

Critical Thinking



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Objectives

- **Identify the definition of critical thinking**
- **Identify challenges of critical thinking skills**
- **Learn strategies to develop critical thinking skills**



Critical Thinking

Definition:
The objective
analysis and
evaluation of an
issue in order to
form a judgment



What is it?
Not Linear
Not Passive
Not Accidental
Not Aimless



What it is...

- **Skillful Reasoning**
- **Analyzing and Interpreting Data**
- **Determining a course of action based on putting the pieces together**





Critical Thinking is reasonable and rational

**Critical thinkers don't
jump to conclusions**

- **Collect data**
- **Get the facts**
- **Think it through**



Accurate Information

**Because of time
constraints, barriers,
multiple handoffs,
clinical work is often
riddled with inaccurate
or incomplete
information**





**Critical
Thinking is
reflective**



**Always thinking of
what to consider
Present and Past
History**



Encourage Reflection

- **Stop and think what is going on and what the data means**
- **Reflect on the meaning of symptoms, not just the clinical findings**



Past Experiences

**Compare a particular
situation with
previous similar ones**

**How is it similar
and/or different**





**Critical Thinking
inspires an
attitude of inquiry**



**How does the body work
and why it responds the
way it does to a disease,
treatment or medicine**





**Critical Thinking
is autonomous
thinking**

**Critical thinkers are
not easily
manipulated**

Nurses need specifics





**Critical Thinking
includes creative
thinking**



**Nurses come up with
original ideas for
day-to-day problems**





Critical Thinking is fair thinking

**It is not biases or
one-sided**

**Think of all the
different angles**



**Critical
thinking
focuses on
deciding what
to believe or do**





CHALLENGES

Personal Factors

- **Moral development**
- **Age**
- **Personal dislikes, prejudices and biases**
- **Emotional intelligence**
- **Self-confidence**
- **Past experiences**
- **Knowledge of problem solving, decision making, nursing process and research principles**



Situational Factors

- **Anxiety, stress, and fatigue**
- **Awareness of risks**
- **Knowledge of related factors**
- **Awareness of resources**
- **Positive reinforcement**
- **Evaluation or judgmental styles**
- **Presence of motivating factors**
- **Time limitations**
- **Environmental distractions.**



Critical Thinking Killers

Intimidation

Silence

Disapproving looks

Hunger

Too many skills to do

Frustration



Barriers

Self Focusing
My way is better
Tunnel Vision
Choosing only one
Face saving
Resistance to change
Conformity
Stereotyping
Self Deception



Challenges in developing Critical Thinking

- **Requires enough experience for a base**
- **Requires adequate knowledge base**
- **Requires time to think!**
- **High level thinking is hard!**
- **Anxiety can derail critical thinking**



Strategies



Logic & Intuition

Logic: Sound reasoning that is based on facts (evidence) Foundation of critical thinking. Safest most reliable strategy



Intuition: Knowing something without evidence

Teach intuition as a tool to be used with caution

- **Gut feelings are not automatic truths but red flags**
- **Probe further to assess symptoms or multiple possibilities before reacting**





Anticipation

Specific Strategies

- **Anticipate the questions others might ask**
- **Ask what else questions**
- **Think out loud or write your thoughts down**
- **Ask an expert to think out loud**
- **Ask what if... questions**
- **Ask Why**
- **Paraphrase in your own words**



Specific Strategies cont.

- **Compare and contrast**
- **Organize and reorganize information**
- **Look for flaws in your thinking (ask somebody else)**
- **Develop good habits of inquiry**
- **Revisit information**
- **Replace and rephrase “I don’t know” and “I’m not sure” with “I need to find out” or “Let’s find out”**
- **Turn errors into learning opportunities**
- **Share your mistakes**



Ask Socratic Questions

- **How do you know this?**
- **How can you be certain that this evidence is reliable?**
- **What conclusions can you make regarding this evidence?**
- **What standards (or benchmarks) are you using to measure judgments?**
- **How will you know that your judgments are accurate?**



Strategies: Questions

- **Use of questions about priorities**
 - **What's the main thing going on with this pt?**
 - **What else is going on?**
 - **What are your two priorities for this shift?**
 - **What needs to happen before this pt can go home?**
 - **Have you identified any barriers to what you are trying to accomplish?**



Think Aloud

- **Thinking aloud exposes the details of judgments**
- **Novices can develop greater depth to their thinking by listening to an expert's line of reasoning**



