



The International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and the Next 40 Years of Holistic Nursing

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Earlier in 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board officially designated 2020 the “International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife” to globally celebrate the world’s nurses and midwives and advocate for increased investments in the nursing and midwifery workforce (WHO, 2019a, 2019b). This honor commemorates the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) – the philosophical founder of modern secular nursing and the first nursing theorist. Nightingale ranks among history’s most accomplished reformers and activists within the healthcare and social equity domains (Dossey, 2010). When she returned

from the Crimean War (1854–1856), she worked for another dedicated 40 years.

In June 2020, the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA) celebrates its 40th annual conference where holistic nurses will address their Core Values and the health and wellbeing considerations of the world and planet that are rapidly shifting. We ask: “What will our world be in 2060?” To answer this question, nurses and midwives are encouraged to perceive themselves as “global citizens” – people who recognize the growing interconnectedness among individuals, countries, and economies, and who identify as belonging to a world community (Beck & Dossey, 2019). We are also invited to find related, innovative ways to strengthen our commitment to healing, caring, and compassion. The International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife is our opportunity to step forward as leaders to ensure we are responding to global needs in our holistic integrity. Two flagship reports – the *State of the World’s Nursing* (SoWN) report and the *State of the World’s Midwifery* (SoWM) report – will be launched this year, prior to the 73rd World Health Assembly (see box at right).

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If we are to rise to the challenges before us and become impactful advocates and changemakers, we must consistently re-examine and expand our understanding of our holistic nursing Core Values (ANA & AHNA, 2019) and their applications to practice. The Core Values reflect the integration of new arts and sciences of holism that are evolving out of individual, population, environmental, and planetary health gaps and disparities.

Core Value 1: Holistic Philosophies, Theories, and Ethics

The complexities of the world intersect human and environmental wellbeing, as well as the health of the planet and biosphere. Dilemmas pertaining to equity, justice, peace, and the social and economic determinants of health require an integral perspective and guidance. International policy items, such as the United Nations (U.N.) 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, provide an integrative blueprint to inform holistic philosophy, theory, and ethics (UN, 2015). Holistic leaders have made the case that the 17 U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the next iteration of holism in action – linking the heritage of Nightingale to the modern day altruism of the profession and to our future destiny as facilitators of healing at a global level (Dossey, Rosa, & Beck, 2019; Rosa, 2017; Rosa, Dossey, Watson, Beck, & Upvall, 2019; Rosa et al., 2019; Rosa, Upvall, Beck, & Dossey, 2019). Our theories and ethical perspectives must continue to mature in ways that reflect the ethos of the SDGs, and holistic philosophy must mature to meet the pressing issues of social justice and planetary change happening before our very eyes. The 17 U.N. SDGs are seen in Table 1 accompanied by personal holistic statements of commitment to a sustainable future (see p. 8).

“This year is not just about our own aesthetic expression or spiritual growth, but about sharing our holistic discoveries with the broader professional village.”

The broad dimensionality of the SDGs carries diverse implications in practice, research, education, and policy. No one nurse or system can effectively achieve all the SDGs simultaneously. Localizing and contextualizing the Agenda is essential. This requires familiarizing oneself with the 17 SDGs and 169 targets and identifying one or two realistic goals that can be achieved through advocacy and partnership at the local level. In this way, local improvements contribute to global progress (Rosa, Dossey, Watson, Beck, & Upvall, 2019).

The State of the World’s Nursing Report and the State of the World’s Midwifery Report

Nursing and midwifery champions will address the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva on May 18-23, 2020. Two flagship reports – the State of World’s Nursing report (SoWN) and the State of the World’s Midwifery report (SoWM) are being developed to inform discussions at the WHA and drive investment in nursing and midwifery workforces to help achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SoWN will highlight areas for policy development for the next three to five years, and will provide technical descriptions and details for the number and types of nurses, education, regulation, practice, leadership, and gender issues. The SoWM will report on quality of midwifery services and challenges to achieving effective coverage. Data validation and reporting efforts will be accomplished through national health workforce accounts, government chief nursing and midwifery officers, and many partners (WHO, 2019d).

Following the 73rd WHA, these reports will also inform discussions at the 2020 Regional Committees with potential regional commitments on the health workforce that includes nursing and midwifery. Other key dates are the International Nurses Day, May 12, 2020, and the World Global Forum of Government Chief Nursing Officers, May 13-16, both held in Geneva.

