



Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon

The Yukon Registered Nurses Association acknowledges, and is grateful to, the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia for permission to adopt and adapt their Standards as our own.*

*The Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia became the 'College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia' in August 2005.

Revised 2008

About this Document

This document has been sectioned into three parts to make it easier for you to find the information you need to support your practice as a registered nurse.¹

The **Overview** explains the purpose of the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon* and how they can help you in your practice.

Part two is the six **Standards for Registered Nursing Practice**² with indicators illustrating how each Standard is applied in four main areas of nursing practice.

The third part of the document includes six **appendices**.

Appendix A is a section from the Canadian Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. It identifies and defines eight nursing values and the responsibilities associated with each.

Appendix B is a glossary of selected terms used in this document.

Appendix C provides suggestions on how you can apply the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* at both an individual and an agency level.

Appendix D lists YRNA resources and services to support you in meeting the Standards.

Appendix E outlines a process for resolving professional practice problems.

Appendix F suggests how registered nurses can meet their ethical and legal obligations to protect society when the action of others is unacceptable.

Where to Get Assistance

If you would like further information on the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon* or any nursing practice issue, contact YRNA at 867-667-4062 or email: [yrna@yknet.ca](mailto:yрна@yknet.ca).

1 Registered nurse: See *Appendix B-Glossary* for an explanation of this term.

2 The terms “the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice*” and “the Standards” both refer to the six Standards statements and their accompanying indicators. The *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon* is the YRNA document that includes the Standards along with other relevant information.

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Overview

Nursing has a proud history of service to the public, and the public expects registered nurses to provide expert, professional nursing care. In the Yukon, the public has entrusted the Yukon Registered Nurses Association (YRNA), through legislation,³ with the responsibility for establishing, monitoring and enforcing standards for the profession.

What are the Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon?

A standard is a desired and achievable level of performance against which actual performance can be compared. It provides a benchmark below which performance is unacceptable.

The *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* are statements about levels of performance that registered nurses are expected to achieve in their practice. They reflect the values of the nursing profession and clarify what the profession expects of its members. They represent the criteria against which the practice of all registered nurses in the Yukon is measured by the public, clients, employers, colleagues and themselves.

Indicators

Indicators illustrate how each Standard is applied and met in each area of registered nursing practice – clinical practice, education, administration and research. Indicators provide specific criteria which are used, when applicable, to measure the actual performance of an individual registered nurse. The indicators in this document are not written in order of importance nor are they intended to be an exhaustive list of criteria for the Standards.

Regardless of their primary area of responsibility, registered nurses may assume responsibilities in other practice areas. For example, a registered nurse whose primary responsibility is for clinical practice may at times assume responsibilities for education (teaching a student in practicum), administration (acting manager or supervisor) and/or research (collecting data for a research or quality improvement study). The same diversity in practice may be experienced by registered nurses whose primary responsibility is for education, administration or research. Registered nurses in these circumstances will find direction for their practice by referring to indicators related to these other practice areas.

Why have Standards?

The primary purpose of the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* is to promote, guide and direct professional nursing practice. Through the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon*, YRNA meets its legal responsibility to

enhance the quality of registered nursing practice in the public interest and address incompetent, impaired or unethical practice among registered nurses.

In addition to using the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* to protect the public through regulation of the practice of registered nurses, YRNA would use the Standards for the approval of basic and refresher nursing education programs in the Yukon⁴ should either of these ever become established. The Standards are also used to: develop administrative guidelines; explain expectations of registered nurses' practice to the public and other health care professionals; and to provide a legal reference for reasonable and prudent registered nursing practice.

The *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* can be used by registered nurses to support their individual practice (e.g., as a tool for self-assessment). They can also be used to assist agencies to develop systems that support registered nurses to meet the Standards (e.g., orientation programs). See Appendix C: Using the Standards in Practice for more information.

Who has responsibility for the Standards?

It is the responsibility of individual registered nurses to act professionally and be accountable for their own practice. All registered nurses, graduate nurses and temporary permit holders are responsible for understanding the Standards and applying them to their nursing practice, regardless of their setting, role or area of practice. The policies of employers or other organizations cannot relieve individual registered nurses of accountability for their own actions or their primary obligation to meet the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice*.

