



RN & RPN PRACTICE: THE CLIENT, THE NURSE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

College of Nurses of Ontario (2014)

MODULE 01 | INTRO TO RN & RPN PRACTICE: THE CLIENT, THE NURSE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

*Prepared by: Donna Rothwell, RN, BScN, MN Wharton Fellow
December 27, 2015 Revised February 27, 2016 March 17, 2016*

The goal of this learning module is to help you enhance your nursing knowledge and expertise about RN and RPN Practice related to the Client, the Nurse and his/her Environment.

<http://www.cno.org/globalassets/docs/prac/41062.pdf>

Outcomes

By completing these learning modules you will learn the following:

- To assist your colleagues, employer and others make effective decisions about the utilization of your role as a RN/RPN in the provision of safe and ethical client care;
- To clearly outline expectations for nurses within the three-factor framework, highlighting key similarities and differences of foundational nursing knowledge and its impact on autonomous nursing practice;
- To highlight nurses' accountabilities when collaborating with one another;
- To identify key attributes of practice environments that facilitate nursing assignments, enhance collaboration and lead to improved client outcomes and public protection.

Process

- Build on your own nursing knowledge, experience and expertise;
- From case studies, matching and true and false questions to help you analyze and self-reflect about RN and RPN Practice: The Client, the Nurse and the Environment;
- From the College of Nurses of Ontario's Professional Standards (2002) and Guidelines;
- By applying what you have learned to your professional nursing practice.

Keep a notebook or journal to document your ideas and answers to the questions in this learning module.

Building On Your Experience

Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) have the knowledge, skills and expertise to assume a leadership role in supporting and enhancing patient-centred care across the healthcare continuum experiences and services. Leadership includes implementing, monitoring and evaluating the provision of health services and client care. Ensuring that you as a nurse have an appropriate client assignment is an important part of these responsibilities.

Context for Assignment of Client Care

In our healthcare system today there are a variety of current and emerging healthcare roles and models of care delivery. In this rapid healthcare transformation, interprofessional healthcare teams need to:

- understand how to optimize the skills of their members;
- communicate effectively;
- share the case management for their clients and;
- provide better health services to clients.¹

In today's practice settings there is a greater emphasis on teamwork and collaboration and it is important for RNs and RPNs to have information that clarifies their role and responsibilities and a framework for decision making based on best practices that guides them in the assignment of client care. It is the responsibility of the nurse to seek and gain this information. There are several ways in which this can be achieved:

- being aware of the changes in our nursing profession by reading current literature
- following the reporting process while being an advocate for patient-centred quality care

The process and art of assignment of patient/client care has become much more complex because of the recognition of overlapping scopes of practice, staff mix, emergence of interprofessional teams and an emphasis on collaboration. In the assignment of client care, it is imperative to look beyond the practice of the RN and RPN to the roles and responsibilities of all partners in care such as but not limited to:

- Pharmacists
- Physiotherapists
- Registered Respiratory Therapists
- Physicians
- Registered Dietitians
- Social Workers
- Unregulated Care Providers (PSW, HCA)
- Activity Aids
- Any other professional role

¹ World Health Organization, 2010.

Match the Following Definitions!

Interprofessional Care

A. Multiple members of the same profession working collaboratively to deliver quality care within and across settings

Intraprofessional Care

B. Involving a variety of healthcare professionals working together to deliver quality care within and across settings

Interprofessional Care _____

Intraprofessional Care _____

Answers: Interprofessional Care - B Intraprofessional Care - A

Assumptions in Assignment of Care

Assignment of client care in acute care, ambulatory care, homecare, complex continuing care and community settings is increasingly challenging. This is due to a number of factors including staff shortages, increased demand for services, models of care, need to adjust to changes in acuity, predictability and complexity in healthcare, as well as the presence of some staff with limited clinical knowledge and expertise.

Fact

There are challenges in continuing care settings with recruitment and retention of regulated health professionals and an increasing proportion of unregulated care providers. Appropriate assignment of providers can minimize the potential risk to clients and liability for staff nurses, managers, nurse administrators other providers and healthcare agencies.²

Think of a Personal Experience

Think of a personal experience you have had related to a client situation in your practice setting that you felt was not at all appropriate for you to be assigned to and analyze the issue:

- Why was this assignment inappropriate?
- Who was involved?
- What actions were taken?
- What was the resolution?

Learning from Our College of Nurses of Ontario's Standards

This learning module will be focusing on three factors:

1. The client;
2. The nurse and;
3. The environment.

These three (3) factors have an impact on decision-making related to care-provider assignments to match client needs as well as the need for consultation and collaboration among care providers.

Guiding Principles

As a RPN working within both the interprofessional and intraprofessional team, you must be focused on the following guiding principles to facilitate practice expectations and thus serve the basis for decision-making in your very important role:

- The ultimate goal of professional nursing practice is to obtain the best possible outcome for the client;
- RNs and RPNs study from the same body of nursing knowledge. The difference is that RNs study for a longer period of time, allowing the opportunity for greater foundational knowledge in clinical practice, decision-making, critical-thinking, leadership, research utilization and resource management. As a result of these differences, the level of autonomous practice of RNs differ from that of RPNs;
- The complexity of a client's condition influences the nursing knowledge required to provide the level of care the client requires. A more complex client situation and less stable environment creates an increased need for consultation and/or the need for a RN to provide a full range of care requirements.
- Respecting and understanding the expectations and contributions of the healthcare team facilitates appropriate utilization of nurses, enhances collaboration and leads to improved client outcomes.

Case Scenario

Marie, a recent RPN graduate, accepted a regular part-time position on an acute medical unit at her local hospital. She has worked many shifts over the last three months and has developed a level of comfort with the unit's policies, procedures, protocols, leadership and management styles, reporting processes, roles and expectations.

However, on arrival to the unit one evening, the Nursing Coordinator informs Marie that she is needed on another unit - inpatient surgery so she is being transferred there for this shift due to a high volume of sick calls.

A worksheet allows you to capture your ideas!

Critical-Thinking

1. What guiding principles are you most concerned about in Marie's situation?
2. How does this issue conflict with CNO's Three Factor Framework - Standard of Practice - RN and RPN Practice - the Client, the Nurse and the Environment? Which Standards?
3. What practice setting or unit policies/procedures does Marie have the potential in not meeting in this new assignment?
4. Who else is potentially affected by this change in Marie's assignment?
5. How could Marie resolve this issue or problem? If Marie is able to, who could/should Marie approach?
6. What resources might give direction to resolve the issue/problem?