***Orem's Model
in Action***

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Orem's Model in Action

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To Lindy, Andrew and Ben

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===== A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE =====

Certain conventions have been observed in the writing of this book. First, a person receiving nursing care is usually referred to as a 'patient', but in some contexts as a 'client'; the terms are often interchangeable and their use tends to be dictated by local practice. Secondly, people in the book are usually referred to by their first name only – this reflects the trust established in effective nurse–patient relationships; each patient is understood to have consented to this use of his or her name. Thirdly, unless the context requires otherwise the nurse is referred to as 'she' and the patient as 'he'. These conventions are solely for reasons of simplicity, clarity and style.

PREFACE

Of all the nursing care models that have evolved within the USA, Dorothea Orem's has been perhaps the most influential. Adopted widely within the UK, Europe and elsewhere, it has offered a refreshingly direct approach to modern care situations. The notions of 'self-care' and of nurses making very active decisions on just how much to intervene with patients – choosing a 'nursing care system' – appeal to the profession today. The economics of health care, and a rising tide of health-care consumerism, mean that nurses must consider carefully just what role they should play with a patient. Often to intervene strongly, to act *for* patients, is inappropriate, undermining their motivation to look after themselves when they have the capacity to do so. This may be not only an untherapeutic approach but one that invades personal privacy and threatens the individual's dignity. Some nursing care may best be presented in the form of education and support, teaching or guiding the patient in self-care measures.

On ethical, legal and professional grounds, nurses must now carefully reflect on the care they plan, deliver and eventually evaluate. The Orem model facilitates this effectively, addressing the patient's self-care deficits through a wide-ranging assessment. The model covers not only universal self-care need (self-care requisites), but also those needs specific to the individual's physical, social and psychological development, and to this encounter with illness or injury and with the caring professions (developmental and health-deviation self-care requisites).

Having accepted that Orem's work is of major importance to nursing, we are still faced with a need to examine her concepts of care in action. This is particularly important when such concepts must be taken out of the context of American culture and clinical

nursing practice and transplanted into nursing-care settings within the UK and elsewhere. In short, we need to draw upon informed interpretation of the model, and to this end Stephen Cavanagh's volume will be most welcome. Personal contact with Orem-based care in the USA, and an established reputation for teaching the model's concepts to nurses, equips him to help the reader deal with the exciting new ideas and perspectives that Orem offers.

Once the nurse has moved beyond the difficulty of wrestling with new concepts and 'foreign semantics', the Orem model of care can seem delightfully simple. In many respects this is as it should be, given that it is designed for practical use by nurses in busy clinical settings. Nevertheless, it should not be underestimated as a piece of nursing theory, for the nurse who really practises Orem-based care can no longer rely on ritualised practice or avoid partnering the patient in very active care-planning. Orem-based nursing care involves the nurse in some honest decisions and a fundamental rethink of the caring relationship. To this end, the care studies in Part II, and the balanced critique of the model in Part III, will be invaluable.

This then is a volume intended to be of interest to nurses, student and qualified alike. It is eminently practical, explaining the model in the context of varied examples of patient situations, but never accepting its tenets without healthy criticism. It is a volume that joins the many on nursing models, but it stands out as an informed interpretation, and one by which I am sure nurses will feel encouraged.

Bob Price