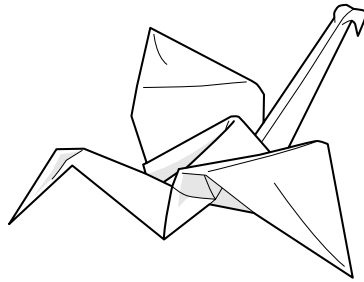


PART IV

THEORIES ABOUT SPECIFIC NURSING ACTIONS, PROCESSES, OR CONCEPTS: MIDDLE-RANGE THEORIES



CHAPTER 16

ENVISIONING THEORIES THROUGH ORIGAMI ART

Theories about specific nursing actions, processes, or concepts (*middle-range theories*) seek to define and provide direction for specific nursing activities. Middle-range theories are those in which nursing topics are most readily identifiable, and nurses who wish to follow the actions or steps described in a theory may do so. Nurses also may be able to replicate or simulate the experience described in the theory. For example, a middle-range theory might propose that there are six steps to productive mentoring relationships between experienced nurses and new nurses. Using the theory as a guide, it would be relatively straightforward for a nurse manager to institute and evaluate the effectiveness of using this six-step approach for mentoring new hires in her unit. If the approach turns out to be effective, then the nurse manager has implemented a valuable tool to enhance consistency of training for new hires. If the approach turns out to be less than helpful, then knowledge has been gained regarding applicability of the theory in this setting. Information has also been provided about mentoring techniques that may not be helpful within this nurse manager's particular pool of staff nurses. With either outcome, useful knowledge has been generated that will clarify for the staff nurses and the manager which approach might be most useful when mentoring new hires.

Envision origami when exploring theories that seek to describe a specific nursing action or process (middle-range theory). Origami is the art of following

specific steps for folding paper into recognizable designs or forms (see Color Plates 16.1 and 16.2 in the color insert). The word *origami* is Japanese, however, people in all cultures have engaged in paper folding since the invention of mass-produced paper roughly a century ago. In the United States, many children experiment with the process of folding paper into readily identifiable objects such as party hats, sailboats, and paper airplanes.

The art of origami consists of steps or actions that are meant to lead to a specific outcome or result, and likewise, middle-range theories consist of steps or actions that are meant to lead to a specific outcome or result. In nursing, the steps lead to a readily identifiable outcome related to care, and in origami the steps lead to a readily identifiable concrete object. In either case, carefully planned steps and actions are meant to lead to a concrete, desired outcome.

To create origami, one begins with a flat, square piece of paper that does not resemble a recognizable object. With careful step-by-step folding, the paper becomes something recognizable, such as an animal, flower, insect, boat, or airplane. The idea is simple: Decide what object will be evident after the folding is complete, such as an airplane, and then carefully fold the paper over and over again, until the airplane is done. If a friend folds a particularly good airplane, the best way to figure out how to make one just like it is to carefully unfold the creation and then follow the folds (or steps) to re-create it, learning how to replicate the design. Nursing research based on middle-range theories follows this same process of choosing a desired outcome and then following the steps provided in the theory to hopefully recreate the desired result.

Using a piece of copy paper or wrapping paper, create the origami airplane as shown in Figure 16.1.

The steps involved in the exploration of middle-range theories are similar to the steps involved in producing origami. The following are steps to use when exploring middle-range theories; the corresponding origami steps are in italics:

1. Identify what the concrete outcome of interest is, for example effective mentoring. *Identify what object will be produced, for example, a sailboat.*
2. Determine what processes or steps, for example, those meant to lead to effective mentoring, are outlined in the theory. *Find a pattern or series of fold sequences for transforming a sheet of paper into a sailboat.*

