

# Providing Ostomy Care Across the Continuum

Diane Davis-Zeek, MS, APN, NP-C, CWOCN, Renee Malandrino, MS, APN, CWOCN, Bari Stiehr, BSN, CWOCN  
Northwest Community Hospital, Arlington Heights, IL

## Overview

In the tri-specialty of wound, ostomy, and continence nursing, it is with the ostomy patient that the nurse often develops a lifelong relationship. From the preoperative consultation through the postoperative recovery period, the nurse plays an important part in the patient's adaptation to his or her changed body.

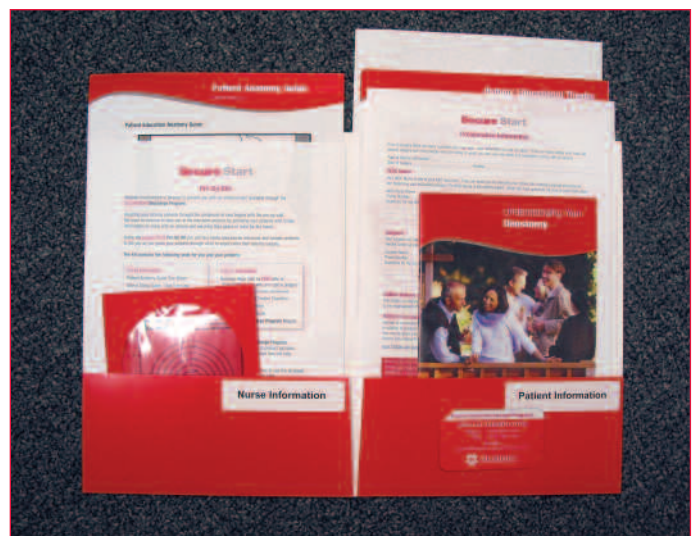
Jean Watson's theory of caring in nursing<sup>1</sup> proposes that caring can potentiate healing. This theory accurately identifies the practice of the ostomy nurse in the care setting and can serve as a guide for ostomy program development.

## Preoperative Period: Stoma Site Marking and Education

The preoperative visit optimally takes place in the pre-admission setting or in the outpatient clinic. This initial meeting follows Jean Watson's theory of caring as the nurse "goes beyond an objective assessment, showing concern toward the person's subjective and deeper meaning regarding their own healthcare situation."<sup>1</sup> **Key activities include:**

- Use of a **Secure Start** Pre-op Kit that includes educational materials, sample products, and stoma siting materials
- Stoma site selection and marking

- Assessment of patient knowledge
- Assessment of ability to self-learn care and learning obstacles
- Inquiry about home-care support and significant others
- Development of rapport



Secure Start Preoperative Kit

## Postoperative Period: Inpatient

According to Watson's theory, the interactions immediately following surgery can "further the transpersonal caring relationship."<sup>1</sup> During this time, the nurse experiences multiple "caring occasions"<sup>1</sup> with the patient to help them plan to go home with their changed body.

**Key activities include:**

- Stoma and skin assessment
- Explanation and demonstration of appropriate pouching materials and accessories
- Education and support for patient and primary caregiver
- Provision of ostomy information (educational handouts, DVD)
- Hands-on teaching and return demonstration
- Responses to questions
- Pastoral care services and/or an ostomy visitor
- Communication with staff nurses for continuity of patient care and with case managers for discharge needs

- A customized discharge kit based on the WOC Nurses' assessment delivered to the patient within 48 hours. This allows the patient to identify the appropriate product fit



Sample Secure Start Discharge Kit

## Postoperative Period: Introduction to the Hollister Secure Start Program

An organized program, like the Hollister Secure Start Program, can provide a 'lifeline' to the patient when they find themselves at home and needing assistance.

**Key elements include:**

- Personalized contact for answers to basic ostomy and product questions

- Introduction to new or updated products when appropriate
- A quarterly *Secure Start Newsletter* with product tips and information



Secure Start Coordinators



Secure Start Newsletters

- Help with finding a supplier for the best coverage based on the patient's insurance
- Assistance with supplies for those who are indigent or uninsured
- Access to printed and online patient education materials



Patient Education Materials

Many new ostomy patients attribute the Secure Start Program with helping their healing begin.

*“The Secure Start Program was my saving grace. I attribute that to my Secure Start Coordinator. He was the first person I spoke to who really understood what I was going through, both mentally and physically. The people of Hollister were so compassionate and generous; their support brought me through a very tough situation.”*

**Lynn, a colostomy patient from Chicago, Illinois**

*“On my first day home after ostomy surgery, I had an accident with my pouching system and had to change it myself. Luckily, my Secure Start Ostomy Specialist had sent me a How to Use an Ostomy Pouching System DVD, which successfully walked me through this challenge. The Secure Start Program has been an invaluable source of information, support, and product samples.”*

**Howard, an ileostomy patient from Chatsworth, California**

### **Discharge Period: Home Care/Extended Care**

Watson talks about creating a “healing space”<sup>1</sup> and promoting mind-body-spirit wholeness and healing. The home care and extended care nurse provides this part of the patient's care.

**Key activities include:**

- Referral to a home care agency
- Joint visits for complicated cases while still inpatient
- Phone calls with home care nurses to support continuity of care
- Continued patient education to promote independence in care
- Phone contact with home care and extended care WOC Nurses to continue patient education and management

### **Community Period: Outpatient Clinic Follow-up for Assessment and Intervention Related to Stoma and Peristomal Problems**

Postoperative swelling subsides, activity increases, and new skin folds may develop. Stomas may become retracted, peristomal skin may become denuded, and pouching systems may no longer provide adequate wear time.

**Key elements include:**

- Evaluation by certified ostomy nurses
- Troubleshooting for stoma or skin problems
- Re-sizing and re-fitting for lifestyle or physical body changes
- Response to questions (e.g., exercise, diet, work, and travel)

## Community Period: Outpatient Support Group/UOAA Chapter

Jean Watson's caring theory expresses the role of our group as we see the patient in the context of their environment (e.g., family, culture, community, society). We see that "health is not just the absence of disease but a person's subjective experience of balance within the mind-body-spirit."<sup>1</sup> We are helping people find meaning to the crises in their lives.

### Key elements include:

- Discussion of concerns of daily life
- Experienced people with ostomies coaching newer members
- Meetings that are planned to meet the needs of our population
- Meetings facilitated by ostomy nurses, present at every meeting
- Networking with fellow support groups
- Future plans for conducting a class on ostomy visitor training

### Reference List

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Photographs from April 1, 2009 Outpatient Support Group meeting—Northwest Community Hospital

## Conclusion

We have incorporated Jean Watson's theory of caring in creating a comprehensive program for our ostomy patients throughout the continuum of care. This has proven to complement our style of care, leading to a professionally rewarding experience for our staff and better outcomes for our patients.

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