

Core Topics and Desired Outcomes for Christian Science Nurses Training Programs

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All Christian Science nurses training programs adhere to the moral and ethical teachings of Christian Science and are based on the *Church Manual By-Law*, “Christian Science Nurse,” Article VIII, Section 31, page 49.

The main objective of each topic is to enable participants to understand ways in which to care for people in accordance with the theology of Christian Science and to fulfil the requirements of this By-Law:

“Christian Science Nurse. SECT. 31. A member of The Mother Church who represents himself or herself as a Christian Science nurse shall be one who has a demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice, who thoroughly understands the practical wisdom necessary in a sick room, and who can take proper care of the sick.

The cards of such persons may be inserted in *The Christian Science Journal* under rules established by the publishers.”

On the following pages are brief descriptions of the core topics found in all programs. These topics are taught in ways that emphasize their Christian basis, and support a patient’s reliance on Christian Science for healing.

Individuals interested in learning more about Christian Science nurses training should contact an organization directly about its program, courses, class dates and tuition or see their website for detailed information (see www.aocsn.org).

CORE TOPICS

Ethics

Christian Science nursing is based on ethics that define and support a practice consistent with the theology and practical application of Christian Science. Participants are taught ethics that guide Christian Science nurses in all their relationships -- with Christian Science practitioners, public officials, patients, families, etc. Each topic includes within it ethics that form a foundation for a successful understanding and practice in relation to that topic.

Desired outcomes:

- to understand and practice an ethical standard of care that supports Christian Science healing and is safe, compassionate, reliable and effective through study of the Scriptures, including the life and teachings of Christ Jesus; the writings of Mary Baker Eddy; group discussions and hypotheticals.
- to understand the legal and ethical responsibilities of Christian Scientists.
- to understand ethical guidelines and laws that pertain to the practice of Christian Science and Christian Science nursing.
- to be familiar with available resources to keep oneself informed and to stay current with relevant laws.
- to have an understanding of the history of Christian Science nursing.

Communication

Participants learn how thoughtful, clear, and effective communication is essential in Christian Science nursing, imparting loving reassurance of God's tender care. Instruction includes verbal and nonverbal forms of communication and the use of various aids for communicating. Some programs may offer a course in reading aloud.

Desired outcomes:

- to read aloud with understanding and clarity from the Bible, the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, Christian Science literature, and other appropriate resources.
- to communicate in a clear, respectful, and compassionate manner when assisting patients.
- to identify appropriate ways to facilitate effective communication with each patient, such as hearing aids, TTY phones, sign language, use of lighting, etc.
- to produce clear, concise, and appropriate verbal and written reports for various situations.
- to respond accurately and confidently to questions regarding the role of the Christian Science nurse.

Surroundings

Participants are shown how a peaceful and supportive environment is conducive to Christian Science healing. They also learn the ethics and practical skills that support an environment for safe and harmonious care.

Desired outcomes:

- to identify and practice legal requirements and ethical standards in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of each patient.
- to discern the correlation between a caring and supportive atmosphere, a comfortable setting (maintaining temperature, light, and ventilation at acceptable levels), and proper care.
- to identify and understand how to meet local fire codes and other safety and sanitation regulations.
- to review relevant aspects of maintaining a clean, orderly, safe environment while respecting others' living space and belongings in various situations.

Personal Care and Bathing

Participants learn how to provide proper, gentle, orderly, and unobtrusive personal care to meet the needs of each patient.

Desired outcomes:

- the ability to provide assistance with all aspects of personal care, including dressing and undressing, bathing, toileting, nail care, and oral care.
- to discern a patient's capabilities in order to encourage and promote maximum independence.
- to be familiar with a variety of personal protection items, such as liners, pads, briefs, etc.

Mobility

Participants explore the metaphysical foundation for and basic principles of lifting, moving, and transferring, and learn how to utilize these skills with understanding, grace, strength, alertness, safety, and gentleness.

