

INTRA-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

CNA POSITION

- ▶ Regulated nurses must work together to achieve optimal intra-professional practice to serve the public interest.
- ▶ Regulated nurses must seek out and value each other, respecting and recognizing the important contributions that each nursing designation makes to patient care and the health system.
- ▶ Regulated nurses apply leadership principles that support collaborative practice models, including shared decision-making and accountability for one's own actions.
- ▶ Models of care must incorporate available evidence, enable optimal scopes of practice of all regulated nurses and be flexible enough to address ever-evolving changes to scopes of practice, while maintaining individual needs at the forefront.
- ▶ When determining the most appropriate nursing care for individuals, decisions must be based on the needs and safety of the person while recognizing the principles of evidence-informed decision-making.
- ▶ Appropriate resources and structural elements are essential for regulated nurses to achieve optimal intra-professional collaboration.

CNA BELIEFS

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) believes that:

- ▶ Intra-professional collaboration is a relational, respectful process among nursing colleagues that allows for the effective use of the knowledge, skills and talents of all nursing designations to establish and achieve optimal client and health system outcomes (Nova Scotia College of Nurses, 2019; Nurses Association of New Brunswick & Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses, 2015).
- ▶ Through effective intra-professional collaborative practice, regulated nurses can optimize their scopes of practice, enhance the health of Canadians and engage in person-centred care.
- ▶ Effective intra-professional practice supports interprofessional collaboration.

- ▶ Strong advocacy efforts, directed at all levels of government, are needed to promote the value of professional nursing care and the need for research regarding intra-professional education and professional practice.

CNA believes that the concepts/information below reflect the requisite capacities for regulated nurses to achieve effective intra-professional collaborative practice:

- ▶ Role clarification to ensure registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, nurse practitioners and licensed practical nurses understand their distinct role and those of the other nursing designations in order to inform effective intra-professional collaboration
- ▶ Effective teamwork practices to maximize quality care and individual outcomes
- ▶ Leadership to support collaborative teamwork and person-centred models of care
- ▶ Respectful communication to enhance effective listening, consultation and engagement with different perspectives
- ▶ Engages self and others in a positive manner (conflict management) to constructively address issues of concern with fairness and timeliness
- ▶ Knowledge of the jurisdiction-specific legislated and regulatory guidelines to support scope of practice optimization

CNA believes that the following resources must be present to support regulated nurses to work collaboratively:

- ▶ Education and mentorship to assist all regulated nurses to articulate the contributions and value of their education and role
- ▶ Education strategies embedded in the curricula of all nursing programs to support the development of intra-professional collaboration
- ▶ Adequate formal safe staffing education around the scopes of practice of different nursing designations for leadership and staff to ensure that nursing resources are matched to individual care needs
- ▶ Education for regulated nurses regarding scope of practice, including shared and unique competencies of each nursing designation
- ▶ Evidence-based knowledge that identifies the enablers and outcomes of optimal intra-professional collaboration and teamwork
- ▶ Leadership strategies and competencies that support intra-professional collaboration
- ▶ Education and support to assist all regulated nurses to optimize their full scope of practice

CNA believes that the following structural elements must be present to support regulated nurses to work collaboratively:

- ▶ Models of care with intra-professional consultation as a core feature

- ▶ Role descriptions and policies that reflect current legislative and regulatory guidelines for nursing practice and that enable all regulated nurses to work at their full scope of practice.
- ▶ Evidence-based frameworks for decision-making
- ▶ Curriculum and education strategies that develop intra-professional collaboration in all nursing programs

BACKGROUND

Collaboration and enhanced individualized outcomes can be supported by health policy and models of care that encourage regulated nurses to work to full scope and enable collaboration (Moore, Prentice, & Salfi, 2017; Lim, North, & Shaw, 2017). The successful implementation of these models requires effective teamwork and inter and intra-professional collaboration (Nelson et al., 2014) that maintains an emphasis on person-centred care and patient safety (MacPhee, 2014). Determination of staffing within these care delivery models must be based on a real-time person needs assessment tool to rate client acuity and dependency. Collaborative practice also supports regulated nurses and other professions to optimize scopes of practice (Nelson et al., 2014; Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative, 2010) and improve health outcomes (Ma, Park & Shang, 2018; Chapman, Rahman, Courtney, & Chalmers, 2016). Given the changes in nursing education, credentials, scope of practice — and the paucity of Canadian evidence describing the impact of various nursing designations on health outcomes — regulated nurses require guidance and support to navigate the distinct and overlapping scopes of practice and new professional relationships.

