



VISION STATEMENT

Community health nurses: diversity, partnership and collaboration; promoting and advocating for health across the lifespan (Schofield et al, 2008).

DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING PRACTICE IN CANADA

Community health nursing practice describes the work of nurses who work in the community. Community health nurses partner with people where they live, work, learn, meet and play to promote health (CHNC, 2009).

Characteristics

In community health nursing practice, nurses build their expertise in a specialty area and demonstrate the following characteristics and features:

- Promote, protect and preserve health, prevent disease and injury
- Promote, protect and preserve the environment that contributes to health
- Advocate for healthy public policy
- Lead in the integration of comprehensive and multiple health promotion approaches that build the capacity of clients
- Respect the diversity of clients and caregivers, focus on the linkages between health and illness experiences and enable clients to achieve health
- Provide evidence informed care in a variety of settings such as the client's home, school, office, clinics, on the street, communal living settings or workplace
- Cooperate, coordinate and collaborate with a variety of partners, disciplines, and sectors
- Recognize that healthy communities and systems that support health contribute to health for all
- Engage a range of resources to support health by coordinating care, and planning services, and programs
- Work with a high degree of autonomy to initiate strategies that will address the determinants of health and positively impact people and their community

Educational Preparation:

A baccalaureate degree in nursing is an essential foundation for community health nurses to practice to their full scope of practice.

Certification

Community health nursing is one of Canadian Nurses Association certified nursing specialty. CHN may enhance their education and competencies by pursuing other certification such as occupational health nursing.

Workplace

The primary areas of work in the community are in diverse rural and urban settings such as, public health units/departments, home health, community health agencies/centres/clinics, family practices, occupational health, outposts/nursing stations, on the street, faith organizations, shelters, schools, correctional institutions, aboriginal communities, addictions, government, and educational institutions

Positions

Community health nurses work in diverse positions such as Clinical Nurse Specialist, Clinical Resource Nurse, Clinical Educator, Consultants, Counselor, Coordinator/Case Managers, Home Health Nurse, Manager/Supervisor/Administrators/Directors, Mental Health Nurse/Registered Psychiatric Nurse, Nurse Practitioners, Occupational Health Nurse, Outpost Nurse, Parish Nurse, Physician Office Nurse, Primary Care Nurses, Policy or Informatics Analyst, Public Health Nurse, and Researcher.

Values

Community health nurses value caring, principles of primary health care, multiple ways of knowing, individual and community partnerships, empowerment, and social justice (CHNAC, 2008).

GLOSSARY

Client: Client refers to individuals, families, groups, communities and populations (CHNAC, 2008).

Communal Living Setting: “a setting where individuals who may or may not be related to each other, share in common all or part of the living quarters. These types of settings could include homeless and other types of shelters, work camps, drop-in centres and hostels” (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009).

Environmental Health: Environmental Health is comprised of those aspects of human health, including quality of life that are determined by physical, chemical, biological, social, and psychosocial factors in the environment. It also refers to the theory and practice of assessing, correcting, controlling and preventing those factors in the environment that can potentially affect adversely the health of present and future generations (World Health Organization, 2007).

Practice: Registered nurses practice in Canada and across the full range of clinical care, education, administration, research, and policy (CNA, 2007).

Primary Health Care: Primary health care is defined as “essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound and acceptable methods and technology made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination” (World Health Organization, 1978, p.2).

Social Justice: According to Canadian Nurses Association “social justice means the fair distribution of society’s benefits responsibilities and their consequences. It focuses on the relative position of the one social group in relationship to others in society as well as on the root causes of disparities and what can be done to eliminate them.” (CNA, 2006, pg.1).

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