

advanced practice nurse role

Advanced Practice Nurse Role: Exploring Its Impact and Scope in Modern Healthcare

advanced practice nurse role is a vital component in today's healthcare system, bridging gaps between patients, physicians, and the broader medical community. With the growing complexity of healthcare needs and the increasing demand for accessible, quality care, advanced practice nurses (APNs) have emerged as essential providers who not only deliver clinical services but also contribute significantly to healthcare innovation, education, and leadership.

Understanding the depth and breadth of the advanced practice nurse role offers valuable insight into how these professionals elevate patient care, influence health outcomes, and shape the future of medicine.

What Defines the Advanced Practice Nurse Role?

At its core, the advanced practice nurse role refers to registered nurses who have pursued advanced education, typically at the master's or doctoral level, to expand their clinical expertise and assume greater responsibilities. These nurses possess specialized skills that enable them to perform comprehensive assessments, diagnose illnesses, develop treatment plans, and prescribe medications in many states.

The role is not limited to clinical functions; advanced practice nurses also engage in research, policy development, and education, making their contribution multifaceted and indispensable.

Categories of Advanced Practice Nurses

The advanced practice nurse role encompasses several recognized specialties, each tailored to meet specific patient needs:

- **Nurse Practitioners (NPs):** Provide primary and specialty care across the lifespan, focusing on health promotion, disease prevention, and management of acute and chronic conditions.
- **Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs):** Experts in a particular area such as pediatrics, geriatrics, or oncology, offering direct patient care, consultation, and system-level improvements.
- **Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs):** Specialize in women's reproductive health, prenatal care, labor and delivery, and postpartum support.
- **Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs):** Provide anesthesia and pain

management services in various surgical and procedural settings.

Each category highlights the versatility and specialized knowledge embedded within the advanced practice nurse role.

The Clinical Impact of the Advanced Practice Nurse Role

One of the most visible facets of the advanced practice nurse role is its direct influence on patient care. APNs often serve as primary care providers, especially in underserved or rural areas where physician shortages persist. Their ability to offer comprehensive care reduces barriers, such as long wait times and limited access, thereby enhancing patient satisfaction and health outcomes.

Enhancing Patient Outcomes Through Holistic Care

Advanced practice nurses adopt a holistic approach that considers the physical, emotional, social, and environmental factors affecting health. This patient-centered care model encourages active patient participation, fostering better adherence to treatment plans and healthier lifestyle choices.

Moreover, APNs emphasize preventive care, educating patients about risk factors and early detection, which can significantly lower the incidence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

Collaboration and Coordination Within Healthcare Teams

The advanced practice nurse role is also critical in facilitating teamwork among healthcare providers. APNs coordinate care plans, communicate effectively with physicians, pharmacists, social workers, and other specialists to ensure seamless patient management. Their leadership in interdisciplinary teams often results in reduced hospital readmissions and improved continuity of care.

Educational Pathways and Certification

Entering the advanced practice nurse role requires a commitment to advanced education and rigorous clinical training. Most APNs hold at least a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), though the trend is shifting toward Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs that emphasize leadership and evidence-based practice.

Steps to Becoming an Advanced Practice Nurse

While requirements vary by state and specialty, the typical pathway includes:

1. Obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and becoming a licensed Registered Nurse (RN).
2. Enrolling in an accredited graduate program focused on the chosen APN specialty.
3. Completing supervised clinical hours to gain hands-on experience.
4. Passing a national certification exam administered by recognized bodies such as the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).
5. Meeting state licensure requirements to practice as an APN.

Continuing education and periodic recertification are important to maintain competency and stay updated with evolving healthcare standards.

Challenges and Opportunities in the Advanced Practice Nurse Role

Despite the growing recognition of their value, advanced practice nurses face several challenges that can impact their effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Scope of Practice and Regulatory Barriers

One significant hurdle involves regulatory limitations on the scope of practice. In some regions, APNs must work under physician supervision or face restrictions on prescribing medications, which can limit their ability to provide autonomous care. Advocacy efforts continue to push for full practice authority, arguing that expanding APN roles can alleviate healthcare shortages and improve access.

