Professional Standards for Neuroscience Nurses

Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association (ANNA)

Introduction

Neuroscience nursing was formally established as a specialty in Australia when Tonnie Koenen was admitted as a member of the World Federation Neuroscience Nurses (WFNN) and given the task of establishing a national society of neuroscience nurses in Australia. On the 4th May 1974 the first meeting of the Australasian Neurosurgical Nurses Association (ANNA) was held in Canberra, ACT during the Neurological Society of Australasia annual meeting. Thirty nurses from the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia met to formally establish the Australasian Neurosurgical Nurses' Association. In 1977 the Australasian Neurosurgical Nurses' Association was formally accepted as a member of the World Federation Neuroscience Nurses. The associations name was formally changed to the Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association in 1987 to recognise the diversity of members and neuroscience nursing. In 1989 the association conducted the first 2 day annual meeting, including a workshop on the "Standards of Neuroscience Nursing Practice". Through reflection on the diversity and nature of neuroscience nursing, a set of broad, generic professional standards was developed that would capture the attributes required for specialist nursing practice across a variety of neuroscience settings. Following review and revision in keeping with the scope of nursing practice these standards were first published in 1992.

The development of these standards was critical to the recognition of neuroscience nursing as a specialty. In 2002 a co-ordinated group of dedicated members subsequently revised the standards to reflect the variety of practice areas and settings of neuroscience nurses.

Professional standards are aimed at promoting, guiding and maintaining safe and clinically competent nursing practice, whilst ensuring optimal patient care. Professional standards encourage nurses to enhance their knowledge base through experience and continuing education with evidence based practice.

Professional Standards for Neuroscience Nurses

The following domains define the standards of professional performance for the neuroscience nurse:

Domain 1:   **Legal**

Domain 2:   **Ethical**

Domain 3:   **Leadership and Management**

Domain 4:   **Clinical Practice**

Domain 5:   **Teamwork and Collaboration**

Domain 6:   **Resource Utilisation**

Domain 7:   **Professional Development**

Domain 8:   **Research and Evidence Based Practice**

Domain 1:   Legal

This domain refers to nursing practice in accordance with State and Federal legislation.

1.1 Performance Standard
Functions in accordance with legislation and common law affecting nursing practice.

Performance Criteria

1.1.1 Demonstrates practice that complies with legislation and common law pertinent to nursing practice.

Examples:
• Adheres to legislative and organizational requirements for drug storage and
 Administration.
• Verifies informed consent in the course of practice.
• Ensures patient safety by consistent attention to duty of care.

1.1.2 Demonstrates accountability for nursing practice.

Examples:
• Initiates and implements clinical decisions based within own scope of practice.
• Demonstrates awareness of predictable and unpredictable outcomes of clinical decisions.
• Ensures accurate and complete documentation in clinical records.

1.1.3 Identifies unsafe practices that contravene the law.
Ensures safe and ethical protocols are followed.

1.1.4 Demonstrates practice that displays awareness of relevant acts and resources. Examples:
• Nurse's Act
• Organ and Tissue Transplant Act
• Freedom of Information Act
• Occupational Health and Safety Act
• Equal Opportunity Act
• Privacy Act
• Carer Recognition Act
• National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards 2011
• Australian Disability Discrimination Act
• Disability Amendment Act 2012
• National Clinical Supervision Competency Resource 2013

Domain 2: Ethical

This domain refers to the ways practice should be underpinned by the ethical principles of Justice, Autonomy, Beneficence, Non-maleficence, Privacy and Dignity.

2.1 Performance Standard
Conducts neuroscience nursing practice in a manner that can be ethically justified.

Performance Criteria
2.1.1 Demonstrates understanding of contemporary ethical issues influencing neuroscience nursing.

Examples:
• Discussing Advanced care directives with Patient and families
• Care issues for individuals in Persistent Vegetative State (PVS).

2.1.2 Demonstrates practice that complies with professional codes of ethics and conduct.

Examples:
• Delivers patient care in a manner that preserves/protects patient rights.
  Demonstrates autonomy, confidentiality, dignity and privacy e.g. assesses the patient's capacity to consent.

2.1.3 Delivers care in a nonjudgmental and non-discriminatory manner that is sensitive to patient diversity.

2.1.4 Displays behaviours reflecting an ethical framework.

2.1.5 Identifies all available resources to ethical decision-making.

Example:
• Utilises family conferences to ensure views and issues are addressed in an ethical manner from a multi-disciplinary team.