Desired outcomes

- to properly assist individuals to stand, walk, move, transfer, and recline safely and comfortably.
- to correctly discern the capabilities of the patient and the Christian Science nurse, the appropriate method for assisting and the number of assistants required, based on the need and the setting.
- to be knowledgeable in the selection and proper use of each mobility aid, such as walkers, canes, wheelchairs, mechanical and power lifters, etc., and when to use a different aid, if needed.
- to instruct patients in proper use of a mobility aid.
- to coordinate a move or transfer at a comfortable pace for the individual and other Christian Science nurses or assistants and to complete it in a safe, harmonious manner.
- to correctly place and use slide and positioning sheets, gait belts, pivot disks, and other assistive devices.

Nourishment

Participants are shown ways to prepare and offer nourishment based on an assessment of the patient's needs. This includes food preparation and modification, menu planning, and assistance with meals. Participants are also introduced to legal requirements that relate to food preparation, service, and storage.

Desired outcomes:

- to understand basic food preparation.
- to prepare and modify food to meet the need for specific flavor or taste (such as mild or bland nourishment), or in a form appropriate to the need (such as soft, liquid, thin, or clear).
- to understand how to provide encouragement and assistance with eating, including the use of appropriate adaptive utensils and dishware.
- to create menus that are appropriate to an individual's needs and preferences, and to vary the foods in regard to color, texture, temperature, flavor, portion size, and frequency of meals.
- to appropriately adapt to the needs of an individual who has particular eating habits or food preferences, either cultural or personal.
- to identify and comply with local food handling practices and regulations.

Rest and Comfort

Participants explore how to support and maintain a peaceful environment that is conducive to progress and healing. Participants are taught the spiritual basis of true rest and comfort which finds expression in assistance that is simple and unobtrusive, skillful, and attentive to detail.

Desired outcomes:

- to be able to make a bed (unoccupied and occupied), taking into consideration local customs, facility standards, or patient preference and individual needs.
- to correctly and comfortably position an individual in a bed or chair.
- to discern when to use and how to place comfort items (such as egg crate mattress overlays, pillows, specialized cushions, etc.) in order to provide support and cushioning to meet individual needs.
- to utilize various pillow arrangements to provide changes of position.

Cleansing and Bandaging

Participants are taught ethics, judgments and skills for cleansing and bandaging, with an alertness to meeting individual needs with poise, compassion, flexibility, unobtrusiveness, thoroughness, gentleness, and the conviction of God's healing power.

Desired outcomes:

- to know the terminology for materials and equipment used in Christian Science nursing.
- to assess covering and bandaging needs to provide for cleanliness, comfort, absorbency, protection, and support in a manner that embraces simplicity and dignity.
- to be knowledgeable in the use of a variety of materials, implements, and methods for cleansing, including selection and proper use of non-medicated cleansing solutions.
- to understand the properties and use of the various coverings and extra-absorbency items available.
- to be able to design and construct coverings that meet individual needs.
- to know how to secure a covering using different bandages, tapes, elastic net, clothing items, and other securing materials that can be adapted to meet differing needs.
- to write clear and concise cleansing and covering instructions when needed, and follow written instructions that provide for cleanliness, protection, support and comfort.
- to follow specific ethical considerations while caring for cleansing and bandaging needs.

Sudden Needs

Participants learn how to assess and respond to sudden changes in a patient's care requirements, as well as sound practices in response to emergency situations, including natural disasters. This involves understanding the metaphysical basis for responding in a calm, confident, alert manner.

Desired outcomes:

- to tend to the patient and address the situation when there is an unexpected or sudden change in circumstances.
- to assess the situation and respond appropriately to provide for safety, cleanliness, protection, support, comfort, as well as any transportation needs.
- to communicate effectively and compassionately with family, co-workers, and others.
- to maintain a calm, safe environment that supports spiritual healing and harmonious care.

Supervision/Management

Participants learn leadership skills for supervisory and administrative roles in Christian Science nursing organizations and in private practice, as well as the basic responsibilities of managing staff and resources.

Desired outcomes:

- to establish and maintain ethical relationships in an organizational setting or when self-employed.
- to develop communication skills to maintain appropriate and clear communication with staff, patients, family and the public.
- to attentively assess the individual needs of patients and staff.
- to manage resources and staff scheduling ethically and impartially.
- to assess the individual capabilities and talents of staff members and utilize and develop them accordingly.