Workload and Burnout

Given their critical roles, many APNs experience high patient loads and administrative demands. Balancing direct patient care with responsibilities in leadership, education, or research can contribute to stress and burnout. Healthcare organizations are increasingly recognizing the need for supportive work environments and resources that promote APN well-being.

Opportunities for Leadership and Innovation

On the positive side, the advanced practice nurse role opens doors to leadership positions within clinical settings and healthcare policy arenas. APNs often spearhead quality improvement initiatives, implement evidence-based protocols, and contribute to shaping healthcare delivery models that prioritize patient-centered care.

Additionally, technological advancements such as telehealth have expanded the reach of APNs, enabling them to serve patients remotely and enhance chronic disease management.

The Future of the Advanced Practice Nurse Role

As healthcare continues to evolve, the advanced practice nurse role is poised to grow in both scope and influence. The increasing prevalence of chronic illnesses, aging populations, and the need for cost-effective care underscore the importance of APNs in filling care gaps.

Emerging trends suggest that APNs will play a larger role in population health management, healthcare informatics, and personalized medicine. By integrating technology, data analytics, and patient engagement strategies, advanced practice nurses can deliver more precise and proactive care.

Furthermore, expanding educational opportunities and removing practice barriers will empower APNs to fully utilize their skills, ultimately benefiting patients and the healthcare system as a whole.

In exploring the advanced practice nurse role, it becomes clear that these professionals are not just caregivers but essential innovators and leaders. Their unique blend of clinical expertise, patient advocacy, and collaborative spirit enhances healthcare delivery in profound ways, making the future of healthcare brighter and more inclusive.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the primary role of an advanced practice nurse (APN)?

The primary role of an advanced practice nurse is to provide expert clinical care, including diagnosis, treatment, and management of patient health conditions, often with a focus on prevention and health education.

How do advanced practice nurses differ from registered nurses?

Advanced practice nurses have completed graduate-level education and training, allowing them to perform higher-level clinical tasks such as prescribing medications, diagnosing illnesses, and managing overall patient care, which registered nurses typically do not perform.

What are the common specializations within the advanced practice nurse role?

Common specializations include Nurse Practitioner (NP), Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). Each specialization focuses on different aspects of healthcare delivery.

How do advanced practice nurses contribute to addressing healthcare provider shortages?

Advanced practice nurses help alleviate healthcare provider shortages by increasing access to primary and specialty care, especially in underserved or rural areas, through their ability to provide comprehensive patient care independently or collaboratively.

What educational requirements are necessary to become an advanced practice nurse?

To become an advanced practice nurse, one must obtain at least a master's degree in nursing (MSN) or higher, such as a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), along with obtaining national certification and state licensure specific to their advanced practice role.

What impact do advanced practice nurses have on patient outcomes?

Advanced practice nurses have been shown to improve patient outcomes by providing high-quality, evidence-based care, enhancing patient education, promoting preventive health measures, and managing chronic diseases effectively, leading to better overall health and reduced hospital readmissions.

Additional Resources

Advanced Practice Nurse Role: A Critical Examination of Its Impact on Modern Healthcare

advanced practice nurse role has evolved significantly over the past few decades, becoming integral to the delivery of comprehensive healthcare services worldwide. As healthcare systems face increasing demands due to aging populations, chronic disease prevalence, and physician shortages, the advanced practice nurse (APN) has emerged as a vital component in bridging gaps and enhancing patient outcomes. This article explores

the multifaceted nature of the advanced practice nurse role, its scope, challenges, and the growing recognition it receives in various healthcare settings.

Defining the Advanced Practice Nurse Role

The advanced practice nurse role encompasses a group of highly trained nursing professionals who have acquired advanced clinical education, typically at the master's or doctoral level, enabling them to provide a higher level of care compared to registered nurses. This role includes several categories such as Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs), and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs).

