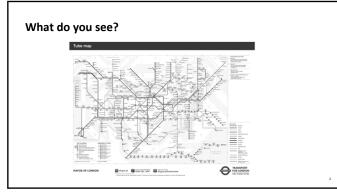
# Week 2: Theories of Knowledge

NURS 485 – The Discipline and Profession of Nursing III

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## Why does this matter?

- Helps us understand research and identify the researcher's perspective
- $\bullet$  Can assess where this knowledge 'fits' into our understandings of nursing
- Appreciate why other people see things differently

#### What are we talking about?

- Ontology- What is it?
- Epistemology- What do you have to know to do it?
- Axiology- What is its value?

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#### Ontology

- What is the thing? What are the <u>relationships</u> between the things?
- Nurses do things for patients
- is different than
- Nurses are partners with patients
- The way you understand your topic indicates how you might chose to study it

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#### Epistemology

- What do we need to know to do it? What is considered knowledge?
- If we need to know about birth, we can study the stages of labour

OR

• Birth is something you can really only know about after you have been through it

## Axiology

- What do we value about the thing?
- Values determine our professional <u>ethics</u>
- We should not give people with addictions high doses of opioids OR
- We should keep someone out of withdrawal so we can focus on other issues

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#### **Philosophy Summary**

- These concepts help us understand what we do and how it fits into our profession and society
- People with a different ontology/ epistemology/ axiology of nursing will be a nurse in a different way
- When we do research, we can understand these differences, and make new knowledge from different lenses

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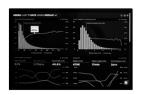
## What are research paradigms?

- Paradigms are ways of understanding the world around us
- "Lens" for interpretation of our experiences
  - Empirical
  - InterpretiveCritical

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## **Empirical Paradigm**

- Sometimes called positivist/postpositivist
- There is an objective truth, which we can measure (and possibly control)
- Usually quantitative methods
- Deductive reasoning: top down



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#### **Interpretive Paradigm**

- There may be an objective truth, but what matters is how people feel about and understand this truth
- Usually qualitative methods

• Inductive reasoning: bottom up



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#### **Critical Paradigm**

- What we understand as truth can be deconstructed and changed
- Various methods, often participatory research
- Question what we know to be "truth" and offer alternative explanations/understandings/behaviours



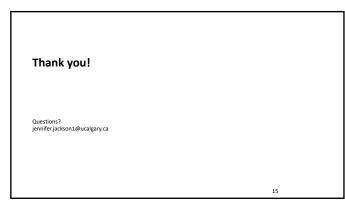
Paradigm	Purpose	Methods	Example
Empirical	Understand objective reality	Usually quantitative	Measure poverty
Interpretive	Understand meanings of reality	Usually qualitative	Understand how it feels to live in poverty
Critical	Change/deconstruct reality	Varies, participatory action research	Create group to help alleviate poverty

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## When you read an abstract...

- What paradigm does this author have?
- How did their paradigm influence the choices they made?
- How is this research valued?

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