

# NUR 380 : Embracing Wicked Problems in Healthcare

## An Interprofessional Undergraduate Course

In Review as General Education Issues Course NUR 364, Health Category



### What is Polarity Thinking?

Polarity Thinking provides a lens to examine and manage challenging and complex issues, dilemmas or competing values. We are surrounded by *interdependent pairs*, that we call polarities, though others refer to them as paradoxes, tensions or opposites. We often mistake polarities for problems to be solved. In actuality, polarities generally surface when there is unresolvable tension, fears, complaints or conflicts. Both sides of a polarity need each other over time to achieve a common purpose that neither could achieve alone. Neither side of a polarity is more important than the other. By focusing our time, money, energy or talent on one side of a polarity, we are destined to fail, since there is not a single solution. Applying the principles of polarity thinking with a BOTH/AND perspective empowers us to manage a polarity to achieve synergy and the most sustainable results.

### Course Description:

This course builds on problem solving skills and provides a lens to think about and manage polarities or paradoxical choices that exist in healthcare. This course is appropriate for students across disciplines who wish to apply dialogue and partnering skills to create sustainable solutions in healthcare. This course is taught in a hybrid format.

### Course Objectives:

- Distinguish between problems to solve and polarities to manage.
- Explain the foundational elements of polarity thinking and polarity management.
- Apply principles of polarity thinking to polarities within personal lives.
- Apply principles of polarity thinking to pertinent polarities within complex healthcare issues.
- Employ the principles of dialogue to collaborate with peers on polarity projects.
- Evaluate the principles of polarity thinking and polarity management to complete polarity projects.



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### COURSE SPECIFICS

In Review as General Education Issues Course NUR 364, Health Category  
Hybrid Course Format (meets live 4 – 5 times/semester)  
Classes Held at Cook DeVos Center for Health Sciences (CHS)

The importance of the skill of polarity thinking becomes apparent when we place it within the context of today's realities in our personal and professional lives. Wicked problems can camouflage sets or pairs of polarities that professionals encounter in contemporary healthcare issues.

#### Polarity Examples

<b>Candor</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Diplomacy</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Learning</b>
<b>Self</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Tradition</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Innovation</b>
<b>Mission</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Margin</b>
<b>Leader</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Follower</b>
<b>Feeling Competent</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Feeling Challenged</b>
<b>Structured</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Flexible</b>
<b>Staff Needs</b>	<b>AND</b>	<b>Patient/Client Needs</b>

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