

**ENTRY LEVEL POPULATION-BASED  
PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING COMPETENCES  
For The New Graduate Or Novice Public Health Nurse**

**PHN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

*CORNERSTONE*

*Public Health Nursing Practice focuses on entire populations and reflects community priorities and needs*

- 1. Applies the public health nursing process to communities, systems, individuals and families**
  - A. Identifies the population(s) for which the PHN is accountable
  - B. Assesses the health status of communities, systems, individuals and families
    - 1) Identifies and understands the use of key health determinants
    - 2) Identifies relevant and appropriate data and information sources for the populations to which the PHN is accountable
      - a. Familiar with data used in the health department
      - b. Familiar with data in the programs in which the PHN works
    - 3) Works in partnership with communities, systems, individuals or families to attach meaning to collected quantitative and qualitative data
    - 4) Works in partnership with communities, systems, individuals and families to establish priorities
  - C. In partnership with communities, systems, individuals and families, develops a plan based on priorities (including nursing care plans for individuals/families)
    - 1) Selects desired outcomes that are measurable, meaningful, and manageable
    - 2) Selects public health interventions that
      - a. Are evidence-based
      - b. Have the greatest potential for improving the health of the population
      - c. Respect the culture and ethnic beliefs of the community
      - d. Are consistent with professional standards, the Nurse Practice Act, existing laws, ordinances, and policies
    - 3) Selects level(s) of intervention (community, systems, individuals and families)
    - 4) Selects level(s) of prevention (primary, secondary, tertiary)
  - D. Implements the plan with communities, systems, individuals and families
    - 1) Works in partnership with communities, systems, individuals and families to implement public health interventions
    - 2) Utilizes best practices when implementing the public health nursing intervention
  - E. Evaluates
    - 1) Measures outcomes of public health nursing interventions
    - 2) Documents public health nursing process by completing forms, records, and charts for communities, systems, individuals and families

## CORNERSTONE

*Public Health Nursing Practice promotes health through strategies driven by epidemiological evidence*

- 2. Utilizes basic epidemiological (the incidence, distribution, and control of disease in a population) principles in public health nursing practice**
  - A. Understands the relationship between community assessment and health department programs, especially the populations and programs with which the PHN works
  - B. Understands the relationships between risk/protective factors and health issues
  - C. Obtains and interprets information regarding risks and benefits to the community
  - D. Applies epidemiological triangle (host, agent, environment) when assessing and intervening with communities, systems, individuals and families

## CORNERSTONE

*Public health nursing practice collaborates with community resources to achieve those strategies... but can and will work alone if necessary*

- 3. Utilizes collaboration to achieve public health goals**
  - A. Demonstrates effective participation on interdisciplinary teams (contributes, are prepared, bring things back)
  - B. Develops relationships and builds partnerships with communities, systems, individuals and families
  - C. Utilizes community assets to empower communities, systems, individuals and families
  
- 4. Works within the responsibility and authority of the governmental public health system**
  - A. Describes the relationship among the federal, state, and local levels of public health system
  - B. Identifies the individual's and organization's responsibilities within the context of the Essential Public Health Services and Core Functions
  - C. Recognizes that public health has statutory authority such as public health nuisance, quarantine, and commitment
  - D. Differentiates the public health model from medical model
  - E. Understands the independent public health nursing role as described in the Scope and Standards of Public Health Nursing
  - F. Describes the role of government in the delivery of community health services
  - G. Aware of components of health care system
    - 1) Funding streams such as Medicare, Medicaid, PMAP, categorical grants
    - 2) Programs utilized by local health departments, such as WIC, home visiting
    - 3) Community resources
  - H. Understands legal issues such as data privacy and mandated reporting

## CORNERSTONE

*The authority for the independent practice of public health nursing emanates from the Nurse Practice Act.*

### **5. Practices within the auspices of the Nurse Practice Act**

- A. Understands the scope of nursing practice (independent nursing functions and delegated medical functions)
- B. Establishes appropriate professional boundaries
- C. Maintains confidentiality
- D. Demonstrates ethical, legal and professional accountability
- E. Delegates and supervises other personnel
- F. Understands the role of a public health nurse as described under public health nursing registration