Each of these specialties operates within a defined scope of practice, which often overlaps with traditional physician roles but emphasizes a holistic, patient-centered approach. The advanced practice nurse role is characterized by autonomy in decision-making, diagnostic reasoning, and management of acute and chronic conditions, including prescribing medications in many jurisdictions.

Scope of Practice and Responsibilities

The scope of practice for APNs varies by country and even by state or region within countries, influenced by regulatory frameworks and healthcare policies. Typically, advanced practice nurses are involved in:

- Performing comprehensive patient assessments
- Diagnosing illnesses and ordering diagnostic tests
- Developing and managing treatment plans
- Prescribing medications and other therapies
- Providing health education and counseling
- Coordinating care among multidisciplinary teams

For instance, Nurse Practitioners in the United States often have full practice authority, enabling them to operate independently, whereas in other countries, their practice may require physician collaboration or oversight.

The Impact of Advanced Practice Nurses in Healthcare Systems

The integration of the advanced practice nurse role has demonstrated measurable improvements in healthcare accessibility, quality, and cost-efficiency. Numerous studies underline that APNs deliver care comparable to physicians in primary care settings, with high patient satisfaction and equivalent health outcomes.

Addressing Primary Care Shortages

One of the most pressing challenges in modern healthcare is the shortage of primary care providers. Advanced practice nurses have been instrumental in filling this void, especially in rural and underserved areas. Their training equips them to manage common illnesses, provide preventive care, and promote health literacy, thereby reducing the burden on physicians and emergency departments.

According to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), over 290,000 licensed NPs in the U.S. provide primary and specialty care, with approximately 60% practicing in primary care settings. This widespread presence enhances healthcare accessibility and continuity.

Cost-Effectiveness and Resource Utilization

From an economic perspective, employing advanced practice nurses can reduce healthcare costs while maintaining or improving quality. APNs generally command lower salaries than physicians, and their ability to manage routine and chronic conditions effectively can limit unnecessary hospital admissions and specialist referrals.

A study published in Health Affairs found that expanding the scope of practice for NPs in states with full practice authority correlated with lower Medicare expenditures and reduced hospitalizations for ambulatory care-sensitive conditions.

Educational and Certification Requirements

The advanced practice nurse role demands rigorous education and certification processes to ensure clinical competence and patient safety. Typically, candidates must first become registered nurses (RNs) and then pursue graduate-level education.

Educational Pathways

The common educational trajectory includes:

1. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or equivalent
2. Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
3. Specialized clinical training in a chosen APN role

The shift toward the DNP as the preferred terminal degree for APNs reflects an emphasis on clinical leadership, evidence-based practice, and healthcare policy expertise.

Certification and Licensure

Certification is typically awarded by professional bodies such as the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) or specialty organizations. Licensure requirements vary but generally mandate passing a national certification exam and fulfilling continuing education obligations.

Challenges and Limitations in the Advanced Practice Nurse Role

Despite its proven benefits, the advanced practice nurse role faces several challenges that impact its full potential.

Regulatory Barriers

Variability in state or national regulations can restrict APNs' scope of practice, limiting their ability to prescribe medications or practice independently. These restrictions often stem from political, professional, or economic interests and may hinder access to care in areas that need it most.

Professional Recognition and Collaboration

While the APN role has gained recognition, some healthcare environments still struggle with role clarity, leading to conflicts or underutilization of APN skills. Effective interdisciplinary collaboration requires clear communication and mutual respect among healthcare providers to optimize patient care.

Workload and Burnout

Advanced practice nurses often carry significant workloads, balancing clinical duties, administrative responsibilities, and continuing education. This can contribute to burnout, which affects job satisfaction and retention.

Future Trends and the Evolving Landscape

The advanced practice nurse role is poised for continued expansion and transformation as healthcare demands evolve.

Telehealth and Technology Integration

The rise of telehealth has opened new avenues for APNs to deliver care remotely, improving access for patients in isolated regions. Integration of digital health tools, electronic health records, and artificial intelligence will likely augment APN capabilities in diagnostics and care management.

