

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Grissel Hernandez, Ph.D., MPH, RN, HNB-BC, NPD-BC, SGAHN, is a Latina Holistic Nurse Leader and Caring Science Scholar. She serves as the Executive Director at Stanford Health Care Center for Education and Professional Development (CEPD) in Palo Alto, California. Grissel has recent experience in the operationalization and integration of Watson Caring Science theory into professional practice and nursing professional development programs. She has over 20 years of Nursing Professional Development experience in ANCC Magnet and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award designated organizations and served as an Appraiser for the ANCC Pathways to Excellence and Nursing Continuing Professional Development Accreditation Programs.

Grissel is a Watson Caring Science Institute (WCSI) Faculty Associate and a founding member of Regional Caritas Consortiums in NY/NJ/PA and CA. She completed her Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Her qualitative research study aimed to describe and understand the lived experience of nurse leaders practicing within Watson Caring Science framework (aka. Caritas Coaches®), creating a caring, healing environment for staff. She is board-certified in Nursing Professional Development and Holistic Nursing. Grissel is a Caritas Coach through Watson Caring Science Institute and was recently inducted as a Scholar to the Global Academy of Holistic Nursing. She is currently completing a Post-Doctoral program in Caring Science with Dr. Jean Watson and Advanced Course in Implementation Science at the Stanford School of Medicine Center for Improvement. Grissel is an active member of the Stanford Health Care LatinX and Allies Employee Resource Group (ERG), Equality, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (EEDISJ) Committee of the American Holistic Nursing Credentialing Center (AHNCC) and board member of the International Association of Human Caring (IAHC), and Watson Caring Science Institute (WCSI),

Grissel has made it her life's mission to share her leadership and patient experience to educate healthcare providers about the healing power of compassion, authentic presence, reflection, intentionality, nurture of self, and gratitude (C.A.R.I.N.G.).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HOLISTIC NURSING

My contribution to holistic nursing began 25 years ago, during my undergraduate nursing program at the University of Pennsylvania. The holistic nursing theory of Jean Watson's Caring Science resonated and aligned with my reasons for becoming a nurse. From that moment, Watson Caring Science theory became my philosophical and ethical-moral compass, informing my nursing student experience and, eventually, my future holistic nursing professional life.

Caring Science reconnected me with the moral and ethical dimensions of caring in nursing, reminding me that as a holistic nurse, I have a social covenant with the public to advocate for my patients and, above all, preserve their humanity and dignity.

In addition, Watson's Caring Science strong emphasis on caring for self as a caregiver permitted me to slow down, and engage in mindful self-care micro-practices, as I connected with others.

This holistic nursing theory's core principles and Caritas Processes® informed my varied nursing roles, including student, direct patient care, educator, and administrator. My journey with holistic nursing guided by Caring Science extended beyond my professional nursing career into personal experiences, which transformed how I viewed holistic nursing as a consumer of care. My journey started with my parents' experiences with cancer diagnosis and treatment, my own experience with renal cancer at age 38, and finally, the untimely death of my beloved husband, John, at age 53, of a heart attack and my mother at age 72 of complications from sepsis.

Through these painful experiences, I found myself grieving as a daughter, wife, patient, and nurse healer. At times, it was not easy to separate all four. Luckily, I had a practice rooted in holistic nursing guided by Caring Science to help me re-frame and make sense of my feelings. Just as an alchemist transforms lead into gold, I used these painful experiences as opportunities for transformation and to become a better holistic nurse. My Caring Science theory-based practice that began in nursing school continues to this day. I integrated holistic theory and core concepts into patient care and nursing education activities in my multiple nursing roles, including nursing orientation, preceptor development, new nurse residency program, nursing leadership development program, and my nursing leadership practice.

These experiences led me toward a deeper appreciation and exploration of holistic nursing and Watson Caring Science, caring in nursing leadership, and the role of holistic nurse leaders in creating a caring, healing environment for their staff within the context of a healthcare organization. For this reason, the next step on my holistic nursing and Caring Science advanced studies journey was the completion of my Ph.D. in nursing from the University of Colorado, College of Nursing in the Caring Science track. The intent was to describe and understand the lived experience of creating a caring, healing environment for staff from the perspective of nurse leaders practicing within Watson Caring Science framework (aka. Caritas Coaches®). In the process, the universal essence of the phenomenon emerged: Creating a caring, healing environment for staff is the embodied, caring-loving consciousness engaged in informed, moral actions and practices. The findings in this study provided a window into an evolved way of leading from a caring consciousness.

This qualitative study created a deeper understanding of nurse leaders' experiences and elements that reflect an evolved leadership practice guided by caring-loving consciousness. The study added to the evolving Watson Caring Science theory-guided research and translation into practice. The Caring Science theory-guided research findings will serve as a foundation for the creative emergence of a Caritas Coach Leader theoretical model for practice integration that can serve as a framework for an organizational-wide Caring Science integration strategic plan. I hope the findings spark a much-needed and honest dialogue about the role holistic theory-guided education, practice, and research have in creating caring, healing environments that support humanistic care and promote human flourishing. I consider this my life's work.

Finally, the most meaningful way I am preserving and promoting the legacy of holistic nursing and Caring Science is by establishing the [John Matthew Kertland Scholarship \(DONATE\)](#) at WCSI

for the [Caritas Coach Education Program®](#). The scholarship was created in 2017 in memory of my husband, John Matthew Kertland V, to honor his support of my love for holistic nursing, Caring Science, and symbolizes a lifelong commitment to Caring Science education and promotion and understanding of caring for others.