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Emergency Nurse Scope and Standards of Practice

Abstract

This paper is an evaluation of the present practice of an Associate Degree Nurse as she nears the end of her Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The writer presently practices as a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Department; therefore the paper has a composite of the Emergency Nurse Association’s standards of practice. Each standard is used and critically analyzed against the writer’s present practices. Areas in which the writer meets the standard are discussed, as well as areas in need of improvement. The writer develops a professional development plan in which the goals are timed and measurable. The goal of the plan is to help the writer develop as a professional nurse in her specialty area. The writer also develops a plan that will evaluate the goals. The evaluation of the goals will take place on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis.

Emergency Nurse Scope and Standards of Practice

As a registered nurse, one must always evaluate and examine his or her role in the workplace. We must strive to provide competent, compassionate, holistic care to our patients. This ensures best care and good outcomes are achieved. Many nurses practice in a specialty area, in which they not only strive to meet the American Nurses Association (ANA) standards and scope of practice, but those that are defined by their designated area of practice. The ANA (2010) states, “Specialty nurses collaborate, consult, and serve as a liaison, bridging the role of the professional registered nurse with that of other professionals, and subsequently help delineate nursing’s role in society” (pg. 18). As a registered nurse working in the emergency department, I strive to meet all aspects of the code of nursing as well as the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) standards of practice.

The ENA (2010) sets standards that, “reflect the values and priorities for emergency nurses, provide direction for professional emergency nursing practice, and provide a framework for evaluation of the practice” (pg. 9). Each standard developed by the ENA is listed below as a bullet and is followed by a critical evaluation of my current practice, highlighting aspects in which I excel in and areas in which need further development.

**Standards of Emergency Nursing Practice**

**Emergency Nursing Process**

* The emergency nurse initiates accurate and ongoing assessment of physical, psychologic, and social problems of patients within the emergency setting.
* The emergency nurse analyzes assessment data to identify patient problems.
* The emergency nurse identifies expected outcomes individualized to the emergency patient based on the patient’s assessment, identified problems, and cultural diversity.
* The emergency nurse formulates a plan of care for the emergency patient based on the assessment, patient problems, and expected outcomes.
* The emergency nurse implements a plan of care based on the assessment, patient problems, and expected outcomes.
* The emergency nurse evaluates and modifies the plan of care based on observable patient response and attainment of expected outcomes.
* The emergency nurse evaluates the quality and effectiveness of emergency nursing practice (ENA, 2010).

As an emergency nurse, with each patient on arrival, a problem-focused assessment is conducted. During every assessment areas are identified in which the patient needs interventions, these interventions may be nursing designated or a physician’s order must be acquired. If nursing interventions are indicated they will be implemented. As a nurse in the emergency room I have pre-set orders that can be done prior to the doctor’s assessment, with this I can begin to prepare my plan of care. By using my nursing judgment, I can acquire intravenous access and obtain laboratory specimens. I am able to apply oxygen, cardiac monitoring, obtain an electrocardiogram, and call respiratory therapy if indicated. After each implementation of an intervention, reassessment is mandated. By reassessing a patient, it allows for you to evaluate if the intervention has been effective and if another intervention is needed or if the intervention can be discontinued. With each patient, I have to constantly evaluate the plan of care, identifying new needs and evaluating previous interventions.

In my practice I have a strong nursing process. I am constantly learning every day; this allows me to expand my assessment skills, predict outcomes and plan interventions appropriately. I have worked in the Emergency Department (ED) for 10 months now; I am not a seasoned nurse but I am gaining valuable experience each day that I work. This experience allows me to have increased strength which helps overcome my weakness, which is inexperience.

**The Emergency Nurse as a Professional**

* The emergency nurse adheres to established standards of emergency nursing practice, including behaviors that characterize professional status.
* The emergency nurse recognizes self-learning needs and is accountable for maximizing professional development and optimal emergency nursing practice.
* The emergency nurse engages in activities and behaviors that characterize a professional (ENA, 2010).

