



The *Professional Standards* document provides an overall framework for nursing practice, and links with the College's other practice standards, guidelines and competencies.

Professional Standards includes seven broad standards. Accountability is one of the standards.

Accountability

Standard statement

Each nurse is accountable to the public and must meet legislative requirements and standards of the profession.



The College regulates nursing in order to protect the public. The College sets the standards of practice, and ensures nurses are practicing to the standards.

Nurses are accountable for their decisions and actions and the consequence of those actions. Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) are not accountable for the decisions or actions of other health care providers or other nurses. For example, RNs are not accountable for the actions or decisions made by RPNs. That being said, nurses are responsible for taking action in situations where the client's safety and well-being are compromised.

In addition, nurses must adhere to the laws specific to the profession (such as the *Health Care Consent Act* and the *Nursing Act, 1991*) and meet the College's practice standards (for example: *Infection Presentation and Control and Documentation*).

Indicators For All Nurses

- seek help and share knowledge; and
- refrain from performing activities for which she/he is not competent.



Nurses are expected to seek assistance appropriately and in a timely manner to ensure the best possible outcome for the client.

In addition to seeking knowledge, nurses are expected to provide direction and collaborate and share knowledge and expertise with nurses working in a new environment or who are experiencing new situations. Think of a time when you had a positive learning experience. Who was your mentor/teacher/or colleague? How did they support you? Why was this a positive learning experience? The College's *Supporting Learners* practice guideline outlines how to support each other. To access this document, use your mouse to click on the words Share Knowledge.

The College receives inquiries from nurses whose roles and responsibilities have changed. This creates a situation where they are expected to meet client care needs with no previous experience in performing the required care. Changes in roles and responsibilities are an opportunity for nurses to grow professionally and expand their knowledge. But, nurses must ensure that they are competent in the new role and that their clients receive the best possible care. As a nurse, you are accountable for sharing and negotiating the aspects of care that you are competent to perform.

Accountability For Your Actions

1. Assess your abilities.
2. Identify areas where you are competent.
3. Identify areas where you require additional education, experience and/or supervision.
4. Outline strategies for meeting your learning needs.
5. Share these strategies with your employer/supervisor/manager.

Often it is possible to identify and meet learning needs before a change in roles is implemented. Proactively planning will prevent nurses from finding themselves in a situation where they do not feel adequately prepared to meet the client care needs.

How can you ensure you are competent to meet the challenges of a new role and responsibilities?

Read the following steps under Accountability For Your Actions.

Indicators For All Nurses

- identify yourself and explain your role;
- ensure best outcome for your clients; and
- advocate for clients, the profession and the health care system.

Click here for more information on identifying oneself:

[Professional Misconduct page 9](#)

If a client asks who you are, you are obligated to fully identify yourself, including your appropriate designation of RN or RPN, and explain your role. This obligation is based on the principles that health professionals are accountable for the care they provide, and that clients have a right to know who is providing the care.

Nurses have a role to play in providing, facilitating, advocating and promoting the best possible care and outcome for the client. Think about this statement and reflect on a time when you changed a client's plan of care or implemented a needed service for a client. Consider the impact of your actions on the client's outcome. How did your actions promote the best possible care for the client?

Nurses have a responsibility to advocate for the profession and the health care system. Have you encouraged or requested nursing input in a practice setting change or suggested a mechanism to improve the care nurses provide? How did the situation turn out? What would you do differently next time?

Indicators For All Nurses

- take responsibility for your errors;
- practice according to the practice standards, guidelines and legislation;
- take action when a client is at risk;
- report unsafe or unprofessional behaviours; and
- maintain core competencies.



Nurses are expected to take responsibility for their own actions (including errors) and ensuring their practice is consistent with practice standards, guidelines and all legislation appropriate to the profession. As well, nurses must take action in situations where client safety and well-being is compromised and report unsafe and unprofessional behaviour. This may involve reporting to the appropriate authority a health care team member or colleague whose actions or behaviour towards their clients is unsafe or unprofessional.

Accountability also includes promoting respect for the nursing profession through ones conduct, and maintaining core competencies throughout a career.

In my workplace we are staffed with RNs, RPNs and unregulated care providers. Our employer wants us to wear name tags identifying us by name but not by professional designation.

Do nurses have an obligation to fully identify themselves, including their designation to their clients?