In keeping with these SDGs, nurses are engaged as 21st century Nightingales who are coaching, informing, and educating for healthy people to be living on a healthy planet (International Nurse Coach Association, n.d.; Nightingale Initiative for Global Health, n.d.). For example, the EarthRose Institute (ERI, n.d.) focuses on nurses’ roles as environmental activists and offers action steps they can take to educate others about toxic exposures in the home, workplace, food chain, and community. The Health Care Without Harm (HCWH, n.d.) movement and the Luminary Project (ANHE, n.d.) both feature more than 200 nurse stories addressing related environmental problems and health challenges, including achieving safer hospitals; establishing and reclaiming clean air, land, and water; and aiming for children to be born without toxic chemicals in their bodies.

Core Value 2: Holistic Nurse Self-Reflection, Self-Development, and Self-Care

The International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife brings with it countless opportunities to shift how we reflect on our work and care for ourselves, as both individuals and as

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U.N. SDGs		Personal Statements of Commitment to a Sustainable Future
 1 No poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I recognize the predictors and sequelae of poverty are multidimensional and complex; they include institutionalized marginalization, greed, and power imbalances; they are historically rooted and politically sustained. I am committed to eradicating poverty and the divisive implications of its pathology. 	
 2 Zero hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I acknowledge the importance of food security and the consequences of hunger on the overall wellness of individuals, families, and communities. I am committed to wiping out hunger, improving sustainable access to food, and advocating systems to redistribute nutritional resources equitably. 	
 3 Good health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I honor the role of nursing to promote, procure, and protect the health and well-being of all peoples everywhere and expand our scope to include the vitality of animal species and the planet at large. I am committed to elevating the health and well-being of all life to invite a future of wholeness and thriving. 	
 4 Quality education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand the crucial nature of a quality education for all human beings and its role in attaining sociopolitical and economic equity. I am committed to individualizing education to clients across the spectrum of care to ensure ease, quality, and the advancement of health literacy for all. 	
 5 Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I walk beside all women who continue on the path toward true equity in respect, salary, and opportunity; I include all those underrepresented and disenfranchised individuals from across the gender spectrum to be a part of the equality movement. I am committed to creating safe spaces and environments that role model true inclusivity and equality for all people of all genders. 	
 6 Clean water and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I note the repeated threats to health and survival imposed by a lack of clean water and sanitation throughout history, often disproportionately witnessed in low-resource settings across continents. I am committed to ensuring clean water and sanitation for all communities and regarding it as an unresolved social justice issue. 	
 7 Affordable and clean energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have witnessed the threats to environmental welfare due to unsustainable sourcing of energy, threats that continue to endanger the future of communities worldwide. I am committed to partnering with organizations and systems that seek affordable and clean energy to build a long-term path to environmental well-being. 	
 8 Decent work and economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have experienced the debilitating outcomes of unemployment and imbalanced economic opportunity, making health and happiness both difficult and impossible. I am committed to addressing these imbalances and advocating systems that promote opportunity and growth for all. 	
 9 Industry, innovation, and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In high-resource countries, we often overlook the lifesaving graces of progressive industry, openly competitive innovation, and reliable infrastructure; in low-resource countries, we seek the security and safety that are elusive without it. I am committed to seeking new ways of promoting industry, sparking innovation, and collaborating to lay systemic infrastructure to serve all. 	
 10 Reduced inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I admit the impact of inequalities inherent to the hierarchies that determine welfare in society, within nations, between nations, among peoples, and within systems and professions. I am committed to confront inequality and identify solutions to heal the wounds at the systems level. 	
 11 Sustainable cities and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I see that the whole must be sustained if the world is to make it; the unity of the global and planetary village is of utmost importance at this time of uncertainty. I am committed to advancing the needs of our cities and communities to ensure our collective sustainability. 	
 12 Responsible consumption and production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I call for the responsible use and production of material goods across systems, particularly throughout hospitals, notorious contributors to waste. I am committed to working with systems at all levels and finding opportunities to increase accountability for consumption and production practices. 	
 13 Climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I continue to learn of how devolving climate stability is becoming a volatile predictor of planetary survival; ultimately, the climate will determine the welfare of life on the planet. I am committed to promote climate awareness and knowledge and to taking informed action for positive change. 	
 14 Life below water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am deeply affected by the well-being of our rivers, lakes, and oceans and am dependent upon these waters for survival. I am committed to environmental activism and conservation efforts that protect our waters and the life below them. 	
 15 Life on land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I seek healing for all life on land, within the human species, but also between species and in concert with our forests, deserts, and land ecosystems. I am committed to defending the welfare of all life on land in order to sustain nature for the healing and wholeness of all those yet to come and all suns yet to rise. 	
 16 Peace, justice, and strong institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I bear witness to a world that is deeply wounded from a lack of peace and glaring injustice; I seek the strength of institutions that are founded on compassion and the recognition of an interdependent humanity. I am committed to being a peacemaker, calling for justice, and supporting institutions whose strength is born from the well-being of its people. 	
 17 Partnerships for the goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I know I cannot do this alone; the path is long, the stakeholders diverse, and the needs great; the partnerships that advance equity must reflect mutual respect and benefit at all levels. I am committed to seeking, creating, and role modeling such partnerships for the sake of self, other, system, and planet. 	

