Chapter 6
The Specialty of Gerontological Nursing
Development of Gerontological Nursing

- **1962**: First meeting of the ANA’s Conference Group on Geriatric Nursing Practice.
  - **1966**: Became the Division of Geriatric Nursing, gaining full recognition as a nursing specialty.
  - **1970**: Published *Standards for Geriatric Nursing Practice*. 
Development of Gerontological Nursing (cont.)

- **1975:** The first 74 nurses achieved certification of nurses for excellence in geriatric nursing practice.
  - Birth of the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*.

- **1976:** The Geriatric Nursing Division became the Gerontological Nursing Division.
Gerontological Nursing vs. Geriatric Nursing

- **Gerontological Nursing**
  - Involves the care of aging people.
  - Emphasizes the promotion of the highest possible quality of life and wellness.

- **Geriatric Nursing**
  - Focuses on the care of the sick aged.
Variables in Gerontological Nursing Patients

- Health status
- Cultural background
- Lifestyle
- Living arrangement
- Socioeconomic status
Gerontological Nursing Roles

- Healer
- Caregiver
- Educator
- Advocate
- Innovator
Healer Role

- Recognizes the interdependency of body, mind, and spirit in health and healing.
- Helps individuals:
  - Stay well.
  - Overcome or cope with disease.
  - Restore function.
  - Find meaning and purpose in life.
  - Mobilize internal and external resources.
Caregiver Role

- Uses gerontological theory in the conscientious application of the nursing process to the care of elders.

- Promotes:
  - The active participation of older adults and their significant others.
  - The highest degree of self-care of the elderly.

- Ensures the care of older adults is based on sound knowledge reflecting the needs of the elderly.
Educator Role

- Takes advantage of formal and informal opportunities to share knowledge and skills related to care.
- Educates others regarding:
  - Normal aging
  - Pathophysiology
  - Geriatric pharmacology
  - Resources
Educator Role (cont.)

- Uses effective communication involving:
  - Listening
  - Interacting
  - Clarifying
  - Coaching
  - Validating
  - Evaluating
**Advocator Role**

- Aids older adults in asserting rights and obtaining required services.
- Facilitates a community’s efforts to effect change and achieve benefits for older adults.
- Promotes gerontological nursing.
  - Including new and expanded roles of nurses in this specialty.
Innovator Role

• Assumes an inquisitive style.
• Makes conscious decisions.
• Focuses on efforts to experiment for improved gerontological practice.
  – Thinks “out of the box.”
  – Takes risks associated with traveling down new roads.
  – Transforms visions into reality.
Advanced Practice Nurses

- Geriatric NPs
- Geriatric clinical specialists
- Geropsychiatric nurse clinicians
Role of Advanced Practice Nurses

- Improve quality and reduce the cost of care.
- Reduce complications.
- Shorten length of stay.
- Reduce need for readmission post-discharge.
ANA Standards of Gerontological Nursing Practice

- Standard I. Assessment
- Standard II. Diagnosis
- Standard III. Outcome Identification
- Standard IV. Planning
- Standard V. Implementation
- Standard VI. Evaluation
Standards of Professional Gerontological Nursing Performance

- Standard I. Quality of Care
- Standard II. Performance Appraisal
- Standard III. Education
- Standard IV. Collegiality
- Standard V. Ethics
- Standard VI. Collaboration
- Standard VII. Research
- Standard VIII. Resource Utilization
Evidence-Based Practice

- Uses existing research for clinical decision-making.
  - **Meta-Analysis:**
    - Published research studies on a specific topic are analyzed and their results compiled.
    - Allows the results of many small studies to be combined to form more significant conclusions.
Evidence-Based Practice (cont.)

- **Cost Analysis Reporting:**
  - Data is gathered on outcomes to make comparisons.
  - The data can be used to stimulate improvements.
Principles of Gerontological Nursing Practice

• Aging is a natural process.
• Various factors influence the aging process.
• Unique data and knowledge are used in applying the nursing process to the older population.
• The elderly share similar self-care and human needs with all other human beings.
• Gerontological nursing helps older adults achieve maximum health.
Misconceptions about Aging

- “Looking gray and wrinkled.”
- “Losing one’s mind.”
- “Becoming sick and frail.”
- “Obtaining little satisfaction from life.”
- “Returning to childlike behavior.”
- “Being useless.”
Core Needs That Promote Health

- **Physiological Balance:** respiration, circulation, nutrition, hydration, elimination, movement, rest, comfort, immunity, and risk reduction.

- **Connection:** familial, societal, cultural, environmental, spiritual, and to self.

- **Gratification:** purpose, pleasure, and dignity.
Nursing Actions That Promote Health

- Strengthening the individual’s self-care capacity.
- Eliminating or minimizing self-care limitations.
- Providing direct services by acting for, doing for, or assisting the individual when demands cannot be met independently.
Holism

- **Definition**
  - The integration of the biologic, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of an individual to form a sum that is greater than its parts.

- **Goal**
  - Not to treat diseases but to serve the needs of the total person through the healing of the body, mind, and spirit.
Concerns of Holistic Gerontological Care

- Facilitating growth toward wholeness.
- Promoting recovery and learning from an illness.
- Maximizing quality of life when one possesses an incurable illness or disability.
- Providing peace, comfort, and dignity as death is approached.