YRNA is responsible for assuring that the profession as a whole carries out its commitment to the public. This is achieved in part through establishing and regularly reviewing the Standards, and providing resources to support registered nurses in understanding and applying them. Employers have an obligation to provide essential support systems, including human and material resources, so that registered nurses are able to meet the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice*.

3 The Registered Nurses Profession Act (S.Y., 1992) requires YRNA to establish, monitor and enforce standards of practice and professional ethics.

4 New graduates are expected to meet the Standards in their beginning practice.

1 Responsibility and Accountability

Maintains standards of nursing practice and professional conduct determined by YRNA and the practice setting.

Clinical Practice	Education
1. Is accountable and takes responsibility for own nursing actions and professional conduct. ⁵	1. Is accountable and takes responsibility for own nursing actions and professional conduct. ⁵
2. Functions within the legally recognized scope of practice of nursing ⁶ and within all relevant legislation. ⁷	2. Functions within the legally recognized scope of practice of nursing ⁶ and within all relevant legislation. ⁷
3. Follows and/or helps to develop agency or department policies and evidence-based care standards.	3. Follows and/or develops agency, department or education policies and evidence-based care standards.
4. Takes action ⁸ to promote the provision of safe, appropriate and ethical care to clients. ⁹	4. Takes action ⁸ to promote the provision of safe, appropriate and ethical care.

Administration**Research**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is accountable and takes responsibility for own nursing actions and professional conduct.⁵ 2. Functions within the legally recognized scope of practice of nursing⁶ and within all relevant legislation.⁷ 3. Follows, develops and/or changes organization policies and evidence-based care standards. 4. Takes action⁸ to promote the provision of safe, appropriate and ethical care. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is accountable and takes responsibility for own nursing actions and professional conduct.⁵ 2. Functions within the legally recognized scope of practice of nursing⁶ and within all relevant legislation.⁷ 3. Follows and/or develops agency or department policies and evidence-based care standards. 4. Takes action⁸ to promote the provision of safe, appropriate and ethical care |
|---|---|

5 Professional conduct includes demonstrating honesty, integrity and respect. See the glossary for a definition of professional conduct.

6 The scope of practice of registered nursing is defined in legislation

7 Relevant legislation is legislation that affects the practice of registered nursing by: a) defining certain functions to be within the domain of practice of another profession; b) requiring adherence to certain conditions (e.g., Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act); or c) directing the behaviour of citizens of the province, territory or country (e.g., the Criminal Code of Canada).

8 Taking action includes advocacy.

9 See the glossary for a definition of the term “client.”

2 Specialized Body of Knowledge

Bases practice on the best evidence from nursing science and other sciences and humanities.

Clinical Practice	Education
1. Knows how and where to find needed information to support the provision of safe, appropriate and ethical client care.	1. Knows how and where to find needed information to support the delivery of appropriate and ethical nursing and health education.
2. Shares nursing knowledge with clients, colleagues, students and others.	2. Shares nursing knowledge with clients, colleagues, students and others.
3. Interprets and uses current evidence from research and other credible sources to make practice decisions.	3. Interprets and uses current evidence from research and other credible sources to make education decisions.
4. Understands and communicates nursing's contribution to the health of clients.	4. Understands and communicates nursing's contribution to the health of clients.
5. Uses relationship and communication theory appropriately in interactions with clients, colleagues and others.	5. Uses relevant learning and communication theory to create a professional learning environment

Administration	Research
1. Knows how and where to find needed information to support the provision of safe, appropriate and ethical nursing practice and client care.	1. Knows how and where to find needed information to support knowledge development for evidence-based, safe, appropriate and ethical nursing practice and client care.
2. Shares nursing knowledge with clients, colleagues, students and others.	2. Shares nursing knowledge with clients, colleagues, students, the scientific community and others.
3. Interprets and uses current evidence from research and other credible sources to make administrative decisions.	3. Interprets and uses current evidence from research and other credible sources to plan and conduct research.
4. Understands and communicates nursing's contribution to the health of clients and the delivery of nursing services.	4. Understands and communicates nursing's contribution to the health of clients.
5. Uses knowledge of organizational behaviour and communication theory to create an environment in which cooperation, professional growth, and mutual respect can flourish.	5. Uses knowledge of communication theory to share the practice implications and policy relevance of research in a meaningful way with registered nurses and others.

