

COMPETENCIES



SCOPE

This guideline applies to the provision of paid support services in the community by Registered Nurses. They are relevant Australia-wide or when a participant is travelling overseas with their Australian team of support worker/s.

DISCLAIMER

This guideline is provided to help guide best practice in the disability, aged care and community support industry. This information does not in any way replace legislative, regulatory, or contractual requirements. Users of this document should seek appropriate expert advice in relation to their circumstances. ACIA does not accept any liability on the use of this guideline.

PURPOSE

This guideline is to assist:

- Providers adequately support Registered Nurses to ensure they are operating within their scope of practice and delegations.
- Nurses are accountable for making professional judgments about when an activity is beyond their own capacity or scope of practice and for initiating consultation with, or referral to, other members of the care team.

DESIRED OUTCOME

- To maintain a quality and safe standard of service delivery support.
- To ensure Registered Nurses to act within its professional within their professional scope and standards.
- Registered Nurses are accountable for making decisions about who is the most appropriate person to perform an activity that is in the plan of care.

BACKGROUND

The primary motivation for any Registered Nurses' decision about a care activity is to meet clients' health needs or to enhance health outcomes.

Nursing practice decisions are best made in a collaborative context of planning, risk management, and evaluation, within the context of their legislative framework.

DEFINITIONS & SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Support Worker - A paid person who assists people to perform tasks of daily living to participate in social, family and community activities in the person's home and their community. Support Workers have been commonly known in the past as attendant care worker, disability worker, aged care worker, community worker, homecare worker, care worker or paid carer.

Service Provider - Organisation or person accountable for the delivery of supports to Clients.

Carer - a person that provides supports to the Client at no cost (generally family or friend).

Support Worker Competency - trained and assessed as competent by a Registered Nurse or a person deemed competent by the provider to safely and appropriately perform a specified task as a support worker.

Client means the service user, participant, user, care recipient, consumer or person receiving the nursing or support services.

Plan means a Service Plan, Support Plan or Individual Plan (however titled – the plan) is a document developed in response to a request for service. It is developed by a Registered Nurse or a person deemed competent by the provider from the service provider, prior to the commencement of service delivery. It outlines the expected outcomes of the requested care/services and the tasks, duties and interventions required to meet the care and service needs of the client (within the parameters of the funding program). The plan guides and directs the individual support worker or Registered Nurse in their day-to-day delivery of the services.

Registered Nurse means a person who has completed the prescribed educational preparation, demonstrated competence for practice, and is registered and licensed with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as a Registered Nurse. The Registered Nurse must act within the scope of practice and requirements of a Registered Nurse, including supervision, reporting and professional development (APHRA, 2016; Carey et al., 2021; Middleton et al., 2022; Nanyonga et al., 2020; Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, 2016; Thomas-Hawkins et al., 2020; Venturato et al., 2007).

Competent means having been trained and assessed by a Registered Nurse or enrolled nurse or approved assessor as competent to safely and appropriately perform a specified task.

GUIDELINE

Standards of Practice

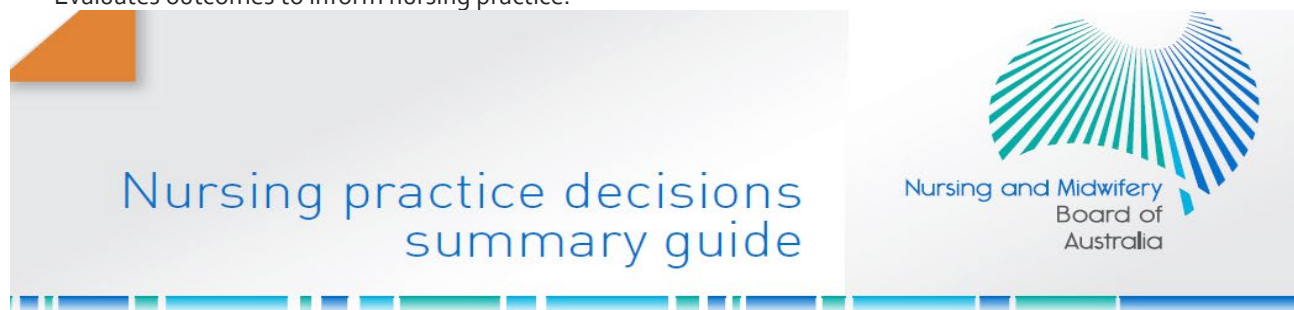
Registered Nurse practice is person-centred and evidence-based with preventative, curative, formative, supportive, restorative and palliative elements. Registered Nurses work in therapeutic and professional relationships with individuals, as well as with families, groups and communities. These people may be healthy and with a range of abilities or have health issues related to physical or mental illness and/or health challenges. These challenges may be posed by physical, psychiatric, developmental and/or intellectual disabilities.