Strategies: Case Studies

- **Case studies of real patients**
 - **Tell the story**
 - **Rehearse shift report**
 - **Avoid “odd ducks”**
 - **Debriefing after the situation: “Let’s talk about what just happened in there”**

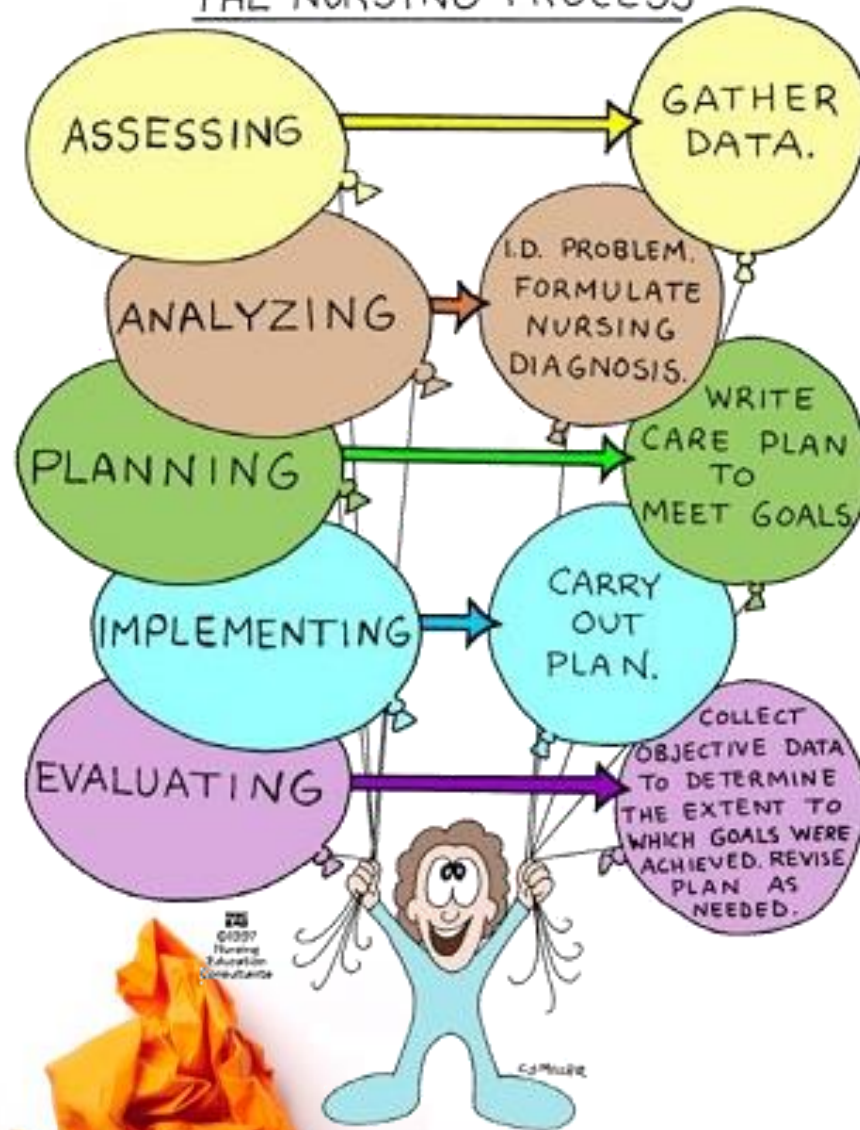


Nursing Process

- **Systematic approach that is used by all nurses to gather data, critically examine and analyze the data, identify client responses, design outcomes, take appropriate action, then evaluate the effectiveness of action**
- **Involves the use of critical thinking skills**
- **Common language for nurse to “think through” clinical problems**



THE NURSING PROCESS



Strategies: Deciding on a course of action

- **What is the fundamental problem?**
- **What might you try?**
- **Why did you choose that?**
- **What might happen if it works?**
- **What might happen if it doesn't?**



Strategies: Building Confidence

- **Use softer language**
 - **“here’s something you might want to think about, try, do...”**
 - **“what works for me is.....”**



Making Progress

- **Set daily goals and review throughout shift**
- **Observe practice**
- **Document progress**
- **Decrease number of patients and complexity**



Critical Thinking

**Long term
developmental
process**



Supports for Critical Thinking development

**Review policies and
job description**

**Involve Instructor, APN,
supervisor and
re-evaluate**



NCLEX Style
Question
Breakdown!
Option Elimination
Strategy



NCLEX Critical Thinking What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do