## ALL CORNERSTONES

### **6. Effectively communicates with communities, systems, individuals, families and colleagues**

- A. Interacts respectfully, sensitively and effectively with everyone
- B. Presents accurate demographic, statistical, programmatic, and scientific information
- C. Selects appropriate communication methods, such as audiovisual, technological, multi-media tools
- D. Organizes written materials that are clear, concise, accurate, and complete
- E. Utilizes sound teaching/learning principles that consider specific characteristics of the community, system, individual or family
- F. Communicates electronically utilizing basic word processing, Internet, email, Netiquette, attachments, and Web-based systems

## PHN CHARACTERISTICS & VALUES

### CORNERSTONE

*Public Health Nursing Practice establishes caring relationships with the communities, systems, individuals and families that comprise the populations PHNs serve*

- 7. Establishes and maintains caring relationships with communities, systems, individuals, and families**
  - A. Demonstrates trust, respect, empathy
  - B. Follows through with commitments
  - C. Maintains appropriate boundaries
  - D. Demonstrates tact and diplomacy
  - E. Seeks assistance when needed in managing relationships

### CORNERSTONE

*Public Health Nursing Practice is grounded in social justice, compassion, and sensitivity to diversity, and respect for the worth of all people, especially the vulnerable*

- 8. Shows evidence of commitment to social justice, the greater good, and the public health principles**
  - A. Differentiates between social justice and market justice
  - B. Applies principles of social justice to promote and maintain the health and well-being of populations
  - C. Advocates for the populations for which the PHN is accountable
  
- 9. Demonstrates nonjudgmental/unconditional acceptance of people different from self**
  - A. Listens to others in an unbiased manner
  - B. Respects points of view of others
  - C. Promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives (*encourages involvement of diverse populations*)
  - D. Identifies the role of cultural, social, spiritual, religious, and behavioral factors when selecting or designing public health interventions
  - E. Interacts respectfully, sensitively and effectively with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, religious backgrounds, health status, age, and lifestyle preferences

## CORNERSTONE

*Public Health Nursing Practice encompasses the mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental aspects of health*

### **10. Incorporates mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental aspects of health into assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation**

- A. Assesses mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental health of communities, systems, individuals and families
- B. Develops intervention plans that consider the mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental health of communities, systems, individuals and families
- C. Implements interventions that improve the mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental health of communities, systems, individuals and families
- D. Evaluates the impact of public health nursing interventions on the mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental health of communities, systems, individuals and families

## ALL CORNERSTONES

### **11. Demonstrates leadership in public health nursing with communities, systems, individuals and families**

- A. Seeks learning opportunities
- B. Works independently; autonomous in practice
- C. Willing to work in an unstructured environment, tolerates ambiguity
- D. Seeks consultation and support (reality check, end of rope phenomenon)
- E. Takes initiative; is a self-starter
- F. Adapts to change
- G. Is willing and able to respond to population needs
- H. Demonstrates flexibility
- I. Contributes to team efforts
- J. Prioritizes and organizes workload, time, materials and resources

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<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/phn/partnerships.html>

## APPENDIX

### **Personal characteristics that contribute to effective practice**

1. Passion
2. Creativity
3. Courage
4. Confidence
5. Adaptability
6. Humor
7. Persistence
8. Independent
9. Positive attitude
10. Life long learner
11. Risk taker
12. Hard worker
13. Leader
14. Resourceful
15. Flexibility
16. Caring
17. Compassion
18. Self-care

### **Basic public health nursing knowledge base:**

1. Human Growth & Development across the lifespan: prenatal, infancy, preschool, school-age, adolescent, adult, elderly
2. Family development
3. Antepartum/Postpartum
4. Parenting
5. Health promotion: infant, pre-school, school-age, adolescent, women, men, elderly
6. Chronic disease prevention and management
7. Injury prevention
8. Violence prevention
9. Chemical health issues and/or behaviors
10. Mental Health
11. Death and dying; grief and loss
12. Human sexuality
13. Family planning
14. Nutrition
15. Disaster and bioterrorism response
16. Disease prevention and control, including universal precautions
17. Immunizations across the lifespan
18. Environmental Health and Safety
19. Technical Nursing Skills
20. Medication administration/management
21. Health determinants
22. Social and market justice