As an emergency nurse, I strive for professional status. According to the ANA (2010), “professional nurses have an ethical obligation to maintain and improve healthcare practice environments conducive to the provision of quality health care” (pg. 5). I always try to keep a professional attitude with my patients and fellow coworkers. Although I am professional, it is hard not to develop personal relationships with coworkers. By spending sometimes more than 12 hours a day with them, it is hard to prevent relationships from developing. This can be a strength and also a weakness. I must be able to balance work with my personal life, and if it includes coworkers we must be able to separate it while at work. Professional attitudes must be maintained in order to provide the best care to the patients.

I understand that I am new to this specialty area. Along with school, I am trying to develop and enhance my specialty skills. I have acquired my Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certificate as well as my Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) certificate. I plan on obtaining my Trauma Nurse Core Course certificate this year. I strive to obtain as much knowledge as possible in my area, which in return rewards me with a greater wealth of knowledge allowing me to provide better care to my patients.

Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2012) defines a professional as a person, “Characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of a profession”. I try my very best to provide compassionate, holistic care according to the ANA scope and standards of practice. I treat my patients in a professional manner, in which I try to uphold all of their requests and meet all of their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

**The Emergency Nurse Provides Holistic Care**

* The emergency nurse provides care based on philosophical and ethical concepts. These concepts include reverence for life; respect for the inherent dignity, worth, autonomy, and individuality of each human being; and acknowledging the beliefs of other people.
* The emergency nurse ensures open and timely communication with emergency patients, significant others, and other health care providers through professional collaboration (ENA, 2010).

As an emergency room nurse, I am exposed to all different races, cultures, and ages. I am from a very rural, predominantly white community in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. I was not raised with a diverse group of people. I am lacking in regards to cultural competence. However, I am becoming increasingly competent with more time spent in my new community. With becoming more culturally competent, it allows me to provide more holistic care to my patients as well as their families. With using a holistic approach, I not only treat my patients, but also their families. Teaching and educating patients and their families is a priority in my nursing process. With education, patients can better understand their disease process and it allows them to try to prevent exacerbations.

As well as using a teaching approach, I also collaborate with other members of our health care team. By involving respiratory therapy, physical therapy, and also social work, it allows for a more dynamic approach to care. With the use of an interdisciplinary team, it ensures the best care is provided and all of the patient’s needs are met.

**The Emergency Nurse Does Research**

* The emergency nurse recognizes, values, and uses research and quality improvement findings to enhance the practice of emergency nursing (ENA, 2010).

Research is an area in which I need to spend more time. I do not actively participate in research at work, but I do understand the importance of it. As a nurse it is imperative that I incorporate new trends and findings into my nursing care. I just recently became ultra-sound guided IV trained. Currently I am one of two people that are considered competent in my department. I also have an excellent Clinical Nurse Supervisor (CNS) that ensures our department is using the most up to date techniques and is an excellent resource. I also am currently pursuing my Bachelors of Science in Nursing; therefore I am enhancing my nursing knowledge.

**The Emergency Nurse Uses an Interdisciplinary Approach**

* The emergency nurse collaborates with other health care providers to deliver patient-centered care in a manner consistent with safe, efficient, and cost-effective use of resources (ENA, 2010).

As stated previously, I incorporate a multi-disciplinary approach into my nursing practice. Incorporating other members of the health care team ensures that the patient is receiving the best care possible. Cost-containment is always in mind, so that the patient is able to afford their care. We also provide our patients with low-cost and/or free resources in the community. These resources include family planning, STD counseling and testing, dental and primary care.

**Professional Development Plan**

As a registered nursing professional, I want to ensure that I am meeting and exceeding the ANA’s professional standards as well as the ENA’s standards. I plan to continue my BSN and graduate in December of 2012. I also plan on acquiring my TNCC as stated this year. The ENA supports a certificate entitled Certified Emergency Nurse (CEN). This certificate requires two years of emergency room experience. The CEN requires renewal every four years. When renewing the test may be repeated, an online based test can be taken or the submission of 100 continuing education credits can be used. I plan on starting my preparation for this test once I have two years of experience working in the ED. I also plan on maintaining my requirements for work by attending all of the mandatory education classes as well as our annual competency class.

