if she puts her heart and soul into it as our Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi says! 'She finds work a relaxation and it is relaxation to be with people. It is relaxation to know, to feel, that you are doing something that is worth doing'².

What can be more valuable for the nurse educator than giving knowledge on health! Wealth of the nation is in the health of the people.

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2. Brown, James W. and Thornton, James W. Jr ; *College Teaching Perspectives and Guidelines*. New York, McGraw Hills Book Co., Inc., 1968.
3. Hassenplug, Lulu Wolf ; "The Good Teacher" *Nursing Outlook* Vol. 13, No. 10, 11-24-27, 1965
4. The Education of the Individual and Society ; Address of the Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi to the 19th Convocation of the Gandigram Rural Institute, Gandigram, 1973.

ATTENTION

Rajasthan State Branch Members

The Returning Officer of TNAI Rajasthan State Branch, Mrs. C. Alexander, has given the following information vis-a-vis the publication of Ballot Paper in the May issue.

- (a) No Conference is proposed to be held and those members who have not sent their ballot papers due to this announcement may send the same by post by June 21, 1976 to Mrs. C. Alexander (Returning Officer), Nursing Superintendent, M.G. Hospital, Jodhpur.
- (b) The ballot papers already submitted in person or by post will be opened and counted after June 21, 1976, the date now announced for receipt of ballots.
- (c) Inconvenience caused to members on this account is regretted.

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