3 Competent Application of Knowledge

Makes decisions about actual or potential problems and strengths, plans and performs interventions, and evaluates outcomes.

Clinical Practice	Education
1. Collects information on client status from a variety of sources ¹⁰ using assessment skills including observation, communication and physical assessment.	1. Collects information on individual and group learning needs from a variety of sources ¹⁰ using assessment skills including observation and communication.
2. Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant and valid information when making decisions about client status and reporting client outcomes.	2. Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant and valid information when planning education.
3. Communicates client status, using verifiable information, in terminology used in the practice setting.	3. Communicates learning needs of individuals and groups using verifiable information.
4. Develops plans of care that include data about assessments, decisions about client status, planned interventions and evaluation criteria for client outcomes.	4. Plans education that addresses learning needs and strengths and includes evaluation criteria.
5. Sets priorities when planning and giving care.	5. Sets priorities when planning and providing education.
6. Carries out interventions in accordance with policies, guidelines and care standards.	6. Teaches using appropriate instructional methods and relevant learning theory.
7. Evaluates client's response to interventions and revises the plan as necessary.	7. Evaluates attainment of learning objectives using valid and reliable measures and revises strategies as necessary.
8. Documents timely ¹¹ and appropriate reports of assessments, decisions about client status, plans, interventions and client outcomes.	8. Establishes and maintains appropriate education records.
9. Initiates, maintains and terminates professional relationships in an appropriate manner.	9. Initiates, maintains and terminates professional relationships in an appropriate manner.

Administration	Research
1. Collects information about organizational status from a variety of sources ¹⁰ using assessment skills including observation and communication.	1. Collects research information from a variety of sources ¹⁰ using valid and reliable data collection instruments and methods.
2. Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant and valid information when determining organizational problems or status.	2. Identifies, analyzes and uses relevant and valid information in nursing research projects.
3. Communicates organizational problems and status using verifiable information.	3. Develops and communicates research questions or hypotheses that are relevant and researchable.
4. Plans administrative and other strategies to address organizational problems and strengths with accompanying evaluation criteria.	4. Writes research proposals to address stated questions/hypotheses.
5. Sets priorities when planning and implementing administrative and other strategies.	5. Sets priorities when planning and conducting research.
6. Implements administrative and other identified strategies.	6. Conducts research in accordance with accepted research methods and procedures and/or supervises research assistants.
7. Evaluates process and/or outcomes of strategies and revises as necessary.	7. Analyzes and interprets qualitative and quantitative data.
8. Establishes and maintains appropriate systems to manage clinical and administrative information.	8. Writes appropriate reports and articles for publication.
9. Initiates, maintains and terminates professional relationships in an appropriate manner.	9. Initiates, maintains and terminates professional relationships in an appropriate manner.

4 Code of Ethics

Adheres to the ethical standards of the nursing profession.

Clinical Practice	Education
<p>1. Upholds the values contained in the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>,¹² namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care • Promoting health and well-being • Promoting and respecting informed decision-making • Preserving dignity • Maintaining privacy and confidentiality • Promoting justice • Being accountable <p>2. Consistently practises according to the responsibility statements in the CNA <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>.</p>	<p>1. Upholds and supports others to uphold the values contained in the Canadian Nurses Association <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>,¹² namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care • Promoting health and well-being • Promoting and respecting informed decision-making • Preserving dignity • Maintaining privacy and confidentiality • Promoting justice • Being accountable <p>2. Consistently practises and supports others to practise according to the responsibility statements in the CNA <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>.</p>

From previous page

10 Whenever possible, registered nurses involve clients in assessment, decision-making about client status, care planning, implementation and evaluation.

11 The timeliness of documentation will be dependent upon the setting. Settings in which the client acuity, complexity and variability is high will require more frequent documentation than settings in which clients are less acute, less complex and/or less variable.