**Evaluation of Plan**

Throughout the course of my work experience I will also be evaluating my care, professionalism, and advancement in my career. Specifically, I will evaluate myself after each year to ensure that I have met all of my department’s requirements. In December of 2012, I will evaluate if I have received my TNCC certificate and if I have finished my BSN. If these are not complete I will revise my plan accordingly. In June of 2013, I will evaluate if I have started preparing for my CEN certificate. Evaluation of my nursing care each day, week, and month is imperative to allow for changes in my care on a daily basis and also as a whole. If at any time I find that I am struggling, I will discuss my progress with my CNS, who is there to offer me guidance and encouragement to proceed in the right direction of my nursing career.

**Summary**

In order to ensure that one is providing the best care, which includes a professional demeanor, use of evidenced based practice, and a holistic approach, one must always challenge and evaluate oneself. As a nurse, I must always uphold the ANA’s scope and standards of practice as well as our own specialty area’s scope and standards. It is imperative to set goals and a plan to evaluate the goals, ensuring adequate growth in your career as well as your nursing knowledge. It is also important to have someone to offer you guidance in the case that you become off track with your plan. This ensures that you are growing and developing, and also providing the best care to the most important part of your job, your patients.

Resources

American Nurses Association. (2010). *Scope and standards of practice.* Silver Spring, MD: nursesbooks.org.

Emergency Nurses Association. (2010). *Sheehy’s emergency nursing: Principles and practice* (6th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.

Professional. (2012). In *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/professional.