Home and Visiting Christian Science Nursing

Participants learn how to provide Christian Science nursing care in the home setting as private duty or visiting Christian Science nurses. Participants study the ethics, legal considerations, and business practices that pertain to developing this aspect of their Christian Science nursing practice.

Desired outcomes:

- to provide skilled and compassionate Christian Science nursing care in a home setting.
- to establish and maintain supportive and ethical relationships, and know how to appropriately communicate with Christian Science practitioners, family, neighbors, and public officials.
- to understand legal obligations in relation to patient, families, and public officials.
- to know how to prepare clear instructions and appropriate guidance for caregivers to help ensure proper care.
- to demonstrate sound judgment and an ability to instruct caregivers in practical skills to help care for a family member or friend.
- to maintain accurate documentation of services rendered.
- to keep an accurate record of billable hours, supplies, and other information as required.
- to be familiar with the needs and activities of children and adolescents.
- to be aware of issues that relate to children and adolescents.
- to be familiar with ethical and legal requirements that pertain to working with minors.

Meeting Mental Health Challenges

Participants explore how a loving, patient, safe and flexible approach grounded in the teachings of Christian Science supports healing and harmonious relationships when assisting those faced with mental impositions such as memory loss, mental confusion, resistance to care, or aggressive behavior.

Desired outcomes:

- to identify and develop the specific qualities that provide the starting point for caring for those with mental health challenges.
- to use spiritual resources to maintain a peaceful environment that supports spiritual healing and harmonious care.
- to be able to discern individual needs and provide appropriate care which is safe for patients and Christian Science nurses and is expressive of infinite patience, wisdom, and kindness.
- to communicate effectively and compassionately with those facing mental health challenges.
- to enable those with mental health challenges to stay in their home and receive care as appropriate.
- to know what resources may be available for home care.
- to be familiar with legislation which applies to caring for someone with a mental health challenge either in the home or in an organizational setting.

Additional Subjects Taught in Some Programs or for Christian Science nurses:

Mentoring and Instruction

Participants learn how to teach Christian Science nursing to others, which may include developing teaching methods and mentoring skills.

Desired outcomes:

- to understand how to process and assess candidate applications.
- to develop and use lesson plans that include classroom discussion, practicum, mentoring, etc.
- to demonstrate the ability to teach by mentoring, leading workshops, assisting in a classroom, etc.
- to individualize the instruction by taking into account differing learning styles and languages, pace of instruction, and need for review.
- to demonstrate the ability to effectively evaluate oneself and others.

Christian Science Nursing in Camp and School Settings

Participants are introduced to the unique opportunities of serving in camp or school settings with a focus on ethics, judgment, and foundational skills for caring for Christian Science youth and adolescents.

Desired outcomes:

- to understand the role, responsibilities and relationships of a Christian Science nurse within a camp or school setting.
- to be familiar with ethical and legal requirements that pertain to working with minors, including understanding the responsibility of the organization and the Christian Science nurse regarding care, oversight, and communication in relation to children and teens who are away from their homes and parents.
- to understand the culture of camp and school settings.
- to know camp and school policies specific to the Christian Science nurse.
- to understand what is required for a readiness to practice Christian Science nursing in settings that include indoor and outdoor education and activities.
- to be familiar with the needs and activities of children and adolescents.
- to be aware of issues that relate to children and adolescents.

Mother and Infant Care

Participants learn how to support expectant mothers and families during labor, birth, and a period of time after the birth, within the Scope of Services for the Christian Science nurse.

Desired outcomes:

- to understand general information needed for acceptance of cases, including how to interview, discuss charges, share what care and services to expect from the Christian Science nurse, time off, etc.
- to answer questions regarding pregnancy and prenatal care without giving counsel or representing oneself as an authority.
- to be familiar with current legal requirements for parents as well as Christian Science nurses.
- to understand the role of a Christian Science nurse in a home, birth center, or a hospital.
- to know basic vocabulary relative to childbirth.
- to assist the family and newborn in practical ways, such as demonstrating how to hold, dress, bathe, feed and burp the baby, and how to change diapers.
- to answer questions on ways to establish harmonious feeding and sleeping schedules.
- to maintain ethical and legal interactions with family, neighbors, medical personnel and public officials.