

How to Choose the Best Nursing Diagnosis Cheat Sheet

Hey there, friend!

Don't you just cringe when your friends tell you, *"Oh...nursing school can't be that bad."*

Or, your family doesn't understand why you didn't make dinner after a 12-hour clinical day?

sigh...

If you've been in nursing school for like, 5 minutes, you know what I'm talking about.

You know that nursing school is different.

And one thing that makes it so different (and challenging!) is the huge amount of responsibility on your shoulders to keep real live humans actually ALIVE.

And it all starts with care plans.

I know you struggle with them, because I did too.

So in this cheat sheet, I'll walk you through the step-by-step process for how to choose the BEST nursing diagnosis for your patient (and prioritize them!)

[Plus, I have all of these videos to walk you through how to write care plans step-by-step.](#)

Gone are the days of spending hours writing care plans.

This cheat sheet will make it a whole lot easier!

All my best,
Christina

p.s. I also have 3 bonus care plans for you PLUS a blank care plan template. You know I wouldn't let you down! :)

[Get your free example care plans here.](#)

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ASSESS YOUR PATIENT:

This is the most important step of selecting the best nursing diagnosis for your patient. You need to know your patient - what their goals are, what their needs are, and what they care about! And the best way to find all of this out, is to assess them.

So make sure you go into your nursing assessment prepared, knowing what information you need and what questions you need to ask. Take a few minutes before you go into the room to write these questions out, so you don't forget them.

KEY POINT: Your nursing instructors need to know that YOU know what you're doing. And the first step to proving to them that you know your stuff is to choose a nursing diagnosis that actually fits your patient.

SELECT THE BEST NANDA-I® NURSING DIAGNOSIS:

The nursing diagnosis is the patient's response to what is happening.

Nursing diagnoses are standardized by NANDA-International®, and you can find the entire list of nursing diagnoses in your school textbooks.

Always choose appropriate nursing diagnoses for your specific patient. This means that the nursing diagnoses you pick should always match your patient.

This is why it is so important for you to assess your patient. You must select the best nursing diagnosis that matches your patient, based on the assessment that you did.

PRIORITIZE YOUR NURSING DIAGNOSES:

Once you've assessed your patient and picked the best nursing diagnoses that fit them, you need to put them in order of most to least important. This means, decide what nursing diagnosis you will focus on first, second, third, and so on.

There are 2 primary principles you will use to prioritize your nursing diagnoses:

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- The ABC's

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Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that you need to focus on a patient's physiological and safety needs first, before you can address their emotional needs, like the need to be loved and belong, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization.

[Check out this video for a deep dive on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.](#)

The ABC's

The ABC principle is similar, as it prioritizes physiological needs first. ABC stands for airway, breathing, and circulation. In most cases, you will need to prioritize a patient's airway, breathing, and circulation needs first, before you address other things.

[Check out this video if you want more info on the ABCs.](#)

Of course, these may change based on the patient's unique situation. So make sure you are always using your amazing critical thinking skills, and doing what is best for your specific patient.