Position Statement for the Anne Boykin Institute on Earth Caring

Introduction

At the Anne Boykin Institute for the Advancement of Caring in Nursing, we recognize that caring extends beyond individual patient interactions to encompass our shared responsibility and moral imperative to care for the Earth, our common home. We share the visions of Saint Hildegarde von Bingen (Hildegard of Bingen, 1990) and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (2003), who provide insights into the spiritual and ecological dimensions of the Earth, recognizing the earth as a spiritual organism with a shared recognition of the Earth's sacredness, its dynamic and interconnected nature, and the integration of material and spiritual dimensions. We embrace Hildegard von Bingen's notion of "viriditas," a vital power that sustains life's greenness and drives the earth and all living things toward healing and wholeness (Maddox, 2001).

We understand health, justice, and the environment are intricately connected, particularly in nursing. Grounded in our mission to provide global leadership in caring-infused nursing education, practice, and research, we affirm our commitment to fostering a deep, moral imperative to prioritize the care and well-being of our Earth home as fundamental to the health of all living beings.

We believe that:

Caring for our Earth home is core to nursing: The environment, as a substantive meta-paradigm domain of nursing, compels our study of the interdependent relationship between health, justice, and the environment.

Caring is the foundational aspect of humanity: To be human is to be caring, which extends to all facets of life, including the stewardship of our earthly home and recognition of the intrinsic connection to individual and community well-being and environmental health.

Caring for our Earth home is a moral imperative: Caring for our planet is not merely an ethical obligation but a moral imperative rooted in our shared humanity. The degradation of our environment disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, exacerbating health disparities and injustices. As nurses, we must champion the cause of environmental stewardship, acknowledging that a healthy planet is essential for the health of individuals and communities.

Caring co-creates unity of meaning among paradoxes: By embracing the paradoxes of modern life, such as progress and conservation, we commit to finding unified approaches to care for our Earth home.

In alignment with our mission and values, we commit to collaborations with other scientists toward achieving the following objectives:

Understanding the moral Imperative for Caring for the Earth: Share information and mobilizing our community on the ethical necessity of environmental stewardship and incorporating environmentally responsible health practices into day-to-day life.

Examining the relationship between health, justice, and the environment grounded in caring: Conduct and disseminate research highlighting the interconnections between health, justice, and the environment. Advocate for action plans and policies for mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies and ensure equitable access to a healthy environment.

Advancing Caring Science through Environmental Stewardship: Apply caring science frameworks to Integrate environmental care principles and sustainability into nursing curricula and practice. Foster a culture of caring that extends beyond human relationships to include our relationship with our Earth home. This holistic approach enriches our understanding of care and reinforces our commitment to nurturing all life forms.

Creating actionable ideas to promote caring for our Earth home: Engage in partnerships and initiatives to encourage sustainable practices and policies within the healthcare and broader community and in mitigation efforts to reduce climate change, environmental degradation, and the dire consequences to our Earth home.

Conclusion

As a leader in caring science, the Anne Boykin Institute for the Advancement of Caring in Nursing is dedicated to advancing the visibility and significance of caring in all forms. Our commitment to earth caring as a fundamental aspect of our mission reflects a sound belief in the holistic nature of health and the necessity of nurturing our Earth home that sustains us. Through collaboration, we extend the moral imperative for environmental care, examining the relationships among health, justice, and the environment, advancing caring science, and creating actionable ideas. Together, we can inspire a transformative approach to nursing that prioritizes the well-being of our planet and all its inhabitants. Through caring-steeped education, research, and advocacy, we devote our efforts to creating a world where caring for our Earth home is recognized as an essential component of nursing and human well-being.

References

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