

Learning in Community: Family as Teacher

Sandra Schmidt Bunkers, RN; PhD; FAAN

*Associate Professor and Chair of Nursing,
Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota*

Nursing in the community poses many challenges for nurses as they work with the certainty-uncertainty of what may be possible for individuals and families. Teaching-learning processes for practicing nurses and students must address the complexity of day-to-day life activities of those who are underserved by healthcare resources; they form a significant portion of many communities. From a human becoming perspective, nurses working with families in community are concerned with the valuing of close others who contribute to the meaning of individual and family life. The human becoming perspective defines family as close others with whom one is affiliated (Parse, 1981). Thus, teaching-learning about family in community includes nurses learning from families what and who is most helpful in changing patterns of health for themselves and for the community.

The following two descriptions are examples of how nurses work and learn with family as close others. Teaching-

learning from this perspective leaves open many possibilities for involvement with those who seek health resources and affiliation with others. Diane K. Josephson, Health Action Model nurse and faculty associate in the Department of Nursing at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, vividly describes her experience of family with a group of women struggling with economic, social, and interpersonal resources. Deborah C. Letcher, assistant professor of nursing and Health Action Model nurse in the Department of Nursing at Augustana College, presents the legacy of an individual man whose story of family and community teaches many lessons for us to consider in our quest for the betterment of humankind.

Reference

Parse, R. R. (1981). *Man-living-health: A theory of nursing*. New York: Delmar.

Editor's Note: Submit notions for exploration in relation to teaching-learning in nursing to Sandra Schmidt Bunkers, RN, PhD, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Nursing, Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD 57197; phone: (605) 336-4726; fax: (605) 336-4723; E-mail: bunkers@inst.augie.edu.

