

# The caring profession of **Anthroposophic Nursing**

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The question for human-centered care that addresses the dignity and wholeness of the ill person is an urgent need of our time. Nursing and caring currently exist in a healthcare context dominated by the economics of curing through diagnosis and measurable symptoms. Within such standardized health care programs, the individual can get lost, and the cultivation of clinical sensitivity and the humanity of caring are diminished. In particular, the caring encounters that emphasize caring dialogue and caring touch are lessened.

Caring is the primary focus of nursing. The aim of caring is to support and strengthen the individual patient's health processes. It is caring that supports and strengthens health, including the experience of well-being: life as meaningful and coherent.

The art of caring has an important task in the development of the human being. We perform our tasks consciously, working with life forces, creating the conditions that allow the formative-creative powers to work. Creation happens anew

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every day, and as we work with formative life forces, creation is continued.

For instance, helping a child to manage a fever by using an external application of lemon infused water on the legs and feet will redistribute the warmth and lead to soothing restlessness and discomfort, while allowing for the developmental benefits of fever to work. This intervention does not suppress, but rather supports the vital role of fever in strengthening the child's immunity and activity of transformation.

With the external application of lemon wrap, the visible action of outer activity is enhanced by the invisible principle of enveloping—a nursing gesture that seeks to give form, and that is one of twelve principle nursing gestures. Enveloping is a Virgo gesture, which Rudolf Steiner referred to as “sober objectivity.” With the awareness of the nursing gesture, routine nursing is raised to a level where the formative life-enhancing forces can effect healing for the patients in our care.


We embrace a principle of life and an inner attitude that recognizes the human being as capable of overcoming illness, transforming it, and coming to a new creation. Patients are not only relieved of symptoms, but also discover something quite new about themselves. It is caring that opens a pathway for individuals to find healing, and it is a key orientation to their future health and development.

We use natural methods to resolve rather than suppress a pathological symptom by mobilizing the whole body and its innate power of

self-healing. This takes time and needs the warm interest and skill of a caregiver who understands that the body has innate healing powers to overcome imbalances through thoughtful loving care.

Thoughtful tender care, protected care, and gentleness coming from outside are felt by the ill person as confidence-building; and the opposite feeling of vulnerability felt by the ill person is diminished. By respecting the mystery of healing and sickness, acquiring the knowledge that renders competent care and discernment possible, caregivers help the ill person to master the fear that is a natural response to what they cannot understand or manage on their own.

Through the anthroposophic nursing training, open to anyone interested in caregiving, we cultivate the courage to care. We begin with interest and awaken to empathy, the key to selflessly serving in all areas of life, from the moment of birth until death.

If you would like to find your way into a helping role based on sound scientific and experience-based knowledge, please contact the North American Anthroposophic Nurses Association. All caregivers are welcome. 

**Training inquiries:** [naanatraining@gmail.com](mailto:naanatraining@gmail.com)

**Contact NAANA:** [anthonursing@gmail.com](mailto:anthonursing@gmail.com)

**Website:** [aamta.wildapricot.org/NAANA-anthro-nurses](http://aamta.wildapricot.org/NAANA-anthro-nurses)

**Directory of Nurses:** [aamta.wildapricot.org/directory](http://aamta.wildapricot.org/directory)

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