The literature on strengthening intra-professional collaboration provides some guidance to regulated nurses who wish to build capacity for collaboration and consultation. There is a recognition that effective nursing intra-professional collaboration must be fostered through education, leadership and structures such as policy and models of care. However, authors of a recent systematic review examining intra-professional student experiences caution that more research is needed to further understand how shifting care teams have an impact on health outcomes (Butcher, MacKinnon, Bruce, Gordon, & Koning, 2017).

Students recognize that role ambiguity and the activation of hierarchies to protect professional boundaries can create barriers to safe client care (Limoges & Jagos, 2015, 2016). Providing opportunities for registered nursing students and licensed practical nursing students to come out of their siloed educations and engage in joint learning activities is a positive strategy to foster effective intra-professional collaboration and understanding (Bainbridge & Wood, 2012; Butcher et al., 2017; Limoges & Jagos, 2015, 2016). Furthermore, addressing hierarchies within higher education, and enhancing faculty knowledge related to the different designations in nursing, can ensure that nursing education contributes to role clarity, effective intra-professional collaboration

and communication (Limoges, Jagos, Lankshear, Witmer, & Madorin, 2018).

Leadership in the clinical setting is vital to set expectations and supports for collaboration in practice (Moore, Prentice, & Salfi, 2017; Lankshear, Rush, Weeres, & Martin, 2016). The nursing workforce will require flexibility as scope of practice continues to adapt to the changing needs of populations, the evolving health-care system, and advancements in nursing education. Leadership competencies are essential to ensure that evolving workplaces support professional, person-focused nursing care (Butcher, MacKinnon, & Bruce, 2018).

Regulated nurses understand the importance of collaborative practice yet struggle to enact it (Moore & Prentice, 2013). Illuminating the complex social processes involved in collaboration and working to full scope can enhance understanding and strengthen interactions among regulated nurses (MacKinnon, Butcher, & Bruce, 2018).

DEFINITIONS

Interprofessional collaboration: The World Health Organization (2010, p. 13) defines collaborative practice in health care as occurring “when multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds provide comprehensive services by working with patients, their families, carers and communities to deliver the highest quality of care across settings.”

Intra-professional collaboration: A relational and respectful process among nursing colleagues that allows for the effective use of the knowledge, skills and talents of all nursing designations to achieve optimal client and health system outcomes (College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia & College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, 2012; Nurses Association of New Brunswick & Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses, 2015)

Models of care: The ways that health care is designed and delivered to meet the person, community or population needs. The key elements of a model of care include the configuration or skill mix of the health-care providers, associated competencies, available resources (e.g., technology), inter and intra-professional relations and organizational practices.

Person-centred care: Nurses actively engage with the person, family, community, etc., to involve them in decision-making and optimize the health and wellness of everyone. Respect for culture, personal preferences and autonomy are core principles of person-centred care.

Scope of practice: Refers to activities that regulated nurses are authorized, educated and competent to perform (CNA, 2015). Authorization comes in many forms, including government legislation, jurisdictional professional standards, guidelines, policy positions and institutional policies. Education is obtained through nursing programs

approved by each provincial/territorial nursing regulatory body. Competency determinations can be achieved through peer assessment or ongoing self-reflection assessment of the nurse's ability to provide safe client care.

Structural elements: Tools and frameworks to support the functioning and efficient delivery of organized, meaningful, safe and effective health-care systems.

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