Parish nursing

Exploring the faith community as a potentially healing community
What is parish nursing?

- The intentional integration of the practice of faith with the practice of nursing (Patterson, 2004:32)
- A recognized specialty practice that combines professional nursing and health ministry. Parish nursing emphasizes health and healing within a faith community. The philosophy of parish nursing embraces four major concepts: spiritual formation; professionalism; shalom as health and wholeness; and community, incorporating culture and diversity. (International Parish Nursing Resource Centre, 2007)
What is a health ministry?

- The intentional reaching out to others by a church (faith community) that promotes health.
- Carried out by a health professional / team of health professionals.
- Respects the culture of the community.
- Recognizes individual and community responsibility for health among those it serves.

Philosophy of parish nursing?

- **SPIRIT** - The spiritual dimension is central to parish nursing practice. Personal spiritual formation is an ongoing, essential component of practice for the parish nurse and includes both self-care and hospitality, through opening the heart to self and others. Spiritual formation is an intentional process of intimacy with God to foster spiritual growth.

- **ROOTS** - The parish nurse role reclaims the historic roots of professional nursing. Aspects of health and healing found in many faith traditions are embodied in the role of the parish nurse. The parish nurse practices under the scope and standards of practice and the ethical code of nursing as set forth in their country.
Philosophy of Parish nursing

- **SHALOM** - The parish nurse understands health to be a dynamic process that embodies the spiritual, psychological, physical, and social dimensions of the person. Shalom, God's intent for harmony and wholeness, serves as a foundation for understanding health. A sense of well being can exist in the presence of imbalance, and healing can exist in the absence of cure.

- **COMMUNITY** - The practice of parish nursing focuses on a faith community. The parish nurse, in collaboration with the pastoral staff and congregants, participates in the ongoing transformation of the faith community into sources of health and healing. Through partnership with other community health resources, parish nursing fosters new and creative responses to health and wellness concerns. Parish nurses appreciate that all persons are sacred and must be treated with respect and dignity. The parish nurse serves the faith community, creates safe and sacred places for healing, and advocates with compassion, mercy, and dignity.
What the parish nurse is not

- Not a physician
- Not a home health-care nurse
- Not a therapist
- Not a clergyperson
The roles of the parish nurse

- Integrator of faith and health
- Health educator
- Health counselor
- Referral advisor
- Health advocate
- Developer of support groups
- Volunteer coordinator
Integrator of faith and healing

- A parish nurse assists community members to achieve higher levels of wellness by improving both their spiritual and physical health (Patterson, 2004:33).
Health educator

- Available for health education and provide opportunities to learn about health issues, individually and in groups (Patterson, 2004:32).
Health counselor

- Available to discuss health concerns, emphasizing early response to small problems and encouraging healthy lifestyles (Patterson, 2004:32).
Available to provide referrals to healthcare and social services within the community upon request (Patterson, 2004:32).
Health advocate

- Speaks out to help obtain needed health-related services (Patterson, 2004:32)
Developer of support groups

- Identifies the need for and facilitates the development of support groups for the community.
Volunteer coordinator

- Recruits, prepares, and oversees volunteers who help those in need.
Sources

- International Parish Nurse Resource Centre (www.parishnurses.org)
‘Parish Nursing’ Project 2008

- ‘VGK gemeente’, Promosa
- Health needs assessment
- Integration of education, research and community service
- Placement of undergraduate students
- Home visits, guided by service workers
Outcome end 2008

- Basic parish nurse programme, based on needs of the congregation
- Research funding application
- Training parish nursing
In five year’s time

- Parish nursing programme development
- Training in parish nursing
- Publications and presentations
- Programme provides integration of education, research and community service