- A) Yes
- B) No

Read the scenario and question, then click on the circle beside the correct answer.

Scenario

Three nurses noted that a client consistently refused to take his medication. Instead of addressing the issue of why the client was refusing his medication, the nurses threw it away and recorded that it had been administered. This action is professional misconduct.

Read the scenario and answer the question that follows this slide.

Choose the most appropriate response.

- A) The nurses should have documented the refused medication on the MAR sheet and stopped the medication order at the pharmacy.
- B) The nurses should have addressed the issue of the client's refusal to take the medication, brought it to the attention of the health care team and looked for solutions to the problem.

Click on the circle beside the most appropriate response.

Question Discussion

The answer is B.

Nurses are accountable to advocate for their clients and are held accountable for their actions and decisions. In this situation, the nurses should have explored solutions with the client and the health care team. In addition, they should have documented the issue, including the client's perspective and the actions taken by the nurses.

Scenario

Ling is asked by the nurse manager to work in another area. She has never worked in this area before and worries that she will be unable to provide safe care to the clients. Ling tells her manager that she does not feel competent to work in that area of practice. The manager tells Ling that some aspects of her experience can be used, therefore she must go.

Read the scenario and answer the question that follows this slide.

Choose the most appropriate response.

- A) No, Ling has never worked in this area so she does not have to go.
- B) Yes, if there are aspects of care that Ling can safely provide then she must work on that unit.

Click on the circle beside the most appropriate response.

Question Discussion

The answer is B.

Yes. Ling has an accountability to her employer and the clients; she was scheduled for a shift and her employer is counting on her to provide care. Ling is accountable for telling her manager that she is not competent to provide *all* aspects of the care and for being specific about what care she can provide. Ling's assignment should be modified to enable her to provide the elements of care that she is competent to do.

[Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services](#)

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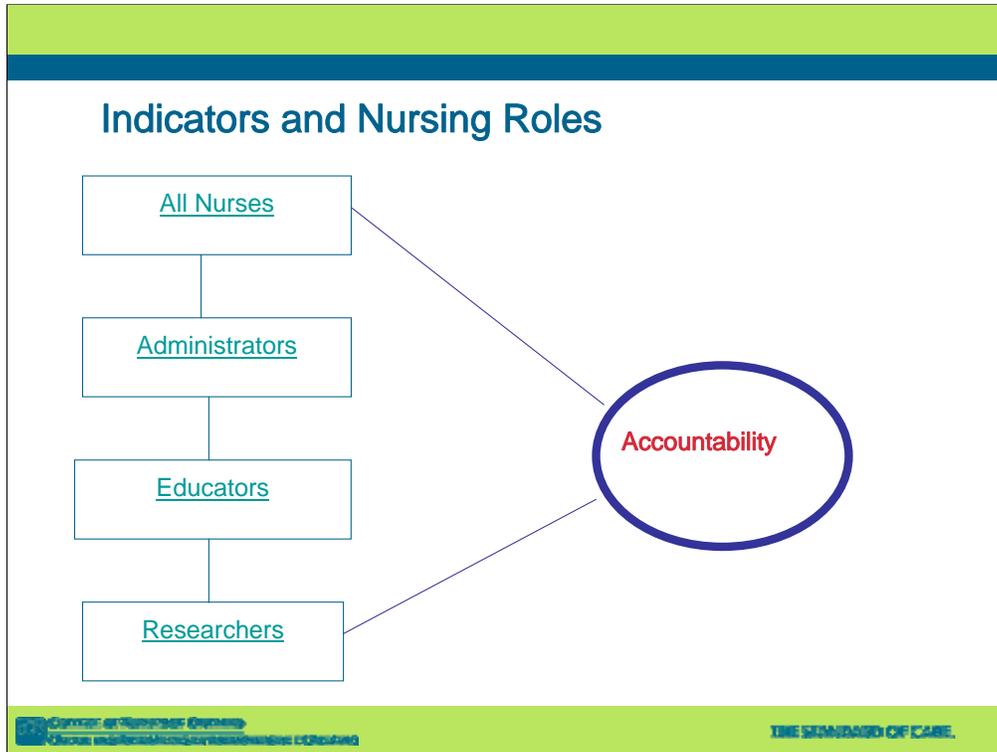
THE STANDARD OF CARE.

Read the following discussion note.

