

Faith Community Nursing Scope & Standards of Practice

Definition: “Faith community nursing is the specialized practice of professional nursing that focuses on the intentional care of the spirit as part of the process of promoting wholistic health and preventing or minimizing illness in a faith community.”

“With an intentional focus on spiritual health, the FCN primarily uses the **nursing interventions** of education, counseling, advocacy, referral, utilizing resources available to the faith community, and training and supervising volunteers from the faith community.”

“These five **assumptions** underlie faith community nursing:

- Health and illness are human experiences.
- Health is the integration of the spiritual, physical, psychological, and social aspects of the patient promoting a sense of harmony with self, other, the environment, and a higher power..
- Health may be experienced in the presence of disease or injury.
- The presence of illness does not preclude health nor does optimal health preclude illness.
- Healing is the process of integrating the body, mind, and spirit to create wholeness, health, and a sense of well-being, even when the patient’s illness is not cured.”

“The **preferred minimum preparation** for a registered nurse or advanced practice registered nurse entering the specialty of faith community nursing includes:

- A baccalaureate or higher degree in nursing with academic preparation in community nursing,
- Experience as a registered nurse using the nursing process,
- Knowledge of the healthcare assets of the community,
- Specialized knowledge of the spiritual beliefs and practices of the faith community, and
- Specialized knowledge and skills to enable implementation of *Faith Community Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice.*”

Preparations – A registered nurse may prepare for this specialty in several ways:

1. Continuing Education Programs with extensive contact hours
2. Baccalaureate nursing courses
3. Graduate level nursing courses – dual degree in nursing and theology
4. On-line programs with or without academic credit

5. At this time, specialty certification in faith community nursing is not available

Standards of Practice for Faith Community Nursing:

1. **Assessment** – collects comprehensive data pertinent to the patient's wholistic health or the situation
2. **Diagnosis** – analyzes the wholistic assessment data to determine the diagnoses or issues
3. **Outcomes identification** – identifies expected outcomes for a plan individualized to the patient or the situation
4. **Planning** – develops a plan that prescribes strategies and alternatives to attain expected outcomes for individuals, groups, or the faith community as a whole
5. **Implementation** – implements the specified plan
 - a. **Coordination of Care**
 - b. **Health Teaching and Health Promotion**
 - c. **Consultation**
 - d. **Prescriptive Authority and Treatment (only for advanced practice nurse)**
6. **Evaluation** – evaluates progress toward attainment of outcomes

Standards of Professional Performance for Faith Community Nursing

7. **Quality of Practice** – systematically enhances the quality and effectiveness of faith community nursing practice
8. **Education** – attains knowledge and competency that reflects current nursing practice
9. **Professional Practice Evaluation** – evaluates one's own nursing practice in relation to professional practice standards and guidelines, relevant statutes, rules, and regulations
10. **Collegiality** - interacts with and contributes to the professional development of peers and colleagues
11. **Collaboration** – collaborates with the patient, spiritual leaders, members of the faith community, and others in the conduct of this specialized nursing practice
12. **Ethics** – integrates ethical provisions in all areas of practice
13. **Research** – integrates research findings into practice
14. **Resource Utilization** – considers factors related to safety, effectiveness, cost, and impact on practice in the planning and delivery of nursing services.
15. **Leadership** – provides leadership in the professional practice setting and the profession

Source: American Nurses Association and Health Ministries Association (2005). *Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice*. Silver Spring, MD: nursesbooks.org.

