Using the Anthroposophical model

Education as an Anthroposophical nurse in New Zealand involves three years of graduate study and is available to registered nurses. The training and regulation of these nurses is the responsibility of the Anthroposophical Nurses Association of New Zealand (ANANZ).

An Anthroposophical nurse is a registered nurse who has extended her practice into the field of Anthroposophy. This field offers a holistic view of health care, accessing a deeper understanding of illness and health through spiritual insight. Wellbeing is a continuously moving and changing state, and achieving balance is a living and breathing process. The Anthroposophical nurse has therapies at her disposal that can help you to facilitate the healing process from within.

This way of nursing has been well established in many countries throughout the world since 1923. Its founder, Rudolf Steiner, was a philosopher and researcher who worked in many areas including medicine, education, biodynamic agriculture, architecture, economics, the arts and the inner life.

In Anthroposophy, the human being is recognised as having not only a physical body, but also a body of life forces, an emotional or feeling body and a sense of self/individuality or spirit. This perspective, known as the Four-Fold picture, underpins the nursing assessment, and provides a framework for the prescribing and administering of a wide range of therapies in the form of an individual therapy plan.

With Anthroposophical nursing, illnesses are seen as more than physical symptoms to be treated with medications. This approach looks at how balance is disturbed during illness, whether it is acute or chronic. The nurse takes into account the processes of inflammation and ‘hardening’ or sclerosis, and where the rhythm may have been lost and could be restored.

Questions are asked about your rhythms of sleeping, digestion, breathing and moods. The nurse will also ask about any significant biographical events such as crises and previous illnesses, as events such as these can impact on the immune system and the adrenal function. Other tools used include the COOP assessment (Dartmouth Primary Care Cooperative Information Project chart system, a tool for measuring daily capacity and wellbeing) and usual baseline recordings.

Supporting therapies

Because Anthroposophical nursing is a generalist approach to health care, there are wide applications for its use. Recently described in the New Zealand Nursing Review (December 2008)