Administration**Research**

- | Administration | Research |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Upholds and supports others to uphold the values contained in the Canadian Nurses Association <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>,¹² namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care • Promoting health and well-being • Promoting and respecting informed decision-making • Preserving dignity • Maintaining privacy and confidentiality • Promoting justice • Being accountable | <p>1. Upholds and supports others to uphold the values contained in the Canadian Nurses Association <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>,¹² namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care • Promoting health and well-being • Promoting and respecting informed decision-making • Preserving dignity • Maintaining privacy and confidentiality • Promoting justice • Being accountable |
| <p>2. Consistently practises and supports others to practise according to the responsibility statements in the CNA <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>.</p> | <p>2. Consistently practises and supports others to practise according to the responsibility statements in the CNA <i>Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses</i>.</p> |

¹² A complete copy of the Canadian Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses* including purpose, ethical situation information, glossary and appendices on history, context and ethical models is available for download at <http://www.cna-aiic.ca>

5 Provision of Service in the Public Interest

Provides nursing services and collaborates with other members of the health care team in providing health care services to the ethical standards of the nursing profession.

Clinical Practice	Education
1. Communicates, collaborates and consults with other members of the health care team ¹³ about the client's care.	1. Communicates, collaborates and consults with registered nurses and others about education.
2. Assigns ¹⁴ and delegates appropriately to other members of the health care team.	2. Advocates and provides education for registered nurses and others regarding assignment ¹⁴ and delegation.
3. Guides other members of the health care team as appropriate.	3. Guides and supervises educational staff and students as appropriate.
4. Advocates and participates in changes to improve client care ¹⁵ and nursing practice.	4. Advocates and takes action to implement changes that improve client care ¹⁵ and educational practice.
5. Reports unsafe practice or professional misconduct to appropriate person or body.	5. Reports unsafe practice or professional misconduct to appropriate person or body.
6. Assists clients to learn about the health care system and accessing appropriate health care services.	6. Assists colleagues, students and others to learn about nursing practice and health care services.

¹³ Team members may be from more than one practice setting.

¹⁴ Registered nurses are frequently involved in assignment. Delegation, on the other hand, is a legal term used to describe the transfer of authority from one individual to another and entails distinct responsibilities and accountabilities for all parties involved. For advice regarding delegation from, as well as to, other members of the health care team, contact the YRNA office.

Administration	Research
1. Communicates, collaborates and consults with registered nurses and other members of the health care team ¹³ about the provision of health care services.	1. Communicates, collaborates and consults with registered nurses and other researchers about research.
2. Advocates and develops policies that clearly outline the responsibility and accountability for all involved in assignment ¹⁴ and delegation.	2. Interprets research evidence to guide policy development regarding assignment ¹⁴ and delegation.
3. Guides and supervises staff and others involved in the planning and delivery of health care services as appropriate.	3. Guides and supervises members of the research team as appropriate.
4. Advocates, directs and participates in changes to improve client care ¹⁵ and administrative practice.	4. Advocates and participates in changes that promote evidence-based client care ¹⁵ and improved conduct of research.
5. Takes appropriate action or reports unsafe practice or professional misconduct to appropriate person or body.	5. Reports unsafe practice or professional misconduct to appropriate person or body.
6. Assists clients, colleagues, students and others to learn about nursing practice and health care services.	6. Assists colleagues, students and others to learn about the health care system and the influence of research on nursing practice and health care services.

¹⁵ Improving client care includes creating and maintaining practice environments that support safe, appropriate and ethical care.

6 Self-Regulation

Assumes primary responsibility for maintaining competence and fitness to practice.

Clinical Practice	Education
1. Maintains current registration.	1. Maintains current registration.
2. Practises within own level of competence.	2. Practises within own level of competence.
3. Meets the requirements for continuing competence, ¹⁶ including investing own time, effort or other resources to meet identified learning goals.	3. Meets the requirements for continuing competence, ¹⁶ including investing own time, effort or other resources to meet identified learning goals.
4. Maintains own physical, psychological and emotional fitness to practice.	4. Maintains own physical, psychological and emotional fitness to practice.