Table 1. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Accompanied by Personal Holistic Statements of Commitment to a Sustainable Future (adapted from Rosa, Dossey, Watson, Beck, & Upvall, 2019). ©2019 W. E. Rosa

U.N. SDG Icons reprinted from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs> according to UN.org SDG communications guidelines

a community of holistic practitioners. How do we reflect as a community to ensure unity among the philosophical and practical divides we are seeing in holistic and integrative nursing? How can we care for each other through times that bring up our social wounds, historical injustices, and antiquated judgments?

This year is not just about our own aesthetic expression or spiritual growth, but about sharing our holistic discoveries with the broader professional village that is so in need of care, love, and open dialogue to move us forward as a specialty and as a people. Although there are 20 million nurses and 2 million midwives in the world, the WHO (2019b) states, “The world needs 18 million more health workers to achieve and sustain universal health coverage by 2030. Approximately half of that shortfall – 9 million health workers – are nurses and midwives. The most acute shortages of nurses and midwives are in South East Asia and Africa” (p. 5).

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Core Value 3: Holistic Caring Process

Caring is universally regarded as the essence of nursing and nursing practice (Kreitzer & Koithan, 2019; Rosa, Horton-Deutsch, & Watson, 2019; Watson, 2018). Urgent policies and changes to practice (that replace outdated and imbalanced power-elite models) are mandatory to shift human consciousness. However, we cannot accomplish this without a caring lens, a caring presence, a caring voice, or a caring platform of advocacy. Watson (2018) declares caring as the cornerstone of nursing’s covenant with society; a moral agreement that must be attended to with persistence and commitment. Indeed, this is the role of the holistic nurse as both leader and role model. As the visibility of nursing is heightened during the 2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, holistic nurses in particular have a responsibility to celebrate caring as a fundamental art and science that is the very foundation of our calling.

Core Value 4: Holistic Communication, Therapeutic Relationship, Healing Environments, and Cultural Care

The current sociopolitical milieu amid the severity of political and ideological partisanship is craving the healing nature of holistic communication. Holistic nurses in 2020 have the opportunity to role model healing, safe, respectful, and reflective communication. We have the chance to create healing environments in healthcare settings, as well as in communities and political arenas that allow for diverse views but inclusive

approaches to care. In fact, this next era cannot simply be about diversity but must emphasize inclusion. American activist Verna Myers said, “Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.” A holistic stance in care and citizenship will assist the public and our clients in understanding that nursing is more than delivering necessary health services, but is about ensuring human beings are deeply valued and that healing remains central to our professional culture.

Core Value 5: Holistic Education and Research

Currently, major international campaigns seek to raise the profile of nursing globally. One example is Nursing Now – a program of the Burdett Trust for Nursing in collaboration with the International Council of Nurses and the WHO that is focused on empowering nurses to contribute to policy and research development around the world (WHO, 2019c). Holistic nurses are key stakeholders in ensuring that the image of nursing promotes our Core Values which will undoubtedly influence future education and research efforts. As the profile of nurses is catapulted throughout the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and beyond, the current and future generations of nurses should be informed of a worldview representative of a holistic foundation. Empowering them in their crucial role will enhance health promotion and disease prevention and treatment.

As the healthcare professionals closest to the community, nurses and midwives have a particular role in developing new models of community-based care and supporting local efforts to promote health and prevent disease. The *Triple Impact* report (2016) – the precursor report to the international Nursing Now movement – is contributing to this goal as it explores how developing nursing will further improve health, promote gender equality, and support economic growth (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Health, 2016).

“There has never been a greater need to incorporate holistic nursing philosophy and the Core Values with nursing’s moral commitment to social justice...”

Conclusion

What will our world be in 2060? This will be determined by our actions and commitments.

At this significant time on the planet, there has never been a greater need to incorporate holistic nursing philosophy and the Core Values with nursing’s moral commitment to social justice – through pro-active participation in the achievement of the U.N.

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2030 Agenda – outlined by the U.N. 17 SDGs. This obligation is no longer optional; it is a “must.” If we are to ensure health and wellbeing for all human beings of the global village and restore integrity to the ecological systems that govern life, we must seek out opportunities to integrate this important work into practice, education, research, and policy settings.

Nightingale’s legacy informs our holistic nursing Core Values and the critical planetary health issues of our time – issues addressed in the 17 SDGs. As global citizens inspired by the vision of Florence Nightingale, we can use the SDG framework to be and become environmental and civil society activists contributing to global health – through local means – empowering each of us to nurture healthy people living on a healthy planet.

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