

EDITORIAL

Innovation in Nursing



Anna Goldman, MSN, RN, NPD-BC, and Barbara Brunt, MA, MN, RN, NE-BC, NPDA-BC® Co-editors

Nurses are at the forefront of developing innovative solutions to complex healthcare problems. Through innovation, they can drive the future creation of innovative healthcare systems. The American Nurses Association (ANA) is committed to cultivating a culture of innovation, actively supporting and nurturing the inherent innovative and pioneering spirit of nurses (ANA, n.d.). The ANA Innovation Department works across the ANA Enterprise, encompassing the ANA, the American Nurses Foundation (ANF), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

Have you heard of the “Backseat Buddy” app that uses Bluetooth technology to alert parents who have moved more than 50 meters from a car seat? This was developed by an Emergency Room nurse who was distressed when a child was left in a car seat in a locked car. Another nurse developed a screening protocol that helps identify individuals who are human trafficking victims. Algorithms for hypertension have helped decrease blood pressure readings (Johnson & Johnson, n.d.). Other examples include innovations in medication administration, such as bar code scanning, individualized medication packets, and computerized medication orders.

One way that nurses can lead innovation is through the use of design thinking. Dam (2024) defined design thinking as “a methodology which provides a solution-based approach to solving problems.” (para 1). It is useful to tackle complex problems by understanding the human needs involved, reframing the problem, brainstorming, and adopting a hands-on approach to prototyping and testing.

The five stages in the design thinking process are:

- Stage 1: Empathize – Research Your Users’ Needs,
- Stage 2: Define – State Your Users’ Needs and Problems,
- Stage 3: Ideate – Challenge Assumptions and Create Ideas,
- Stage 4: Prototype – Start to Create Solutions, and
- Stage 5: Test – Try Your Solutions Out. (Dam, 2024, para 3)

Creating an innovation involves starting with defining a problem and empathizing with the individuals you could help. The ideation stage includes talking with others to integrate other points of view. Synthesizing that information will help provide other underlying opportunities. Once you understand what you are designing, you can prototype your idea. This could involve designing a piece of equipment or piloting an idea with a small group. In this phase it is important to repeat the steps of prototyping, testing, and gathering feedback. Building support is an essential part of the process. You need to share your innovation with individuals who can help bring it to life (Johnson & Johnson, n.d.). If you would like to see an innovation in action, please click on the QR code.



The ANA Innovation Team aims to connect nurses with educational and aspirational content and events by pro-

viding opportunities to learn from and engage with members across the nursing community. They are working to create resources and funding opportunities to support the innovative work of nurses. According to Oriana Beaudet, DNP, RN, ANA Vice President of Nursing Innovation, “Your ideas and creativity will design and build the future of healthcare.” (ANA, n.d., para 2). The ANA endorses the definition of innovation developed by Lachman et al. (2006) as “the application of creativity or problem solving that results in a widely adapted strategy, product, or service that meets a need in a new and different way. Innovations are about improvement in quality, cost-effectiveness, or efficiency” (p. 205).

If you want to get more involved, ANA has engaged an online innovation community of learning and practice, and this community has over 11,000 nurses interested in innovation practice, research, and leadership. They also offer the Innovation Accelerator, which in 2023 was expanded to a free nine-month experience. This lets nurses advance their innovation knowledge, collaborate with fellow nurses interested in innovation, and practice pitching ideas to receive valuable feedback. The ANA Innovation Accelerator is the only program explicitly crafted for nurses and nursing students outside of an academic environment.

Other ANA Innovation events include the Innovation Awards, highlighting, recognizing, and celebrating nurse-led innovation that improves patient safety and outcomes. There is an Innovation Sandbox, designed to provide micro-funding for very early-stage ideas, and an Innovation Lounge, which offers



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the opportunity to engage in real-time networking, enhance personal skills, and connect colleagues and industry leaders to accelerate innovation in nursing and healthcare (ANA, n.d.).

Recognizing the need for action relating to innovation, Ohio State University invited nationally recognized leaders in nursing innovation for an Innovation Summit in 2021. The Summit Planning Committee invited nineteen experts from across the United States. The group explored gaps and barriers to innovation in the four pillars of academics, research, policy, and practice. This article provides specific information for ANA-Ohio members who are practicing in different areas. Members of each workgroup will continue to refine recommendations and strategies to address the identified gaps (Ohara et al., 2022).

Some examples from the literature that describe innovations in nursing practice, nursing education, and technology are highlighted. This is not a comprehensive list but provides information for additional reading, if desired.

Rylee and Cvanagh (2022) completed a scoping review of innovation in nursing practice. They identified three components essential to successful innovation:

- 1) the innate characteristics of the nurse, teams, leader, workplace, and organization,
- 2) the culture or environmental factors, and
- 3) the process components, which include the translation, assessment, outcome, and sustainability of the innovation.

Bruce et al. (2024) described an innovation in nursing education. A university in the United Kingdom created a digitally enhanced learning environment, which they named the Wellbeing in Student Education (WISE) Room. The authors concluded the WISE Room, with its multisensory, digital, and experiential nature, was beneficial for students throughout their education.

With the current nursing shortage, organizations are looking at technology to increase nurse recruitment, engagement, retention, and satisfaction. Blouin (2023) outlined how emerging innovative technology solutions can supplement and enhance past strategies.

This edition of the ANA-Ohio News Journal focuses on innovations in various settings. This includes innovations in the clinical arena, policy arena, and educational arena. Remember innovation can look different in each organization. Innovative ideas can come from anyone in the organization. Organizational leaders must support and nurture a culture of innovation for it to grow and make a difference. Please share with us how your organization supports innovation through our ANA-Ohio website article submission portal:



References online:
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