



Steps to becoming an Advanced Practice Neuroscience Nurse

A. Introduction

The ***Australasian Neuroscience Nurses' Association (ANNA)***, is the peak body for neuroscience nurses, facilitating and fostering the advancement of neuroscience nursing thus enabling optimal person-centred care.

When you become a member, further information, resources and guidance can be found at www.anna.asn.au

All ANNA members are therefore also members of the ***World Federation of Neuroscience Nurses (WFNN)***, thus giving you a number of further resources - nationally and internationally www.wfnn.org The WFNN is an international neuroscience nursing organisation dedicated to the promotion and development of neuroscience nursing worldwide. The mission is to encourage and facilitate interaction amongst neuroscience nurses worldwide to aid, exchange and disseminate nursing knowledge. It is dedicated to improving and fostering high nursing standards, encouraging nursing research and developing expertise across all levels of neuroscience nursing. Activities culminate with the Quadrennial WFNN Scientific Congress. The WFNN actively seeks opportunities for learning, highlighted through the website and fosters the building of a community of neuroscience nursing international relationships.

Advanced practice nurses have relevant neuroscience expertise, that includes critical thinking, complex decision-making, autonomous practice and are effective and safe practitioners. They work within a specialist neuroscience context and they are responsible and accountable in managing people who have complex neuro healthcare requirements.

Advanced practice in nursing is demonstrated by a level of practice and experience and is not by a job title or level of remuneration.

B. Desire to further yourself in Neuroscience

The Advanced Practice nurse provides a more complex and expansive clinical consultancy service. As an Advanced Practice Neuroscience Nurse, there are five domains of focus –

- 1. Education** – Nurses are involved in dissemination of current neuroscience scientific knowledge for increasing the knowledge of colleagues, students, carers, relatives and the general public.
This also includes assisting patients and families to understand and best manage the neuroscience illness, provide informal and formal education sessions for staff development, and information and preventative strategies for the general public.
Provides significant contribution to the direction of clinical nursing education within the specialty, eg. involvement in the development of expansive programs (extra-regional, state or national education programs, advanced practice specialty programs, education involving large numbers of nurses within the specialty).
- 2. Leadership** – This includes both practice and attributes that allow for sharing and dissemination of knowledge further beyond the institutional setting, in a local, national or international setting. This promotes nurses, nursing and patient care outcomes.

Collaborative ventures are initiated with academic colleagues, eg. major projects determining the current status and influencing future directions of nursing practice.

3. **Clinical Practice** – exemplary practice providing a clinical focus of care for neuroscience patients and family. A mainstay of support, mentorship and guidance for students and clinical colleagues. This requires maintaining own clinical knowledge, attendance/speaking at conferences and seminars to fulfilling advanced practice requirements.
4. **Professional Development** – allows for the nurse to increase their knowledge in the field of neuroscience to better manage their patient population. This promotes nurses, nursing and patient care outcomes, in providing for dissemination of nursing knowledge, serving in professional organisations, and acting as a consultant to individuals and groups.
5. **Research & Writing for Publication** – This adapts and applies related scientific research to neuroscience and is encouraged to promote the specialty through scientific inquiry and promotion of innovative problem solving to answer clinical questions. This includes conducting clinical research, identifying funding sources and using evidence to guide practice and policy. Dissemination of research findings through specialist publications and presentations is promoted.

C. Membership to your Professional Association – *Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association*

As an advanced practice nurse in Australasia, alignment with ANNA - the peak professional body is recommended. Other professional bodies include – Neuro Critical care Society (NCS), American Association of Neuroscience Nurses (AANN)... etc

Aligning with a professional body gives credibility and support to professionalism.

D. Further study pathways

There are many pathways to choose within the body of Neuroscience to further study -

1. Management – eg: NUM, NM
2. Clinical – CNS, CNE, CNC, NP, specialist coordinator positions within neuroscience (PD, MS, Concussion, MND etc)
3. Research

Advanced practice nursing is the experience, education and knowledge to practice at the full capacity of the registered nurse practice scope. It is a level of clinical practice that involves cognitive and practical integration of knowledge and skills from the clinical, health systems, education and research domains of nursing. *ACN (2019)*.