Policy Advocacy and Leadership

Increasingly, advanced practice nurses are stepping into leadership roles influencing healthcare policy, education, and organizational management. Their frontline experience provides valuable insights into patient needs and system efficiencies.

Global Perspectives

Internationally, the adoption of advanced practice nursing varies widely, with some countries rapidly expanding APN roles to meet healthcare challenges while others remain in early stages of implementation. Global health initiatives recognize the potential of APNs in achieving universal health coverage and addressing workforce shortages.

In summary, the advanced practice nurse role represents a dynamic and essential element of contemporary healthcare systems. Its impact spans improved access, quality of care, and cost savings, while challenges related to regulation and professional integration persist. As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, advanced practice nurses are poised to play an increasingly influential role in shaping patient-centered, efficient, and equitable care delivery worldwide.

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advanced practice nurse role: International Council of Nurses Madrean Schober, Fadwa Affara, 2006-11-28 Advanced Nursing Practice addresses the key issues in practice, education, regulation, research and role/practice development, which are central to defining the distinctive nature of advanced nursing practice (ANP) and explores international developments in the field of ANP. Advanced Nursing Practice has been developed in recognition of the key role nurses with advanced knowledge and skills play in developing health care services worldwide. The book tracks the evolution of new advanced practice nursing roles and innovative practice models, and examines the need for international guidelines. In exploring strategies for implementing ANP in the context of countries' health care needs, Advanced Nursing Practice addresses legal and ethical challenges and commonalities and differences in advanced nursing practice, while examining the implications, obstacles, and facilitative strategies in maintaining, implementing and supporting the development of ANP. This book provides guidance in decision-making, examines the implications for liaising with other health care professionals and encourages nurses to shape their role to the needs of their patients and practice.

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advanced practice nurse role: Advanced Practice Nurse Networking to Enhance Global Health Melanie Rogers, Daniela Lehwaldt, Josette Roussel, Michelle Acorn, 2024-04-18 This book is the first bringing together the work of the ICN NP/APN Network, recognised as the leading authority on advanced practice nursing globally. Since its inception a wide range of projects have been conducted. This book offers readers an overview of global developments led by the Network on advanced practice in addition to findings related to education, research, health policy and clinical practice. This volume recognises the benefits and challenges associated with the development of advanced practice nursing globally. It begins with an overview of the Network before discussing some of the global challenges. The second section of the book presents a variety of the Network's

projects and evidence informed data on APN role. This book presents the global context of advanced practice in a variety of settings; As such it is relevant for APNs, students, health policy makers, educators and researchers.

advanced practice nurse role: Successful Advanced Practice Nurse Role Transition Maria Kidner, 2022-08-04 This book is designed to help APN students and new APNs understand the process of role transition through the exploration of the Concept Analyses for APN Role Transition and Professional Identity. APN role transition from a generalist nurse to a graduate prepared Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) can be a challenging and emotional as the APN student progresses through graduate education, clinical experiences and during the first year of APN clinical practice. Precise steps that individuals can take to gain an in-depth understanding of the development of APN professional Identity through the personal process of role transition are provided. Role transition is complex, this book provides knowledge and skills on four levels of role transition based on the facilitators and barriers of macro, meso, micro, and personal levels. A critical aspect of role transition is gaining a personal insight of one's identity as person and as professional nurse. Professional identity changes significantly through the graduate education process and first year of clinical practice. This book emphasizes personal introspection and forethought to augment successful APN role transition and personal growth through a series of questions to guide personal thoughts while setting plans for the future as an APN. This unique book allows readers to gain the skills to help them progress through role transition to APN practice through the development of their professional identity by providing activities with journal space within the book. In addition, precise steps for developing a personal role transition plan include a framework to identify personal values, visions, mission, and goal statements. As the reader completes the activities provided throughout the book, they will have a valuable personal resource as they understand their role transition from generalist nurse to the APN role. An enhanced understanding of this role transition will result in a higher of degree of success in defining their personal and professional identity. This volume is intended for students in APN programs, new graduates, nurses changing roles where there is role transition confusion, and APNs seeking to understand their professional identity and /or gain insights into the multiple facets of the APN role.