Registered Nurse practice, as a professional endeavour, requires continuous thinking and analysis in the context of thoughtful development and maintenance of constructive relationships. To engage in this work, Registered Nurses need to continue to develop professionally and maintain their capability for professional practice. Registered Nurses determine, coordinate and provide safe, quality nursing. This practice includes comprehensive assessment, development of a plan, implementation and evaluation of outcomes. As part of practice, Registered Nurses are responsible and accountable for supervision and the delegation of nursing activity to enrolled nurses (ENs) and others.

Practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. Nursing practice extends to any paid or unpaid role where the nurse uses their nursing skills and knowledge. This practice includes working in a direct non-clinical relationship with clients, working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory, policy development roles or other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession and/or use of the nurse's professional skills. Registered Nurses are responsible for autonomous practice within dynamic systems, and in relationships with other health care professionals.

Registered Nurse standards for practice consist of the following seven standards:

- Thinks critically and analyses nursing practice.
- Engages in therapeutic and professional relationships.
- Maintains the capability for practice.
- Comprehensively conducts assessments.
- Develops a plan for nursing practice.
- Provides safe, appropriate and responsive quality nursing practice.
- Evaluates outcomes to inform nursing practice.



NOTE: the order in which these issues are considered may vary according to context



Clinical Leadership

It is imperative that clinicians are afforded the opportunity for professional development and supported to develop leadership skills and attitudes to achieve clinical excellence and high quality service provision.

The organisation will adopt an approach where clinicians are supported to be clinical leaders, accountable for their practice and contributing towards sustained organisational improvement.

Inspiring shared purpose

- Clinicians are encouraged to create shared organisational values to deliver high quality care for clients, supporting families and communities. It also encompasses behaving appropriately in a way that reflects the organisations core principles and commitment to improving services.

Leading with care

- Clinicians will demonstrate essential personal qualities as leaders within the organisation understanding the unique qualities and needs of care of the care team and facilitate an environment that enables all workers within the team to function effectively and efficiently, ultimately resulting in positive outcomes.

Evaluating information

- Clinicians will seek out quality data and information and use this information to generate new ideas or make effective plans for improvement or change. The clinicians will ensure that their decisions are evidence based and meet the needs of all service recipients.

Connecting the service provision

- Leaders understand how different health services fit together, and how they must operate in an interconnected and interprofessional / multidimensional fashion. Clinicians will value the opinions of multidisciplinary teams and focus their care and service delivery around achieving positive outcomes utilising multiple professionals and resources.

Sharing the vision

- Leading clinicians will communicate a credible and compelling vision of where the organisation is heading, making it feel achievable, inclusive and exciting. Leading care professionals will encourage their care team to share and experience this vision, and collectively work toward clinical excellence.

Engaging the team

- Leaders will provide inclusive and collaborative care that demonstrates and values important contributions from all participants in delivering positive care outcomes and improvements to the care and service delivery.

Holding to account

- All health professionals agreeing to clear performance goals and quality indicators, supporting individuals and teams to be responsible for the care they deliver, and providing positive, balanced feedback to improve the care and service delivery. There is clarity about the organisations' expectations and successes, and clinicians practice with the independence and a greater level of clinical autonomy, knowing they are responsible within their role.

Developing capability

- Building capability and capacity to enable people to meet future health care challenges, using a range of experiences as a vehicle for individual and organisational learning, also acting as a role model for others' professional development.

Influencing for results

- Leaders decide how to positively impact other team members, build positive relationships and use interpersonal organisational understanding to persuade and build collaboration to achieve optimal health outcomes.

RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

- External ACIA Guidelines 002 – Care and Service Provision in the Community
- Australian Community Industry Standards ACIS
- APHRA. (2016). *Registered Nurse Standards for Practice*. Canberra: APHRA Retrieved from <https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards/registered-nurse-standards-for-practice.aspx>
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- Thomas-Hawkins, C., Flynn, L., & Dillon, J. (2020). Registered Nurse Staffing, Workload, and Nursing Care Left Undone, and Their Relationships to Patient Safety in Hemodialysis Units. *Nephrol Nurs J*, 47(2), 133-142. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/32343087>
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