



Learning Disability Nursing at a Glance

Edited by
Bob Gates
Debra Fearn
Jo Welch



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Nursing
at a Glance**

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Preface

It is with enormous pride that we offer this new and exciting book – *Learning Disability Nursing at a Glance*; one that is in a series of popular nursing texts. The aim of this book is to provide learning disability nursing students with user-friendly, contemporary information in relation to some of the key clinical practice issues that they may encounter when working with people with learning disabilities. At the outset we need to make clear our use of terminology in this text. Generally speaking within the UK, the term ‘*learning disability*’ is used to describe people with significant developmental delay that results in arrested or incomplete achievement of the ‘*normal*’ milestones of human development. The term ‘*learning disabilities*’ is also used elsewhere throughout the world, but it holds different meanings in many other countries; paradoxically so too in the UK. It is this difference in meaning that causes confusion to, what we hope, will be an international audience of readers. Elsewhere in the world alternative terms to ‘*learning disability*’ are used, such as ‘*mental retardation*’, and ‘*mental handicap*’, but these terms are felt to portray negative imagery concerning people with learning disabilities. There are more positive international terms in use, such as ‘*intellectual disability*’ and ‘*developmental disability*’ but we have decided to adopt the consistent use of a term which we believe seems most appropriate to this text, and for the readership, as well as those who this book is principally about, and that is ‘*learning disability*’. Therefore, throughout the remainder of this book we will only use the term learning disability, save where certain Acts and, or, other technical works require other terminology for accuracy.

The text has been edited using expert contributions from learning disability academic staff as well as clinicians. While there are currently a number of texts available that describe nursing practice from an adult perspective, there are few that deal with practice specifically related to people with learning disabilities. And indeed fewer still that address the needs of people with learning disabilities across the life spectrum, from children through to adolescents and on to adults and older people. Also, many of the current texts related to people with learning disabilities that are available tend to deal with the subject of *learning disabilities*, rather than *learning disability nursing*; this book does both. Uniquely, the book is aimed at health and social care students, as well as registered nurses, but will be of use to a wide range of other students from a wide variety of vocational, academic and professional backgrounds, and other fields of nursing. Principally the book is intended to provide nursing students with material that is accessible, up to date, and readily available. The text addresses the principles underpinning contemporary learning disability nursing practice that students are likely to encounter, and these are discussed in the context of

maintaining health and wellbeing. And in order to reflect the contemporary field of learning disability nursing practice, the text embraces both primary and secondary care perspectives. Learning disability nurses can now be found working and supporting people in diverse care contexts, such as community learning disability teams, treatment and assessment services, outreach services, residential settings, day care and respite services, health facilitation and hospital liaison roles, mental health and, or, challenging behaviour services, special schools and specialist services for people who can be located on the spectrum of autistic conditions. Additionally, they can be found working for many different agencies and organisations, such as health, social care, education and the independent sector (this comprises the private, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations), and also alongside numerous other professional disciplines that include clinical psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and consultant psychiatrists in learning disabilities as well as a range of professionals within mainstream health, social services and education. Given this complexity, there is need for a text that holds an overarching aim of helping learning disability nursing students understand fundamental aspects of their practice, in order to provide safe, effective and compassionate care to people with learning disabilities in a variety of situations. From an academic perspective, there is often a lot of support available to learning disability nursing students for their academic assessment and progression. However, when in practice, learning disability nursing students may find themselves being supervised from a distance and, as such, this proposed text could accompany them in a variety of settings to assist their integration of theory and practice. This text is based upon the principles of care; a foundation text to encourage the learning disability nursing student to grow and develop.

The book has been designed to be used as a quick reference guide in either practice settings, educational establishments or at home and has been written in easy-to-understand language, drawing heavily on diagrams and pictures to support visual learners. Therefore it is not intended that you read this book from cover to cover in one sitting, rather – as its name implies – the text should be seen as an ‘at a glance’ guide or manual.