- **Clinical Nurse Specialist** – is well on the way to becoming an advanced practice nurse.

A CNS is recognised as a Registered Nurse who -

- Has developed and continues to maintain a higher level of clinical knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes
- Actively participates in/contributes to initiatives that have a unit and/or organisational impact
- Undertakes ongoing professional development activities for self and contributes to others' development
- Engages in quality improvement and research activities to improve practice
- Serves as a role model and demonstrates leadership in the specialty

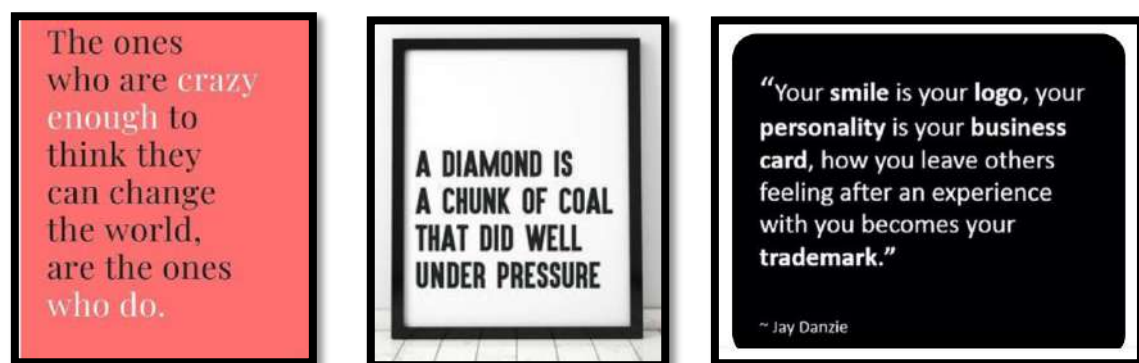
Advanced Practice Nurses – are experts in their neuroscience field and work with a high level of autonomy within their respective practice scopes.

- **Clinical Nurse Consultant** – is a well-established and developed clinician with a level and type of practice that functions at the full extent of the registered nurse practice scope.
 - A CNC provides expert clinical advice to patients, carers and other health care professionals within the neuroscience specialty.
 - Undertakes primary **responsibility** for the planning and implementation of **specialist clinical** education for the local health network.
 - Develops significant education resources for **nurses** and other health care professionals. Participates in the development and delivery of postgraduate tertiary programs
- **Nurse Practitioner** – is a senior Master's prepared nurse with additional practice privileges, regulated for practice beyond the registered nurse practice scope.
 - A NP performs advanced health assessments
 - Initiates and interprets diagnostic investigations (pathology, diagnostic imaging)
 - Diagnoses health problems
 - Designs, implements and monitors therapeutic regimens in collaboration with patients, families/careers and other health professionals
 - Prescribes certain medications
 - Initiates and receives appropriate referrals to and from other health professionals

E. Giving back & paying it forward

As Advanced Practice nurses there is the underlying assumption that the education and encouragement of newer interested nurses will benefit from your more experienced knowledge and support. Fostering like-minded neuroscience nurses is our legacy.

ANNA Mentorship Program – provides neuroscience nurses with the opportunity for mentoring in clinical, research, and clinical educator pathways, as well as advice regarding career development. Mentee and mentor applications will be reviewed by ANNA Executive Committee delegate(s). Each mentor/mentee match will agree to defined status checks, and ANNA will ask participants to evaluate their mentoring engagement throughout the relationship.



F. References:

Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2019, 'A New Horizon for Health Services: Optimising Advanced Practice Nursing—A White Paper by ACN 2019', ACN, Canberra. ©ACN 2019

Gardner G, Duffield C, Doubrovsky A, et al. 2017. The Structure of Nursing: A national examination of titles and practice profiles. INR Jun 64(2):233-241

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