2.1.6 Undertakes or participates in approved research in accordance with ethical guidelines for the protection of human rights.

Domain 3:   Leadership and Management

This domain refers to the demonstration of leadership attributes and qualities.

3.1 Performance Standard

Acts as a positive role model to colleagues and other health care professionals.

Performance Criteria

3.1.1 Functions autonomously utilizing advanced, specialised knowledge and skills, consults and/or collaborates with other health care team members as appropriate

3.1.2 Demonstrates awareness of organisational policies affecting neuroscience nursing practice

3.1.3 Identifies and participates in quality improvement activities

3.1.4 Manages issues and situations demonstrating professionalism and respect to colleagues, patients and/or significant others

3.1.5 Maintains a positive attitude in response to feedback and/or suggestion for change

3.1.6 Actively contributes to organisational decisions and contributes positively to team projects

3.1.7 Actively provides appropriate support to staff in stressful and/or crisis situations

3.1.8 Conducts systematic reviews of clinical practice

3.2 Performance Standard

Positively promotes the specialty of neuroscience nursing

Performance Criteria

3.2.1   Actively participates in relevant state, national and international professional associations

3.2.2   Acts as an advocate and consultant for issues relating to neuroscience nursing practice

3.2.3 Demonstrates knowledge of current neuroscience nursing research

3.2.4 Has knowledge of issues that may have the potential to affect neuroscience health care services, and raises concerns at appropriate forums

3.2.5   Participates in state and national working parties having an influence on policy related to neuroscience nursing

3.2.6   Identifies new directions for the specialty and contributes to strategic planning processes.

Domain 4:   Clinical Practice

This domain refers to the utilisation of best practice standards to ensure optimal patient outcomes.

4.1 Performance Standard

Initiates and integrates ongoing patient assessment and utilises interpretive and critical thinking skills to achieve optimal outcomes.

Performance Criteria

4.1.1   Assessment

4.1.1a   Utilises available resources for gathering clinical information e.g. the patient and/or significant others, health care record, test results

4.1.1b   utilises a systematic approach to collect and review relevant clinical data

4.1.2   Diagnosis

4.1.2a   Ability to identify salient features of clinical history

4.1.2b   Ability to identify deviation from baseline assessment parameters and/or the unexpected clinical course

4.1.2c   Ability to identify abnormal biological parameters and analyse trends to evaluate the patients clinical status

4.1.2d   Ability to formulate nursing and collaborative problems and determine priorities based on assessment parameters

4.1.2e   Application of scientific knowledge to diagnosis and treatment through the use of judgement and critical thinking

4.1.3   Outcome Identification

4.1.3a   Identifies optimal outcomes as measurable goals that are realistic and attainable within an estimated time frame

4.1.3b   Goals are individually designed for the patient and significant others

4.1.3c   Determines realistic outcomes from patient needs based upon present and potential level of wellness

4.1.4   Documentation

4.1.4a   Ensures the documented clinical data, identifies problems and expected outcomes are accurate

4.1.4b   Communicates the expected outcomes to the health care team to ensure continuity of care

4.1.4c Acts as a clinical resource to facilitate accurate and ongoing assessment, diagnosis and expected outcome identification

4.2 Performance Standard

Initiates a plan of care to achieve an optimal outcome considering implications for ongoing care and impending discharge

Performance Criteria

4.2.1 Demonstrates a sound knowledge of the pathophysiology of neurological disease processes and related management and treatment strategies

4.2.1a Plans and organises individualised care that reflects priorities, continuity and4.2.1b Utilises evidence based knowledge from nursing, health sciences and related disciplines to select and individualise nursing interventions

4.1.4c Promotes evidence based practice to inform clinical decision making

4.2.2 Implementation

4.2.2a Develops a plan of care incorporating specialised knowledge and prioritises interventions according to patient presentation and clinical status

4.2.2b Facilitates the implementation of planned interventions, management priorities and treatment strategies, including but not limited to teaching, counselling and community development, which assist patients to meet identified needs

4.2.2c Initiates discharge planning ensuring that care is planned to achieve optimal outcomes

4.2.2d Ensures that the documented plan of care is effectively communicated to the health care team

4.2.2e Maintains continuity of care

4.2.3 Evaluation

4.2.3a Demonstrates continuous evaluation of patient responses based on interventions towards attainment of optimal outcomes

4.2.3b Recognises and responds to alterations in patient status and undertakes further assessment and appropriate interventions

4.2.3c Recognises and responds promptly to life threatening changes

4.2.3d Recognises that changes to health status are dynamic processes, anticipates potential issues and adjusts the plan of care accordingly to achieve an optimal outcome

4.2.3e Ensures the patient responses are documented and timely communicated to the health care team

Domain 5:   Teamwork and Collaboration

This domain refers to the ability to work within a multidisciplinary team and the utilisation of a collaborative approach to achieve optimal patient outcomes.