The book is divided into 12 parts, each containing a variable number of chapters that relate to the theme of that part. The parts of the book include: an introduction to learning disability nursing, an exploration of learning disability, childhood development, adolescence, adults with a learning disability, people with a learning disability and additional mental health needs, vulnerable adults with a learning disability, biophysical aspects of learning disability nursing, older people with a learning disability, medication, the learning disability nurse and issues of inclusion.

We hope that *Learning Disability Nursing At A Glance* will come to be seen as a highly regarded textbook, not only in the field of learning disabilities but also more widely, and that it will be used widely by the many professionals and students from a wide range of different professional and academic backgrounds. We believe that the excellent end product that you have before you is due, in no small part, to the excellent contributions that have been made by our many friends and colleagues across the UK and Southern

Ireland, and we offer our thanks for contributing to this book. We hope that you find the book helpful and that through using it, in some small way, it assists you in supporting people with learning disabilities enjoy good health and wellbeing in their lives.

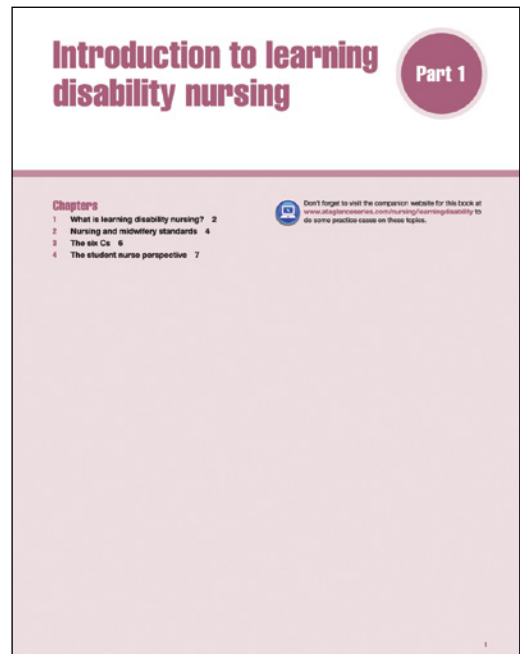
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How to use your revision guide

Features contained within your revision guide

The overview page gives a summary of the topics covered in each part.



Each topic is presented in a double-page spread with clear, easy-to-follow diagrams supported by succinct explanatory text.

1 What is learning disability nursing?

Defining learning disability nursing... this is to:

- **fully assess the social and health care needs of people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism, in order to assist them to live as independently as possible. The nurse will achieve this by working with their family, carers and co-ordinators of services and will demonstrate that their evidence-based interventions lead to health maintenance and/or gain. The nurse will practice their work autonomously and interdependently with other colleagues from a variety of other academic disciplines, and across agencies as a society or service, in partnership with people with learning disabilities to assist them to lead valued lives. This role will require them to develop and refine their knowledge and competence in a range of skills in order to meet the changing needs of people with learning disabilities.**

Green, 1992, 10-12

The learning disability nurse:

- **Assesses the social and healthcare needs of people with learning disability**
- **Works with people with learning disability, and their family, to provide the best of support required, across the lifespan**
- **Practices and delivers adult care plans based on a systematic nursing assessment**
- **Is willing to develop knowledge and competence to address their skills to meet the changing needs of people with learning disability**

Works both independently and part of a team of healthcare and support workers

Supports people when children are young, adolescents, adults and older people with learning disability

Works in the community, hospital or further afield, in a variety of settings, day services, schools, prisons, specialist services

Uses their skills as manager, adviser and coordinator of services

The result is a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities to enjoy quality lives.

Introduction

Learning disability nursing is a person-centred profession whose primary aim is to support people with learning disabilities either directly or indirectly through improving or maintaining their health and wellbeing, and bringing about their social inclusion in their communities.

What do learning disability nurses do?

