

STANDARDS OF
PRACTICE FOR
NURSES AND MIDWIVES



SINGAPORE NURSING BOARD

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Introduction

Self-regulation involves nurses regulating nursing in the interest of public safety. The nursing profession regulates itself by setting its own standards for education and practice, and ensuring these standards are met. However, this privilege cannot be taken for granted. To safeguard this privilege, nurses must maintain the trust of the public by demonstrating that we are responsible and accountable for upholding the standards of practice, maintaining competence and fitness to practice.

It is essential that nursing as a self regulating profession establishes practice standards. The revised nursing practice standards in this document defines acceptable requirements for determining the quality of nursing care a client receives. When nurses use the standards of nursing practice, and the code of ethics and professional conduct to guide their daily practice, they are acting in the best interest of the public and demonstrate that they are involved in self regulation. This revision replaces the previous Singapore Nursing Board Standards of Practice for Nurses and Midwives (1999).

There are indicators described in this revision for each nursing practice standard. These indicators illustrate how the standards may be met.

As professional nurses in Singapore, let us continue to demonstrate that we can regulate ourselves by collectively upholding the standards of nursing practice and consistently maintain the trust of the public.

*Registrar
Singapore Nursing Board
1 August 2011*

Standard 1

Professional and Competent Practice

Nurses/midwives apply their professional knowledge, skills and judgment competently within their defined scope of practice.

Rationale

Nurses/midwives act professionally and are accountable for their own practice in accordance to professional standards. The standards reflect the values of the nursing profession and clarify the profession's expectations. They represent the criteria against which the public, clients, employers, colleagues and themselves measure nursing practice.

Indicators

1. Initiate, maintain and evaluate professional therapeutic relationships with clients.
2. Deliver care within their scope of practice, training and ability.
3. Record and maintain documentation that is clear, timely, accurate and reflective of observations and decisions.
4. Receive training and certification (if applicable) before performing new skills and undergo regular re-certification as indicated.
5. Undertake new roles and responsibilities that will enhance nursing practice, benefit the clients and improve standards of care.
6. Seek the advice and supervision of a more competent practitioner when the care required is beyond their own level of competence.
7. Share knowledge and skills with their colleagues and precept new nurses for the benefit of clients through formal and informal training programmes.
8. Assess the other person's ability and competency prior to delegating duties.

Standard 2

Responsibility and Accountability

Nurses/midwives demonstrate professional conduct and practice in accordance with standards of nursing practice determined by the regulatory board and accept that the primary duty is to ensure safe, competent and ethical nursing care to the client.

Rationale

Clients trust nurses/midwives with their well-being. Nurses/midwives have a duty to maintain standards of practice and respect human life, dignity and care of the client.

Indicators

1. Comply with SNB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct :
 - Respect clients' individual values and needs
 - Respect and promote clients' autonomy
 - Respect clients' right to confidentiality
 - Respect and preserve clients' privacy and dignity
 - Provide care in a responsible and accountable manner
 - Maintain competency in the care of clients
 - Advocate in the best interest of clients
 - Maintain a high ethical standard in the conduct of research
 - Maintain a practice environment that is conducive to the provision of ethical health care
 - Promote compliance with ethical practice and maintain public trust in the nursing profession
2. Provide safe, competent and ethical care to clients.
3. Practise in accordance to policies, protocols and legislations relevant to nursing.
4. Protect clients by recognising and reporting unsafe practices when clients' safety and well-being are potentially or actually compromised.

Standard 5

Collaborative Partnership

Nurses/midwives establish collaborative partnerships with clients, community and members of the healthcare team to achieve optimal client outcomes.

Rationale

Nurses/midwives are in constant contact with their clients through the care they provide. They play an important role in the multidisciplinary healthcare team to ensure the continuity of care and positive client outcomes.

Indicators

1. Collaborate with clients, families and/or significant others to develop and evaluate plan of care and priorities based on clients' needs.
2. Maintain open and supportive communication with the healthcare team to promote effective working relationships for optimal client outcome.
3. Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication and available resources to ensure effective communication with clients, families and caregivers.

Standard 7

Nursing Development

Nurses/midwives contribute to the advancement of the profession and the enhancement of professional image.

Rationale

Nurses/midwives have a professional responsibility to assist in the education and development of other nurses/midwives. They should contribute their professional expertise to their institution or community by serving as nursing representatives on committees or nursing advisors to special projects.

Indicators

1. Participate in conferences, workshops and continuing education programmes organized by professional bodies.
2. Contribute to decisions related to nursing, health policies and practices.
3. Provide professional inputs as nursing representatives to committees and community projects.
4. Participate in the growth of the profession through involvement in the activities of professional bodies.

Glossary

Accountability	Being answerable and responsible for the outcome of one's actions (include judgment, decision and action taken or omitted in the course of nursing practice).
Client	One who seeks or receives professional care or advice from a nurse/midwife.
Competence	The ability of a nurse/midwife to demonstrate the knowledge, skill, judgment and attitude required to perform nursing activities within the defined scope of practice at an acceptable level of proficiency, in a constantly changing environment.
Evidence-based nursing	Refers to the process of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtaining evidence from research findings in journals or databases; • evaluating the relevance and strength of the evidence obtained; • changing practice based on research evidence and • evaluating the impact of the changed practice
Indicator	Description of the expected performance behaviour that reflects the professional attributes required in a given nursing role, situation or practice setting.
Midwife	A person who has completed a programme in midwifery and is licensed by the SNB to practice as a Registered Midwife.
Nurse	A person who has completed a pre-enrolment, pre-registration or Master level nursing programme and is licensed by SNB to practice as an Enrolled Nurse or Registered Nurse or an Advanced Practice Nurse.
Public	Client, family, care-giver, and/or community.
Resource	Manpower, finance, consumables, inventory, equipment, facility and time.
Responsibility	The obligation to carry out duties expected of a nurse/midwife.
Scope of Practice	The scope of practice refers to the range of activities and clinical decisions in nursing/midwifery practice that each nurse/midwife is trained and authorized by license to perform independently and the performance of which the nurse/midwife is accountable for. It is determined by the nurse/midwife's professional qualifications, competencies and clinical roles.
Self-regulation	Self-regulation involves nurses regulating nursing in the interest of public safety. The nursing profession regulates itself by setting its own standards for education and practice, and ensuring these standards are met.

Appendix

Related Legislation and Guidelines

The following contains the list of Legislative Acts under the purview of the Ministry of Health. These Acts regulate public health and safety, including the healthcare profession, healthcare practices/establishments as well as statutory boards charged with these responsibilities.

Act regulating Healthcare Professionals

1. Nurses and Midwives Act (Cap 209)

Acts concerning diseases and other medical conditions

1. Infectious Disease Act
2. Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act (2008)

Acts concerning medical practices and research

1. Advance Medical Directive Act
2. Human Organ Transplant Act
3. Medical (Therapy, Education and Research) Act
4. Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act
5. Termination of Pregnancy Act
6. Voluntary Sterilization Act

Other Acts

1. Medical and Elderly Care Endowment Schemes Act
2. Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Act

Other SNB's Standards and Guidelines

1. Standards for Nursing Education (2011)
2. Code of Practice for Midwives (2001)
3. Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (1999)

Acknowledgement

The Singapore Nursing Board gratefully acknowledges the contributions by the nursing representatives from the Restructured Hospitals and the Singapore Nurses' Association in the revision of this document.

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