



## REFERENCE DOCUMENT

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# Appendix Glossary of Terms

**Abuse** Abusive conduct is interpreted broadly to include acts or omissions that cause or may cause physical or emotional harm to a client. Abuse is the misuse of power or the betrayal of trust, respect or intimacy in the therapeutic relationship. It can take many forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, and financial. Neglect is also a form of abuse.

**Category** In Ontario, nursing is one profession with two categories of care providers — Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs). In most ways, the two categories are subject to the same regulatory requirements. The main area of difference between RNs and RPNs is educational preparation. Although all nursing students learn from the same basic body of nursing knowledge, RNs study it in greater depth and breadth over a longer period of time and, accordingly, are able to provide care in more complex situations.

**Class** There are four classes of registration for RNs and RPNs, and an additional one for RNs only. For a description of each class, see General Class, Temporary Class, Special Assignment Class, Retired Class and Extended Class (RNs only).

**Client** The client refers to a person or persons with whom the nurse is engaged in a professional therapeutic relationship. In most cases, the client is an individual. The client may also be a family, a group (as in psychotherapy) or a community (as in the public health field). In research, the client is a participant; in education, the client may include students. In Ontario, “client” is preferred over the narrower term “patient.”

**CNO** The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) is mandated through legislation as the regulatory body for nursing in Ontario. Its mission is to protect the public’s right to quality nursing services by providing leadership to the nursing profession in self-regulation.

**Code** The Health Professions Procedural Code is Schedule 2 of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA). It provides procedural guidance for implementing the act.

**Competence** The ability of a nurse to integrate the professional attributes required to perform in a given role, situation or practice setting. Professional attributes include knowledge, skill, judgment, values and beliefs.

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**Controlled acts** The RHPA established 13 controlled acts. These acts are considered potentially harmful if performed by unqualified persons. There are three controlled acts authorized to RNs and RPNs. An additional four acts are authorized to RN(EC)s.

**Council** The Council is the governing board of the College. Council consists of 39 members. There are 21 elected councillors who are members of the profession (seven RPNs and 14 RNs) and 18 councillors appointed by the provincial government.

**Councillor** A member of the governing Council of the College is referred to as a councillor. This term includes appointed and elected councillors.

**Culture** Culture refers to the learned values, beliefs, norms and ways of life of an individual. It influences thinking, actions and decisions.

**Delegation** Delegation is the transfer of the authority to perform a controlled act to a person not otherwise authorized by legislation.

**Direct order** A direct order is an order for a procedure, treatment, drug or intervention. It is given by an individual practitioner and may be written or oral (e.g., by telephone). It applies to an individual client.

**Dual registration** If a nurse is registered in both categories of membership (RN and RPN), she/he has dual registration.

**Elected committee members** Elected committee members are RNs and RPNs who are elected by their peers to sit on the College's statutory committees. They are not members of Council.

**Elected councillor** An elected councillor is either an RN or RPN elected to Council by nurses in her/his geographic region.

**Evidence-based practice** The integration of knowledge of the best-available research, client preferences, resources and clinical expertise when making decisions with a client about achieving the best possible health care.

**Extended Class (EC)** The Extended Class is a class of registration available to RNs who have

successfully demonstrated competence to practise as primary health care nurse practitioners. They are able to practise with extended scope in the areas of assessment, diagnosis and health care management.

**Fact sheets** These one-page (double-sided) information sheets describe College processes and programs. Fact sheets may also be developed to provide a quick response to urgent practice issues. In this situation, they are time-limited; later a fact sheet may be developed into a practice standard or guideline, or retired. Examples of fact sheets include *Transferring Clients*, *Reflective Practice* and *Disciplinary Proceedings*.

**General Class** The General Class is the most common class of registration for RNs and RPNs.

**Governing Council** See Council.

**Incapacity** The Health Professional Procedural Code of the RHPA states: "incapacitated means, in relation to a member, that the member is suffering from a physical or mental condition or disorder that makes it desirable in the interest of the public that the member no longer be permitted to practise or that the member's practice be restricted."

**Incompetence** Incompetence occurs when a member's professional care of a client displays a lack of knowledge, skill or judgment, or disregard for the welfare of a client of a nature, or to an extent that demonstrates that the member is unfit to continue to practise, or that the member's practice should be restricted. Acts of incompetence that are reported to the College must be investigated and can lead to disciplinary proceedings.

**Initiation** Initiation refers to making the decision to carry out a procedure and, in some instances, to ordering someone else to carry out the procedure in the absence of a specific order or protocol written by a physician. A regulation under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, gives the authority to initiate specific controlled acts to RNs and RN(EC)s who meet certain conditions. As of this printing, initiation authority for RPNs is under review.

**Medical directive** A medical directive is a physician's order for a procedure, treatment, drug

or intervention that may be implemented for a range of clients when specific conditions are met and when specific circumstances exist. A medical directive is always written.

**Member** An individual registered with the College is called a member.

**Nurse** Nurse refers to a Registered Nurse (RN) or a Registered Practical Nurse (RPN). Only a registered member of the College can use any form of the title “nurse” or practise as a nurse.