Administration**Research**

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Maintains current registration. | 1. Maintains current registration. |
| 2. Practises within own level of competence. | 2. Practises within own level of competence. |
| 3. Meets the requirements for continuing competence, ¹⁶ including investing own time, effort or other resources to meet identified learning goals. | 3. Meets the requirements for continuing competence, ¹⁶ including investing own time, effort or other resources to meet identified learning goals. |
| 4. Maintains own physical, psychological and emotional fitness to practice. | 4. Maintains own physical, psychological and emotional fitness to practice. |

¹⁶ YRNA requires a minimum of 1125 hours of practice over 5 years to maintain registration.

APPENDICES

A. Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics

Appendix A (p.19-30), which originally contained an excerpt from the 2002 edition of the Code of Ethics, has been removed. The current **CNA Code of Ethics**, 2008 Centennial Edition, is available on the CNA website at www.cna-aiic.ca; through the YRNA website at www.yrna.ca; or by contacting the YRNA office.

B. Glossary of Terms

C. Using the Standards in Practice

D. YRNA Resources

E. Guidelines for Resolving Professional Practice Problems

F. Guidelines for Taking Action on Unacceptable Behaviour

APPENDIX B: Glossary of Terms

Assignment: Allocation of clients or client care activities among care providers in order to meet client care needs. Assignment occurs when the required care falls within the employing agency's policies and role descriptions and within the regulated care providers' scope of practice.

Client: An individual, family, group, population or entire community who requires nursing expertise. In some clinical settings the client may be referred to as a patient or resident.

Competence: The integration and application of knowledge, skills, attitude and judgment required for safe, ethical and appropriate performance in an individual's nursing practice.

Delegation: Sharing authority with other health care providers to provide a particular aspect of care. Delegation among regulated care providers occurs when an activity is within the scope of one profession and outside the scope of the other profession. Delegation to unregulated providers occurs when the required task is outside the role description and training of the unregulated care provider.

Ethical: The fundamental disposition of the nurse toward what is good and right and action toward what the nurse recognizes or believes to be the best good in a particular situation (Benner, Tanner and Chesla, 1996).¹⁸

Evidence-based practice: Practice based on successful strategies that improve client outcomes and are derived from various sources of evidence including research, national guidelines, policies, consensus statements, expert opinion, quality improvement data and client preference.

Fitness to practice: All the qualities and capabilities of an individual relevant to his or her capacity to practise as a registered nurse, including, but not limited to, any cognitive, physical, psychological or emotional condition, or a dependence on alcohol or drugs, that impairs his or her ability to practise nursing.

Health care team: Clients, families, health care professionals, paraprofessionals, students, volunteers and others who may be involved in providing care.

¹⁸ Benner, P.E., Tanner, C.A., & Chesla, C.A. (1996). *Expertise in nursing practice: Caring, clinical judgment and ethics*. New York: Springer.

APPENDIX B *(continued)* Glossary of Terms

Indicator: Indicators illustrate how each Standard is applied and met in each area of nursing practice (i.e., clinical practice, education, administration and research). Indicators provide specific criteria which are used, when applicable, to measure the actual performance of an individual registered nurse.

Nursing science: Knowledge (e.g., concepts, constructs, principles, theories) of nursing derived from systematic observation, study and research.

Professional conduct: Behaving in a way that upholds the profession. This includes, but is not limited to, practising in accordance with relevant legislation, the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* and the Canadian Nurses Association *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*.

Registered nurse: According to the *Yukon Registered Nurses Profession Act (S.Y. 1992)* a “registered nurse” means a person whose name appears on the register. For the purposes of this document, “registered nurse” also refers to a person who holds a temporary permit to practise nursing in the Yukon.

Scope of nursing practice: The activities nurses are educated and authorized to perform, as established through legislated definitions of nursing practice complemented by standards, guidelines and policy positions issued by nursing regulatory bodies.

Standard: A standard is a desired and achievable level of performance against which actual performance can be compared. It provides a benchmark below which performance is unacceptable. The *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* are statements about levels of performance that registered nurses in the Yukon are expected to achieve in their practice and represent the criteria against which the performance of all registered nurses in the territory is measured.