advanced practice nurse role: Advanced Practice Nursing in der klinischen Pflegepraxis Johanna Feuchtinger, Sandra Weidlich, 2022-11-16 Advanced practice nursing (APN) is an approach to further academic qualification for nurses that has been recognized worldwide by the International Council of Nurses since 2018, with the aim of combining practical nursing competence with scientific work. Particularly in clinical nursing practice, the demand for APN nursing experts is increasing. In this field, they support patient care, especially in areas with increased and complex nursing and monitoring needs, and ensure the quality of care. This book discusses the relevance of and areas of activity for APNs in specialized areas in hospitals.

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Edition: Focuses on the pros and cons of international healthcare system models Reflects the evolving roles of the DNP and CNL Details the transition into practice for APRN master's and doctoral students, particularly NPs, CNSs, CNMs and CRNAs Focuses on the importance of APRN leadership in shaping health through political activism Discusses the impact of the APRN role on expected changes to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Emphasizes how APRNs can influence health policy, global health, and differentiated practice and leadership roles within interprofessional teams Updates information about educational requirements and differentiation from certification Expands coverage of professional issues and research-based practice Incorporates topics for discussion at the end of each chapter Key Features: Addresses interprofessional, global health, leadership roles, and practice issues regarding credentialing, prescriptive authority, and liabilities Delivers conceptual and practical frameworks for teachers and students Includes case studies, an instructor's manual, and PowerPoints Print version includes free, searchable, digital access to entire contents of the book

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Charlene M. Hanson, Mary Fran Tracy, Eileen T. O'Grady, PhD, RN, ANP, 2013-07-18 Addressing all major advanced practice nursing competencies, roles, and issues, *Advanced Practice Nursing: An Integrative Approach*, 5th Edition provides a clear, comprehensive, and current introduction to APN today. It applies APN core competencies to the major APN roles - including the burgeoning Nurse Practitioner role - and covers topics ranging from the evolution of APN to evidence-based practice, leadership, ethical decision-making, and health policy. This edition includes a new chapter on the international development of APN, new and enhanced illustrations, and a colorful new reader-friendly format for improved readability. From internationally known APN experts Ann Hamric, Charlene Hanson, Mary Fran Tracy, and Eileen O'Grady, along with a host of internationally recognized APN contributors, *Advanced Practice Nursing* introduces you to APN and helps you identify an APN role, develop key competencies for that role, and succeed as an APN. Coverage of APN core competencies defines and describes all competencies, including direct clinical practice, guidance and coaching, consultation, evidence-based practice (EBP), leadership, collaboration, and ethical decision-making. Operationalizes and applies APN core competencies to the major APN specialties including the Clinical Nurse Specialist, the Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, the Certified Nurse-Midwife, and the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. Content on managing APN environments addresses such factors as business planning and reimbursement; marketing, negotiating, and contracting; regulatory, legal, and credentialing requirements; health policy issues; and nursing outcomes and performance improvement research. Unique Exemplar boxes provide real-life scenarios, showing APN competencies in action. In-depth discussions of educational strategies show how nurses develop competencies as they progress into advanced practice. Discussions of APN role development clearly explain the career trajectory that you can anticipate as you transition to advanced practice. EXPANDED international focus includes a NEW International Development of Advanced Practice Nursing chapter that addresses common issues such as the public image and status of APN, dealing with physician resistance, discrepancies in titling, and educational standardization. ENHANCED reader-friendly format includes more headings, tables, and illustrations in lieu of long stretches of unbroken text. REVISED Evidence-Based Practice chapter emphasizes the key competency of evidence-based practice (EBP) and includes a comprehensive history and explanation of the steps of the EBP process. UPDATED Health Policy chapter covers key U.S. initiatives affecting APN including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing report, the Consensus Model of APRN Regulation, and how APNs can engage in the political process. ENHANCED Exemplar boxes (case studies), including Day in the Life vignettes of each APN specialty, emphasize innovative practices and coverage of advanced practice roles. Increased interprofessional content emphasizes the subjects of ethics, collaboration, and consultation. Enhanced integration of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) considerations and literature makes this text ideal for DNP programs.

