

March 25, 2015

Dear IFNA Awards Committee Members,

With the great admiration and enthusiasm, I would like to nominate **Dr. Kathy Knafl** for the **Excellence in Family Nursing Award for Research**. Dr. Knafl's lifetime achievement in developing and disseminating novel concepts and research regarding the nursing of families, is, I believe, unparalleled. Her contributions are theoretical, substantive and methodological and have extended from the 1980s into the present. It is not an overstatement to say that Dr. Kathy Knafl has changed the face of family nursing research with her seminal contributions. She has also contributed to the formation of team science in family nursing, and has trained multiple generations of nurse scientists in family nursing. Alongside her brief biographical sketch, which documents the breadth of her contributions, I will comment on the quality and depth of her contributions to the field of family nursing.

Dr. Knafl has published at least 75 separate manuscripts focused on varied aspects of family response to chronic illness in a child. Counted in these contributions are only those manuscripts that focus on family nursing science, although she has made consistent written contributions to other aspects of nursing, qualitative research and education. In addition, she has authored a books and 14 book chapters on family development and illness response. Her early work focused on breastfeeding and experiences of children in the hospital. Her seminal work, developed as part of a research team with Dr. Janet Deatrick, focused on conceptualizing family response to a child's chronic condition (1987). This work, labeled at first as Family Management Style (1990) and subsequently as the Family Management Style Framework (2012), articulates the varied patterns and processes that families undergo in adapting to a chronic condition in a child. With NIH funding, Dr. Knafl advanced the measurement of the family management in the Family Management Measure (2011), which has been widely adopted in the field. The FMSF has had tremendous reach in nursing and beyond, as is evident in citations to papers that outline key constructs in the framework; citations for FMSF generally number 100 to 150 according to Google Scholar. In addition, a special issue in the Journal of Family Nursing in 2012 examined new directions in the framework, and demonstrated the vibrancy of the concepts for conducting research on families with chronically ill children.

A second seminal paper, on which she also worked on with Dr. Deatrick was the concept analysis of normalization in families with a chronically ill child. This work again demonstrates Dr. Knafl's consistent working and reworking of concepts in the field to hone the best possible frame. The original concept development of normalization was first published in 1988, and the concept has been through consistent revision and reframing (2002), ending with the most recent articulation using perspectives from families on the meaning of the concept (2010).

Throughout her career, Dr. Knafl has made groundbreaking contributions to the accretion of knowledge in family nursing via her syntheses of family nursing research. Such work is painstaking, and requires a sophisticated gestalt of the field in order to produce a quality synthesis. Many of us have consistently relied upon and admired Dr. Knafl's syntheses and review papers, employing them in our graduate student coursework. At the moment, Dr. Knafl

is lead PI on an NIH-funded, major mixed method synthesis of recent studies on family research in childhood chronic conditions. We look forward to her publications, some of which are in press, to assist in clarifying the state of the knowledge for the years 2000 to 2015.

Dr. Knafel is a consummate research scientist. Both junior to the senior faculty seek her expertise to collaborate on research, concept development and methods development. She has led or collaborated in diverse research teams that include such noteworthy co-investigators as Drs. Ayres, Angst, Gallo, Gilliss, Grey, Sawin, and Sullivan-Boyai to name only a few. In projects too numerous to recount, Dr. Knafel has made substantial contributions to the thinking of other nurse scientists, and to the successful completion and dissemination of the research they proposed. She is a thoughtful, generous and committed researcher. In addition, she has repeatedly collaborated or consulted with international colleagues, most recently with Dr. Swallow in England, and Dr Syzlit in Brazil. Clearly, many of her ideas and research have resonance not only in the U.S. but track across cultural and national boundaries.

Although this letter of nomination is primarily focused upon Dr. Knafel's contributions to family nursing research, I would be remiss if I did not mention her outstanding contributions to the International Family Nursing Association and Conferences. Dr. Knafel, along with Dr. Bell and myself, was one of the founding members of the organization, meeting via telephone for years in order to structure a nonprofit organization that could serve as an international meeting place for family nurses. She has the distinction of being the only family scientist who has chaired three International Family Nursing Conferences in Chicago (2000), Minneapolis (2013) and Odense, Denmark (2015). Her involvement in the conferences is indicative of all her IFNA work, which is engaged, detail oriented, selfless, discerning, responsive to the aims and purposes of the organization. Her contributions have, without understatement, enabled the successful conduct of these conferences based on her considerable personal sacrifice and skill in soliciting the help of other IFNA members. She is simply the *best* at these organizing activities.

In short, I believe the Dr. Knafel is exceedingly deserving of the inaugural Excellence in Family Nursing Award for Research. Dr. Knafel's contributions via research publication, her considerable success in partnering with other nurse scientists, her efforts to synthesize family nursing knowledge and her intellectual contributions to identifying new concepts and models have made a profoundly positive mark on our field. It would be fitting to acknowledge her gifts with this Award.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Chesla

Professor and Shobe Endowed Chair
University of California, San Francisco