



P O S I T I O N S T A T E M E N T

CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST

The Nurses Association of New Brunswick believes that nurses working in advanced nursing practice roles, such as the clinical nurse specialist (CNS), contribute to the development of nursing knowledge and promotion of optimal health care. Through a unique combination of experience, advanced clinical practice, knowledge, skills and a comprehensive view of health care, the clinical nurse specialist makes an important difference to the health of individuals, families, groups and communities.

Definition

The clinical nurse specialist is a registered nurse who holds a master's or a doctorate degree in nursing and has expertise in a clinical nursing specialty. CNS practice is based on in-depth knowledge of nursing and other sciences gained through graduate nursing education and clinical experience. As an advanced practitioner, the CNS provides evidence-based nursing care in complex client situations through direct care, education and consultation to clients, and education, consultation, and collaboration with nurses and other members of the health care team. The CNS promotes excellence in nursing by disseminating current knowledge, participating in research and acting as a role model.

Scope of practice

The CNS role is grounded in advanced nursing practice and exemplifies the full scope of nursing practice. The work of clinical nurse specialists contributes to nursing knowledge and the development and advancement of the profession. There are five interrelated components of the CNS role: practitioner, educator, consultant, researcher and leader. The balance of these role components will vary in any CNS's practice depending upon the needs of the clients and the organization.

Practitioner

As a practitioner the CNS is prepared to assess and intervene in complex nursing care problems within a clinical specialty as well as to promote health in diverse settings. The CNS provides expert holistic care, based upon experience and in-depth knowledge of nursing and other relevant sciences. Clients may be individuals, families, groups or communities.

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Educator

As an educator, the CNS works directly with individuals, families, communities, nurses and other health care professionals. The CNS also promotes an environment conducive to learning for clients, nurses, students and other health care professionals.

Consultant

As a consultant, the CNS shares specialized knowledge and provides consultation to clients, nurses and other health care professionals, health care institutions, organizations and policy makers. The CNS consults with others to enhance client care, and to deal with complex and challenging situations.

Researcher

As a researcher, the CNS strengthens the link between clinical nursing and research. Based upon expertise in research methodology, the CNS participates in nursing and/or interdisciplinary research and disseminates research findings to improve the quality of nursing care. The CNS supports nurses in the research process by promoting the identification of research questions, participating in research activities and applying the findings to practice.

Leader

As a leader, the CNS promotes quality care through in-depth assessment of clients' needs, the development and evaluation of policies, standards of care, and clinical programs and services. The CNS directs nursing care activities as well as plans, implements and evaluates changes in clinical practice. The CNS provides clinical leadership by acting as a resource, facilitator, coordinator, role model and advocate.

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References

Canadian Nurses Association (2003). *Position Statement: Clinical Nurse Specialist*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

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