For more information, the College has developed the practice guideline *Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services*. You can access this document by using your mouse to click on the practice guideline title at the bottom of the slide.

Accountability For All Nurses

Your score	{score}
Max score	{max-score}
Number of quiz attempts	{total-attempts}



Nurses work in a variety of roles. Some nurses provide direct client care, while others practice in the administrator, educator or researcher role.

The indicators on the following slides illustrate how the standard may be demonstrated by nurses working in different roles.

Nurses in the administrator, educator and researcher role have additional indicators, therefore they should review the All Nurses section and the specific section matching their role. To review this presentation by specific roles, use your mouse and click on your choice.

Indicators For The Administrator Role

- ensure staffing is in the best interest of clients and professional practice; and
- ensure appropriate utilization, education and supervision of staff.



In addition to the indicators for all nurses, nurse administrators have additional expectations. Administrators are accountability for providing sufficient human and physical resources to ensure client safety. They are also accountable for ensuring mechanisms allow for staffing decisions that are in the best interest of client and professional practice and that staff are appropriately utilized and have adequate supervision. This includes considering the appropriate use of unregulated care providers.

Before making staffing decisions, consider the overall client care needs, and collaborate with staff to determine whether the level and mix of staffing is adequate to provide safe and effective care.

Indicators For The Administrator Role

- create an environment that encourages ongoing learning; and
- advocate for quality practice settings.



Nurses are best able to provide quality care when their work environment: supports quality professional nursing practice, is effective in implementing change and responds to nurses' concerns. Nurse administrators are expected to create an environment that encourages ongoing learning and to advocate for quality practice settings.

Scenario

As a nurse manager, I am faced with a staff shortage. It is a huge challenge to recruit and retain staff and frequently we work short-staffed. What is the nurse manager's accountability in this situation?

Read the scenario and answer the question that follows this slide.

Choose the most appropriate answer.

- A) As a nurse manager, you are accountable for having mechanisms in place to address the staff shortage.
- B) As a nurse manager, you are accountable for ensuring client care needs are met. If the staff refuses to work overtime, it is considered abandonment.

Click on the circle beside the most appropriate response.

Question Discussion

The answer is A.

As a nurse manager, you are accountable for having mechanisms in place to address the staff shortage.

Some administrators believe that staff nurses are abandoning clients and committing professional misconduct if they refuse to work overtime or extra shifts. This is not correct.

[*Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services*](#)

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THE STANDARD OF CARE.

Nurse managers are accountable for having mechanisms in place to address staff shortages. Managers should collaborate with staff and colleagues, look at trends and themes within the organization and consider creative ideas in order to achieve workable solutions that will meet client care needs. For example, examine: other services that are available; the possibility of sharing resources with other units or facilities; and whether the level and mix of staff is adequate for providing safe nursing services.

When chronic staff shortages becomes unmanageable, it may be time to consider stopping or reducing services to ensure the care provided remains effective and safe.

Regarding abandoning clients, the College has developed a practice guideline titled *Refusing Assignments and Discontinuing Nursing Services*. You can access this document by using your mouse to click on the practice guideline title at the bottom of the slide.

Accountability Nurse Administrator

Your score	{score}
Max score	{max-score}
Number of quiz attempts	{total-attempts}

Indicators For The Educator Role

- communicate level of preparation and objectives for learning;
- ensure appropriate supervision of students; and
- use standards of practice and evidence-based knowledge.



Click here to read [Supporting Learners practice guideline](#)

In addition to the indicators for all nurses, nurse educators have additional expectations.

The nurse in the educator role is expected to communicate the level of preparation and the learning objectives to the staff. A learner or student may be a novice nurse, a nurse new to the role, other care providers or a student enrolled in a nursing program.

The nurse in the educator role should ensure a student receives the appropriate education, support and supervision to practice safely and to facilitate the learning of new skills and knowledge. As well, educators apply the standards of practice and evidence-based knowledge to their own practice.

Indicators for the researcher role

- ensuring the safety and well-being of clients.



In addition to the indicators for all nurses, nurses in the researcher role have additional expectations.

They are expected to put the safety and well-being of the client first, and the client is considered above all other objectives.

Professional Standards

Accountability
Continuing Competency
Ethics
Knowledge
Knowledge Application
Leadership
Relationship



To work through another chapter from *Professional Standards*, close the presentation and return to the Learning Centre.