Origami Art

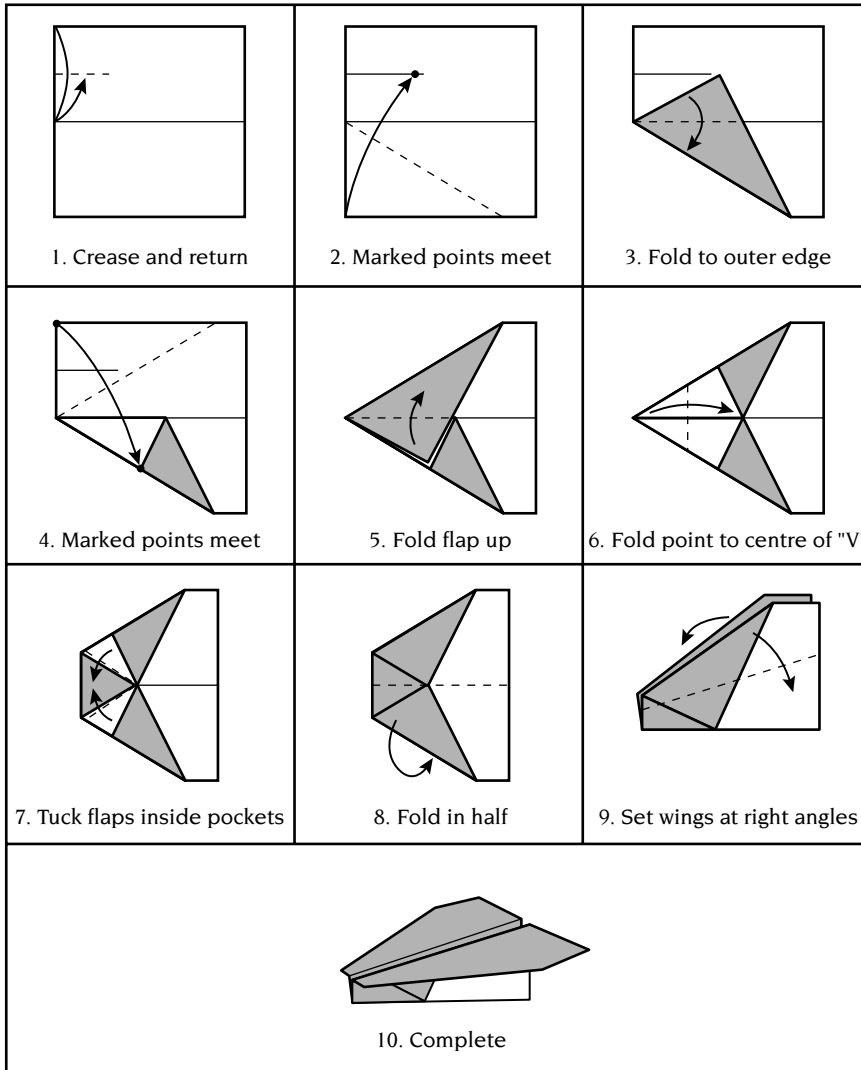


Figure 16.1 Step-by-step creation of an origami airplane.

This traditional origami model airplane was downloaded on May 25, 2003 from Dave's Origami Emporium, <http://members.aol.com/ukpetd/>

3. Through reflection and personal experience, assess whether the process or series of steps outlined in the theory resonate with personal understanding of effective nurse mentoring. *After completing all of the folds in the origami pattern, assess how closely the creation resembles your understanding of what a sailboat should look like.*
4. If the steps or processes outlined in the theory do not appear to match personal/professional experiences with the phenomenon of nurse mentoring, then explore a different theory or create a new one. *If the completed creation does not look like a sailboat, try another pattern or create a new one.*

Try creating some traditional origami art. Be mindful of the importance of each fold (or step) in completing the finished object. Figure 16.2 presents another traditional pattern to try.

When reading about theories that address a specific nursing action or process (a middle-range theory), ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the purpose of this theory? What is it meant to describe?
2. What are the steps outlined by the theory to achieve the desired result?
3. Are there a sufficient number of steps, and are they explained well enough that others would be able to replicate the desired result?
4. Does the overall pattern and resulting object, or process, resonate with personal/professional nursing experience?
5. What nursing environments would be appropriate to use this theory in?
6. Where would it *not be appropriate* to use the theory?
7. Would it be productive to share this theory with others who work in environments where it might fit?

Learning Activity

Go to the Jones and Bartlett Web site for this text <http://nursing.jbpub.com/sitzman> and explore the Web links listed for this chapter.

Origami Art

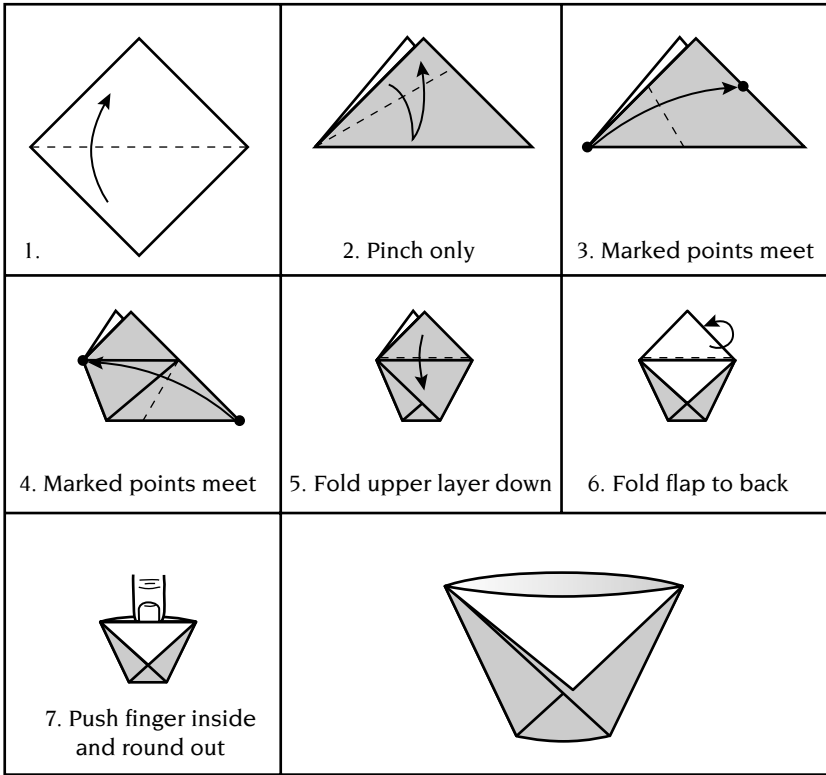


Figure 16.2 Origami drinking cup.

This traditional origami drinking cup was downloaded on May 25, 2003 from Dave's Origami Emporium, <http://members.aol.com/ukpetd/>