**Nursing Act** The *Nursing Act, 1991*, along with the RHPA, authorizes the development of standards and regulations for nursing. It protects the titles “nurse,” “Registered Nurse” and “Registered Practical Nurse.”

**Over-the-counter (OTC)** Over-the-counter refers to medications that may be purchased without a prescription.

**Perform** To perform is to carry out a procedure. Performing occurs after the decision that the procedure is required/authorized. See Initiation.

**Practice guidelines** These documents are developed to assist nurses in understanding their responsibilities and to aid them in making safe, effective decisions. Examples include *Consent, Independent Practice* and *Medical Directives*.

**Practice Review** Practice Review is a component of the Quality Assurance Program. It assesses and addresses the needs of nurses who require additional support to practise within the standards of practice.

**Practice standards** Authoritative statements that set out the professional basis of nursing practice. Practice standards describe what each nurse is accountable and responsible for in practice, and represent the desired and achievable level of performance against which actual performance is measured. Examples include *Documentation, Ethics* and *Therapeutic Nurse-Client Relationship*.

**Professional accountability** Professional accountability means being responsible for one’s actions and decisions and accepting the consequences. Nurses demonstrate accountability

through their decision-making process, competency and integrity. It is reflected through nurses’ actions and through accurate documentation.

**Professional misconduct** Professional misconduct is defined in the RHPA and occurs when a regulated professional violates the ethical standards set out for the profession, fails to meet or breaches the standards of practice, or crosses the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. If a nurse is alleged to have committed an act or acts of professional misconduct, an investigation by the College will result and could lead to a referral to disciplinary proceedings.

**Professional standards** These provide an overall framework for the practice of nursing and link with other standards, guidelines and competencies developed by the College. They describe, in broad terms, the professional expectations for nurses and apply to all nurses in every area of practice.

**Public councillor** A public councillor is one of the 18 members of Council appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

**Quality Assurance (QA) Program** The RHPA requires each regulatory college to develop, establish and maintain programs to promote continuing competence among its members. Included in the College’s QA Program are Reflective Practice and Practice Review.

**Reflective Practice** Reflective Practice is a component of the QA Program. It is a five-step process that helps nurses maintain their competence in today’s rapidly changing health care environment. Every year, all nurses practising in Ontario are required to complete the Reflective Practice program and declare their participation in the program.

**Registrar** The executive director of the College of Nurses of Ontario is the registrar.

**Retired Class** The Retired Class is available at a reduced fee to current and former College members who are permanently retired and are age 65 or older.

**Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA)** This is the core legislation that applies to all regulated health professionals, including nurses.

The focus of the RHPA is openness, consumer choice and quality care.

**RN** The acronym for Registered Nurse.

**RN(EC)** The acronym for Registered Nurse in the Extended Class.

**RPN** The acronym for Registered Practical Nurse.

**Scope of practice statement** The legislated scope of practice statement for nursing in Ontario is a statement set out in the *Nursing Act, 1991*, that describes what nursing does, why it does it and what it means. This statement is: "The practice of nursing is the promotion of health and the assessment of, the provision of care for, and the treatment of health conditions by supportive, preventive, therapeutic, palliative and rehabilitative means in order to attain or maintain optimal function." The scope of practice also includes the authorized controlled acts for general and extended classes.

**Self-regulation** Self-regulation means that the profession governs itself, individually and through the College, in that each member is responsible for practising in accordance with the standards of the profession, keeping current and competent throughout her/his nursing career and participating in self-regulatory activities (e.g., surveys, elections).

**Sexual abuse** Sexual abuse as defined in the RHPA consists of one or more of the following types of conduct: sexual intercourse or other forms of physical relations between the member and client; touching, of a sexual nature, of the client by the member; and behaviour or remarks, of a sexual nature, by the member toward the client. Reporting of sexual abuse of clients by any registered health professional is a legal requirement for all RNs and RPNs in Ontario. Failure to report an incident of sexual abuse could be considered professional misconduct.

**Special Assignment Class** This short-term, non-

renewable class of registration is for individuals, usually from outside Ontario, who have an assignment with an approved facility. Individuals in this class can practise only within the scope of their appointment and under defined terms, limits and conditions.

**Standing order** The terminology and use of standing orders is not supported by the College. Medical directives are more acceptable. (See Medical Directive.)

**Statutory committees** Statutory committees are required by the RHPA and are composed of elected and public Council members and elected committee members. They include the Registration, Quality Assurance, Fitness to Practise, Executive, Complaints and Client Relations committees.

**Temporary Class** The Temporary Class is a short-term registration that enables individuals who have met all the registration requirements, except the national examination requirements, to practise as registered members. The terms and conditions of the Temporary Class were amended by College Council and forwarded to the Ontario government for approval in 2001.

**Therapeutic nurse-client relationship** Established and maintained by the nurse and the client as the foundation for providing nursing services that contribute to the client's health and well-being, the relationship is based on trust, respect, intimacy and the appropriate use of the nurse's inherent power.

**Unregulated care provider (UCP)** A family member, household member, volunteer or paid individual who is not a member of a regulated health profession and who assists with or provides personal care.



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