APPENDIX C: Using the Standards in Practice

Use the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* to support your own nursing practice and to assist your agency to develop systems that support registered nurses to meet the Standards.

As an individual registered nurse, use the Standards to:

- assess your practice as part of meeting continuing competence requirements;
- define and resolve professional practice problems (see Appendix E);
- advocate for improvements to promote quality client care and nursing practice;
- determine what role you can take in program and policy development and evaluation;
- articulate nursing's contributions to the health of clients and to the work of multidisciplinary teams; and
- inform others about the professional practice of nursing.

Examples of situations in which the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* may assist you:

- **if you are concerned about a client** and others are not taking your concerns seriously, you are meeting the Standards by pursuing your concerns and advocating for resolution of your concerns, through the appropriate channels, on behalf of your client;
- **if you believe there are practice concerns on your unit**, use the Standards to articulate the nature and seriousness of the concerns and bring them forward for action and resolution;
- **if you are asked to provide information about a client to someone not involved in their care**, use the Standards to support your decision regarding release of this information;
- **if another registered nurse or health care provider tells you to do something you know you are not competent to do**, suggesting that they will be accountable, use the Standards to support your position that only you can be accountable for your practice; and
- **if you are concerned that a client has not been provided with enough information to make an informed choice**, use the Standards to support your actions to ensure the client receives adequate information to make an informed choice.

APPENDIX C *(continued)*

Using the Standards of Practice

To improve nursing practice within your agency, use the Standards:

- as a framework to identify agency strengths and areas for improvement; and
- to develop systems that create more effective practice environments, including providing essential support systems so that registered nurses are able to meet the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon*.

Examples of ways in which the Standards can be used in **clinical practice** include developing, modifying and evaluating:

- specific expectations for practice that are relevant to the clinical area, role and setting; and
- client documentation systems.

Examples of ways in which the Standards can be used in **education** include developing, modifying and evaluating:

- education programs;
- orientation programs;
- preceptorship and mentorship programs; and
- nursing rounds.

Examples of ways in which the Standards can be used in **administration** include developing, modifying and evaluating:

- role descriptions;
- policies and procedures; and
- performance appraisal tools.

Examples of ways in which the Standards can be used in **research** include developing, modifying and evaluating:

- quality improvement initiatives; and
- evidence-based practice guidelines.

APPENDIX D: YRNA Resources

www.yrna.ca

Use YRNA's website to view or print YRNA documents including registration information and forms and education fund information and applications. The website carries information about the latest YRNA news and events and provides links to other nursing organizations.

Library

YRNA has a library which contains a variety of policy and research material, nursing journals, policy and position statements from other jurisdictions and a selection of books on health and nursing issues. The library does not contain up-to-date clinical/theory reference books because of the difficulty in maintaining currency and because this material is easily accessible through the internet and other sources. Most items can be borrowed by phone, mail, e-mail or in person at the YRNA office.

YRNA Nursing Practice Support

YRNA provides nursing practice consultation in order to promote safe nursing care and prevent problems arising in nursing practice settings.

Nurses can experience difficulties in providing safe, quality care to clients and can have concerns about handling professional problems and practice issues. Employers, colleagues and the public can have questions about nursing policies and practices.

If you have a professional problem or a question or concern about nursing practice - either related to a specific practice, a practice setting or a general nursing question - you can call the YRNA office for information. Professional nursing staff are available to offer support, advice and resource information to registered nurses, the public or others with an interest in health care services.

YRNA can assist by:

- providing confidential support and advice to members and others regarding nursing practice;
- assisting you to deal with practice problems or concerns about client care;
- providing advice on nursing policies and procedures;
- interpreting professional legislation, regulations, code of ethics, standards of practice and YRNA policy positions;
- assisting you with the application of standards, guidelines and policies related to nursing practice

APPENDIX D *(continued)* **YRNA Resources**

- consulting with the Nursing Practice Committee or Registration Committee as appropriate;
- directing you to an appropriate resource which has the expertise to assist you with a specific or specialized issue

YRNA can also provide information on trends and issues which are affecting, or are expected to affect, the practice of nursing. YRNA staff can be reached at 867-667-4062.