**Appendix**

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| --- | --- |
| **CHECK**  **DATE, TIME, & INITIAL** | **PROOFREAD FOR: APA ISSUE** |
| x | 1. **Page Numbers:**  Did you number your pages using the automatic functions of your Word program? [p. 230 and example on p. 40)] |
| x | 2. **Running head:** Does the Running head: have a small “h”? Is it on every page? Is it less than 50 spaces total? Is the title of the Running head in all caps? Is it 1/2” from the top of your title page? (Should be a few words from the title of your paper). [p. 229 and example on p. 40] |
| x | 3. **Abstract:** Make sure your abstract begins on a new page. Is there a label of Abstract and it is centered at the top of the page? Is it a single paragraph? Is the paragraph flush with the margin without an indentation? Is your abstract a summary of your entire paper? Remember it is not an introduction to your paper. Someone should be able to read the abstract and know what to find in your paper. [p. 25 and example on p. 41] |
| x | 4. **Introduction:** Did you repeat the title of your paper on your first page of content? Do not use ‘Introduction’ as a heading following the title. The first paragraph clearly implies the introduction and no heading is needed. [p. 27 and example on p. 42] |
| x | 5. **Margins:** Did you leave 1” on all sides? [p. 229] |
| x | 6. **Double-spacing:** Did you double-space throughout? No triple or extra spaces between sections or paragraphs except in special circumstances. This includes the reference page. [p. 229 and example on p. 40-59] |
| x | 7. **Line Length and Alignment:** Did youuse the flush-left style, and leave the right margin uneven, or ragged? [p. 229] |
| x | 8. **Paragraphs and Indentation:** Did you indent the first line of every paragraph? See P. 229 for exceptions. |
| x | 9. **Spacing After Punctuation Marks:** Did you space once at the end of separate parts of a reference and initials in a person’s name? Do not space after periods in abbreviations. Space twice after punctuation marks at the end of a sentence. [p. 87-88] |
| x | 10. **Typeface:** Did you use Times Roman 12-point font? [p. 228] |
| x | 11. **Abbreviation:** Did you explain each abbreviation the first time you used it? [p. 106-111] |
| x | 12. **Plagiarism:** Cite all sources! If you say something that is not your original idea, it must be cited. You may be citing many times…this is what you are supposed to be doing! [p. 170] |
| x | 13. **Direct Quote:** A direct quote is exact words taken from another. An example with citation would look like this:  “The variables that impact the etiology and the human response to various disease states will be explored” (Bell-Scriber, 2007, p. 1).  Please note where the quotation marks are placed, where the final period is placed, no first name of author, and inclusion of page number, etc. Do all direct quotes look like this? [p. 170-172] |
| x | 14. **Quotes Over 40 Words:** Did you make block quotes out of any direct quotes that are 40 words or longer? [p. 170-172] |
| x | 15. **Paraphrase:** A paraphrase citation would look like this:  Patients respond to illnesses in various ways depending on a number of factors that will be explored (Bell-Scriber, 2007).  It may also look like this: Bell-Scriber (2007) found that……  [p. 171 and multiple examples in text on p. 40-59]  For multiple references within the same paragraph see page 174. |
| x | 16. **Headings:** Did you check your headings for proper levels? [p. 62-63]. |
| x | 17. **General Guidelines for** **References:**  **A.** Did you start the References on a new page? [p. 37]  **B.** Did you cut and paste references on your reference page? If so, check to make sure they are in correct APA format. Often they are not and must be adapted. Make sure all fonts are the same.  **C.** Is your reference list double spaced with hanging indents? [p. 37] |
|  | **PROOFREAD FOR GRAMMAR, SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, & STRUCTURE** |
| x | 18. Did you follow the assignment rubric? Did you make headings that address each major section? (Required to point out where you addressed each section.) |
| x | 19. Watch for run-on or long, cumbersome sentences. Read it out loud without pausing unless punctuation is present. If you become breathless or it doesn’t make sense, you need to rephrase or break the sentence into 2 or more smaller sentences. Did you do this? |
| x | 20. Wordiness: check for the words “that”, and “the”. If not necessary, did you omit? |
| x | 21. Conversational tone: Don’t write as if you are talking to someone in a casual way. For example, “Well so I couldn’t believe nurses did such things!” or “I was in total shock over that.” Did you stay in a formal/professional tone? |
| x | 22. Avoid contractions. i.e. don’t, can’t, won’t, etc. Did you spell these out? |
|  | 23. Did you check to make sure there are no hyphens and broken words in the right margin? |
| x | 24. Do not use “etc.” or "i.e." in formal writing unless in parenthesis. Did you check for improper use of etc. & i.e.? |
| x | 25. Stay in subject agreement. When referring to 1 nurse, don’t refer to the nurse as “they” or “them”. Also, in referring to a human, don’t refer to the person as “that”, but rather “who”. For example: The nurse that gave the injection….” Should be “The nurse who gave the injection…” Did you check for subject agreement? |
| x | 26. Don’t refer to “us”, “we”, “our”, within the paper…this is not about you and me. Be clear in identifying. For example don’t say “Our profession uses empirical data to support ….” . Instead say “The nursing profession uses empirical data….. |
| x | 27. Did you check your sentences to make sure you did not end them with a preposition? For example, “I witnessed activities that I was not happy with.” Instead, “I witnessed activities with which I was not happy.” |
| x | 28. Did you run a Spellcheck? Did you proofread in addition to running the Spellcheck? |
| x | 29. Did you have other people read your paper? Did they find any areas confusing? |
| x | 30. Did you include a summary or conclusion heading and section to wrap up your paper? |
| x | 31. Does your paper have sentence fragments? Do you have complete sentences? |
| x | 32. Did you check apostrophes for correct possessive use. Don’t use apostrophes unless it is showing possession and then be sure it is in the correct location. The exception is with the word it. It’s = it is. Its is possessive. |

Signing below indicates you have proofread your paper for the errors in the checklist:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Jessie McBurney\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_DATE: 4/19/12

A peer needs to proofread your paper checking for errors in the listed areas and sign below:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Virginia Jordan \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­DATE:\_\_\_4/19/12

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