

Practical/Vocational Nursing Program Outcome: Nursing Judgment

Clinical judgment refers to ways nurses come to understand the problems, issues, or concerns of clients/patients, to attend to salient information, and to respond in concerned and involved ways (Benner, 2010). Nurses employ clinical judgment in complex patient care situations, working with interprofessional teams to ensure health care quality and safety. Critical components include: changes in patient status, uncertainty about the most appropriate course of action, accounting for context, and the nurse's practical experience. Making clinical decisions is rooted in the nurse's theoretical knowledge; ethical perspectives; relationships with patients, the patient's caregivers, and the community; and understanding of the influence of systems on health care outcomes.

Outcome

Make judgments in practice, substantiated with evidence, that integrate nursing science in the provision of safe, quality care for diverse patients and their families in collaboration with the health care team.

End-of-Program, Role-Specific Competencies

The practical nursing program prepares the graduate to:

1. Be accountable for decisions and actions performed in the provision of safe, quality care to diverse populations in a variety of health care settings (quality).
2. Provide safe, quality care based on evidence and standards of care that promote the health of patients within the context of the family and community (safety).
3. Collaborate with members of the health care team to implement and/or adjust the plan of care (team/collaboration).
4. Partner with patients and families to identify their preferences based on their expectations, resources, and cultural traditions when modifying care-approaches (relationship-centered care).
5. Assume the role of team member or team leader based on the situation, care setting, and system requirements, as determined by management (systems-based care).
6. Seek assistance in situations that require knowledge/actions beyond individual expertise and scope of LPN/LVN practice to provide safe, quality care (personal and professional development).

Course Learner Outcomes that Support the Achievement of Role-Specific Competencies

Quality Competency

Be accountable for decisions and actions performed in the provision of safe, quality care to diverse populations in a variety of health care settings.

Suggested Course Learner Outcomes:

1. Prevent complications through the provision of timely evidenced-based care.
2. Use national standards of care to inform clinical judgment.

Safety Competency

Provide safe, quality care, based on evidence and standards of care, that promote the health of patients within the context of the family and community

Suggested Course Learner Outcomes:

1. Provide clinical procedures safely.
2. Accept only those assignments that fall within individual scope of practice based on experience and educational preparation.
3. Recognize the distinct practice boundaries of team members.
4. Practice priority setting in a dynamic work environment.
5. Recognize and report unsafe practices to appropriate members of the health care team.

Team/Collaboration Competency

Collaborate with members of the health care team to implement and/or adjust the plan of care.

Suggested Course Learner Outcomes:

1. Informs appropriate team members of changes in patient status.
2. Consults with clinical experts when making patient care decisions in situations that are beyond expertise and scope of practice.
3. Contributes to assessment and care planning in collaboration with the health care team.

Relationship-Centered Care Competency

Partner with patients and families to identify their preferences when modifying care approaches, based on their expectations, resources, and cultural traditions.

Suggested Course Learner Outcomes:

1. Utilize ethical standards to inform clinical judgment.
2. Be receptive to the ideas of others when making clinical decisions.

System-Based Care Competency

Assume role of team member or team leader based on the situation, care setting, and system requirements, as determined by management.

Suggested Course Learner Outcomes:

1. Provide evidence to advocate for resource allocation to meet patient care needs.
2. Report data to assist in the formulation of health care goals/outcomes, in collaboration with patients, their families, and health care team members.
3. Solicit input to improve individual, team, and system-wide goals.

Personal/Professional Development Competency

Seek assistance in situations that require knowledge/actions beyond individual expertise and scope of LPN/LVN practice to provide safe, quality care.

Suggested Course Learner Outcomes:

1. Values the need for clinical practice based on new knowledge and emerging technologies.
2. Identify valid sources of evidence in clinical decision making.
3. Recognizes threats to the integrity of relationships and the potential for conflict and abuse.
4. Examines personal beliefs, values, and biases in regard to respect for human dignity, equality, and justice.

Suggested Learning Activities to Meet Nursing Judgment Program Outcome

Provide opportunities for the student to:

1. Utilize national standards of care and best practices to inform clinical judgment.
2. Determine the professional boundaries of all health care team members.
3. Participate in scenarios challenging the student's personal ethics in clinical judgment.
4. Employ valid evidence coupled with theoretical knowledge and clinical expertise to make clinical judgments.
5. Recognize complex clinical cases that require knowledge/actions beyond individual expertise and scope of LPN/LVN practice.
6. Participate in diverse community-based settings that require collaboration with multiple team members to develop health care goals/outcomes.
7. Communicate with the patient and the family to identify their preferences when adjusting their care.

Suggested Evaluation Strategies to Assess Graduate Achievement of Practical/Vocational Nursing Program Outcome

Make judgments in practice, substantiated with evidence, that integrate nursing science in the provision of safe, quality care for diverse patients and their families in collaboration with the health care team.

Does the graduate:

1. Ask for assistance to learn new skills or procedures?
2. Ask questions if orders are unclear and require clarification?
3. Speak out, using appropriate channels, when safety issues are recognized?
4. Complete and document data collection/assessment findings?
5. Initiate more frequent data collection/assessment if indicated based on patient condition?
6. Evaluate effectiveness of interventions?
7. Take action immediately after seeing changes in patient status?
8. Ask questions about findings to appropriate members of the interprofessional team?
9. Assess for potential risks (falls, wandering, sleep deprivation)?
10. Act on at-risk patients by making team members aware of potential harm (falls, UTI, BS, sepsis)?

Benner, P., Sutphen, M., Leonard, V., Day, L. (2010). *Educating Nurses: A Call for Radical Transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

September 2014