5.1.1 Establishes, maintains and appropriately concludes therapeutic relationships with the consumer and significant others.

5.1.2 Provides relevant, accurate and timely information to facilitate informed decision-making processes.

5.1.3 Encourages the consumer and significant others to actively participate in their care, care planning and goal setting.

5.1.4 Facilitates physical, psychosocial, cultural, spiritual, and linguistically appropriate language/ environment that promotes individual's safety, security and allows them to make informed health care decisions.

5.1.5 Educate individuals/ groups and act as a clinical resource to consumers and their significant others to promote independence and control over their health.

5.2.1 Demonstrates effective collaboration with all members of the multidisciplinary health care team.

5.2.2 Advocates for the consumer in the multidisciplinary decision-making process.

5.2.3 Facilitates coordination of care with all members of the multidisciplinary team members to achieve the consumers agreed health care outcomes.

5.2.4 Effectively communicate the consumers' health care directives to assist the health care team to make informed decisions on care, interventions, outcomes and/ or discharge planning.

DOMAIN 6:   Resource Utilisation

This domain refers to optimal utilisation of human and physical resources.

6.1.1 Demonstrates knowledge of and compliance with each organisation Work Health and Safety principles. This incorporates occupational violence, infection prevention and control, risk management, environmental risks, and emergency procedures.

6.1.2 Ensure commitment and compliance with risk management practices to ensure a minimum risk management standard is achieved and expected.

6.1.3 Recognises the potential for Occupational violence, adheres relevant policies to ensure staff safety and reports incidents via appropriate incident management systems.

6.1.4 Ensures staffing skill mix and patient allocation is appropriate for each shift to deliver safe and effective care.

6.2.1 Demonstrates knowledge of equipment and resources which are required to provide safe and effective care for a Neuroscience patient.

6.2.2 Ensures equipment is inspected and in working order prior to use and reports any faults to the appropriate personnel.

6.2.3 Ensures accurate and timely reporting of actual or potential incidents.

Domain 7:   Professional Development

This domain refers to participation in relevant activities, which maintain and enhance clinical knowledge, skills and competency for self and others**.**

7.1 Performance Standard
Maintains own professional academic development portfolio.

Performance Criteria

7.1.1 Reviews appropriate journals and current literature to enhance nursing practice.

7.1.2 Participates in quality improvement activities.

7.1.3 Seeks opportunities to function in extended roles such as practice development and subspecialty roles, with added responsibilities

7.1.4 Utilises reflection and clinical supervision to identify personal strengths as well as seeking to address identified learning needs and professional goals.

7.1.5 Actively seeks, contributes and participates in education activities to maintain & advance clinical expertise.

7.1.6 Is responsible for meeting the requirements of gaining continuing professional development (CPD) points.

7.2 Performance Standard
Facilitates ongoing professional development of colleagues.

Performance Criteria

7.2.1 Acts as a positive role model through the delivery of competent specialised care.

7.2.2 Accepts responsibility for the mentorship and development of colleagues and students.

7.2.3 Actively contributes to the mentoring and development of less experienced nurses.

7.2.4 Demonstrates the ability to identify optimal performance and actively facilitates a participative approach to resolving the performance issues.

Domain 8:   Research

This domain refers to awareness of and/or participation in current and relevant research to enhance patient care and to validate evidence based practice.

8.1 Performance Standard
Acknowledges values and utilises research to enhance the specialty practice of neuroscience nursing.

Performance Criteria

8.1.1 Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the levels of evidence underpinning best practice and research
8.1.2 Utilises a range of processes to contribute to the knowledge base of neuroscience nursing. Examples:
• Incorporates evidence-based practice into neuroscience nursing.
• Identifies clinical practice relevant and suitable for research.
• Seeks opportunities to participate in or undertake research.
• Disseminates research findings and/or results to colleagues.

8.1.3 Submits research papers for publication to add to the validated body of knowledge in neuroscience nursing.

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