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competencies to the major APN roles — including the burgeoning Nurse Practitioner role — and covers topics ranging from the evolution of APN to evidence-based practice, leadership, ethical decision-making, and health policy. This edition includes a new chapter on the international development of APN, new and enhanced illustrations, and a colorful new reader-friendly format for improved readability. From internationally known APN experts Ann Hamric, Charlene Hanson, Mary Fran Tracy, and Eileen O'Grady, along with a host of internationally recognized APN contributors, *Advanced Practice Nursing* introduces you to APN and helps you identify an APN role, develop key competencies for that role, and succeed as an APN. Coverage of APN core competencies defines and describes all competencies, including direct clinical practice, guidance and coaching, consultation, evidence-based practice (EBP), leadership, collaboration, and ethical decision-making. Operationalizes and applies APN core competencies to the major APN specialties including the Clinical Nurse Specialist, the Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner, the Certified Nurse-Midwife, and the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. Content on managing APN environments addresses such factors as business planning and reimbursement; marketing, negotiating, and contracting; regulatory, legal, and credentialing requirements; health policy issues; and nursing outcomes and performance improvement research. Unique Exemplar boxes provide real-life scenarios, showing APN competencies in action. In-depth discussions of educational strategies show how nurses develop competencies as they progress into advanced practice. Discussions of APN role development clearly explain the career trajectory that you can anticipate as you transition to advanced practice.

advanced practice nurse role: *A Caring Advanced Practice Nursing Model* Lisbeth Maria Fagerström, 2021-06-30 This book introduces readers to the basics of Advanced Practice Nursing (APN), which offers expanded clinical competence that can help improve the quality of health and care services. The book offers a range of perspectives on APN, APN models, APN education, challenges in the implementation of APN in new countries, as well as a description of the APN role, including areas of expertise. These core areas of the Caring APN model (clinical nursing practice; ethical decision-making; coaching and teaching; consultation; collaboration; case management; leadership; research and development) are described, together with the role of APN in acute care and primary healthcare service contexts. The book also explores the connection between epistemology, a three-dimensional view of knowledge (epistêmê, technê and phronesis) and a care perspective, as well as central theoretical aspects of nursing, e.g. health, holism and ethics/ethos. All research should be grounded in theoretical perspectives, and here we highlight the value of a caring and person-centered philosophy in advanced practice nursing. Through its specific focus on the central, generic theoretical features of nursing science that deepen the role of APN and the scope of practice and APN research and education, the content presented here will help any researcher, teacher or student understand the importance of epistemological issues for research, education and clinical practice in this field. Moreover, it can be used when designing Master's programs in Advanced Practice Nursing, making the book a valuable resource for the international nursing community.

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An awareness of this concept is integral to the provision of person-centred holistic care. However, APNs ability to provide spiritual care is often impeded by time pressures and the prioritisation of clinical tasks. Confusion about the meaning of spirituality and its relationship to religion compound the challenges involved in providing spiritual care leaving APNs feeling ill-equipped to address this area of care. Indeed many APNs view spirituality as synonymous with religion. This book provides clarity with the assumption that spirituality is innate to all of our patients and is related to what gives them hope, meaning and purpose. Fundamentally it is about being human. APNs ability to practice with kindness, compassion and empathy will naturally resonate with spiritually competent practice. It begins with an outline of the definitions of spirituality in addition to the concept of spiritually competent practice. An emphasis on the importance of personal development follows. Case studies from countries across the globe illustrate the benefit of integrating spirituality and provide evidence of the importance and relevance of integrating spirituality into practice. These include discussion and presentations of the related concepts of availability and vulnerability which will give APNs more confidence and competence to integrate spirituality into practice. This book is relevant for APNs, students, educators and researchers.

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