Learning disability nurses work with people with learning disabilities from birth through to death, those who may require a range of supports throughout their lives. This support will range from non- or minimal support through to intensive holistic nursing care aimed at meeting the multidimensional needs of people with learning disabilities. Much of the care planning and delivery of learning disability takes place in local community settings. Learning disability nurses must be competent in preparing robust, professionally prepared care plans based on a systematic nursing assessment. Much evidence exists of the positive contribution of learning disability nurses to the lives of people with learning disabilities. Learning disability nurses currently work in a wide range of organisational settings that include the NHS, local authorities and the third sector. Typically they are likely to work in inter-professional teams and for a variety of agencies. Recent changes in health and social care are creating new and exciting roles that are being undertaken by nursing disability nurses, for example nurses working in specialist healthcare teams in acute hospitals, mental health services and primary care. The *Strengthening the Greenhouse Learning Disability Nursing (UK, Chief Nursing Officer, 2012)* report has asserted that learning disability nurses are needed to ensure that people with learning disabilities of all ages, today and tomorrow, have access to the expert learning disability nursing they need, want and deserve. These primary areas of practice in the NHS are:

- **Health facilitation** - supporting mainstream access
- **Inpatient services** - for example, assessment and treatment, and secure services
- **Specialist roles** - community learning disability nurses

Other, broader, developments in healthcare roles, such as the modern matrix, specialist epilepsy nurses and nurse prescribers are all providing new areas of practice for learning disability nurses. Also learning disability nurses work in consultation who are able to offer valuable clinical, supervisory expertise along with both regional and national professional leadership.

The purist form of nursing – the context of learning disability nursing

Learning disability nursing is often referred to as the purist form of nursing, unlike colleagues in other fields of nursing, they do not concentrate on specific manifestations of physical ill health or trauma, or mental health and wellbeing, or children, or childbirth, for that matter, rather they offer support to people with learning disabilities, and their families that is embracing and quite literally from the cradle through to the grave. In order to offer competent, compassionate and comprehensive nursing interventions that meet the multidimensional needs of people with learning disability, it is helpful to adopt a structured approach to working. A comprehensive needs assessment (physical, psychological, social, spiritual and emotional) should first be completed. If a nurse is required to work with someone with learning disabilities and their family, it is necessary that their needs are assessed and incorporated into an individual care plan, taking their desires, wishes and preferences into account. The nurse must work closely with the health, family, care providers, and other professionals, as this approach will bring very important and essential information, as well as informing the development of a care plan, its approach, delivery and management. This detailed assessment is followed by the construction of a written care plan that is implemented, and followed up with ongoing reviews and evaluations. This very structured approach, using partnership working, and incorporating the multidimensionality of people, coupled with the person at the heart of planning, ensures that learning disability nurses provide holistic person-centred care and support.

A modelled approach

In response to social and political influences, learning disability care and models of support, care planning has changed considerably over recent years, as has the practice of learning disability nursing. For example, during the last century, many people with learning disabilities were located in urban and/or long-stay hospitals that were dominated by a medical model of care, emphasising the biological needs of people and the need to 'treat' physical problems. Most people with learning disabilities have now moved out of long-stay hospitals, but there remains a concern that the powerful effects of the medical model may continue to influence care provided in smaller community-based residences. It has been argued that the use of the medical model in the past privileged and alienated people with learning disabilities, leading to them being seen as 'less than human'. Therefore, nurses need to consider adopting a 'nursing model' to guide their care in practice, to ensure that they offer holistic nursing support. The use of any model must hold the person with learning disabilities central to the care planning process, and of course be realistic that they use a model to ensure that is best for that person. There are numerous nursing models that can be adapted and used in health and social care settings. Some nursing models are regularly used in learning disability nursing practice. An example of a world nursing model is that of Ingeger Lognes and Torrey OGGI this is well known and widely used within nursing professions. The model focuses on holistic care and is based on the concept of health rather than illness and disease. The model focuses on understanding the needs of people in terms of the activities of daily living they perform. The model embraces the idea that independence and dependence operate along a continuum relating to each activity of living separately.

Summary boxes remind you about key points to remember.

Summary

- Chromosomes are made of DNA.
- Each contains genes in a linear order.
- Human body cells contain 46 chromosomes in 23 pairs – one of each pair inherited from each parent.
- Chromosome pairs 1–22 are called autosomes.
- The 23rd pair are called sex chromosomes: XX is female, XY is male.

The website icon indicates that you can find accompanying resources on the book's companion website.



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About the companion website



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There you will find case studies to test your knowledge.



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