Professional Conduct Review

The primary focus of YRNA's Professional Conduct Review Program is protection of the public. Assistance is available if anyone is concerned about the practice or conduct of a registered nurse. YRNA staff work to help resolve these concerns. Contact YRNA's Executive Director at 867-667-4062.

Continuing Education Funds

The Yukon Registered Nurses Association administers funding provided by the Yukon Department of Health and Social Services to support continuing education for Yukon registered nurses.

This funding of \$135,000 annually is intended to assist members with costs for:

- Post basic specialty education to enable Yukon registered nurses to provide specialized nursing service to meet Yukon health needs.
- Attendance at conferences or education courses, in person or through distance.
- Provision of a speaker or instructor to address a group either in person, or through teleconferencing methods.
- Registered Nurse Refresher courses to allow previously registered nurses to regain qualifications for registration and practice.

Decisions about funding criteria, policies and individual approvals are made by the YRNA Education Fund Management Committee.

Fund information and application forms can be obtained at the office or on the YRNA website at www.yrna.ca.

APPENDIX E: Guidelines for Resolving Professional Practice Problems

As a registered nurse, you face diverse and complex problems that have an impact on your nursing practice. At the same time, you are held accountable and responsible for making decisions that are consistent with safe and appropriate nursing practice. The process described below can be used as a resource by registered nurses in all settings to help identify and resolve problems that affect professional practice.

What is a professional practice problem?

A professional practice problem is any problem or situation that:

- Interferes with a registered nurse's ability to practise in a manner consistent with the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon*, workplace policies or procedures, or other relevant standards and guidelines;
- has or could put clients at risk;
- is beyond the ability of an individual registered nurse to resolve.

Registered nurses and employers each have responsibilities in the workplace.

Registered nurses are accountable to:

- clients for any actions or non-actions;
- the public, through YRNA, for maintaining accepted standards of nursing practice;
- the employer for working to accepted standards and for using appropriate routes of communication to inform the employer when unable to meet those standards.

Employers are responsible for ensuring that:

- action is taken to examine situations and resolve problems once they have been informed about them;
- there is a sufficient number of competent nursing staff; and
- there are adequate resources and support services so that registered nurses are able to meet the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon*.

How can these guidelines help resolve professional practice problems?

These guidelines can be used to help you confirm, communicate, document and resolve professional practice problems. They can assist you to protect clients from harm and to ensure that they receive safe and appropriate care. YRNA professional staff can assist you to clarify any of the four steps in this process.

APPENDIX E *(continued)*

Guidelines for Resolving Professional Practice Problems

Examples of Professional Practice Problems

- staff that is inadequate in number, education or experience
- lack of written policies or guidelines to provide direction for nursing practice
- lack of required medical or other health care professionals
- conflict between professionals
- communication problems
- lack of supplies or equipment

STEP 1: Confirm the Problem

These questions can help to identify and confirm the problem:

Yes No

- Does the problem present a risk to clients? What are the risks or effects on client care?
- Does the problem conflict with standards, guidelines, policies/procedures?
- Does the problem make it difficult or impossible to practise according to policies or procedures, care plans, the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon* and/or the *Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*?
- Does the problem interfere with your ability to practise competently?
- Does the absence of policies/procedures/ guidelines contribute to this problem?
- Are other factors associated with this problem? If so, what are they (e.g., people, situations, settings, shifts/times)?
- Does the problem occur frequently?
- Do other registered nurses have similar concerns?

If you answered “yes” to most of these questions, you may have a professional practice problem. You may wish to consult with YRNA on a confidential basis.

If you answered “no,” your problem is not likely a professional practice problem. It may be a labour relations issue or relate to employment conditions such as hours of work, vacation, etc. You may wish to consult with your manager and, if appropriate, your union representative.

STEP 2: Communicate the Problem

Once it is clear that you are facing a professional practice problem, communicate the problem so that it can be examined and action taken:

- First, contact your manager or person to whom you report to discuss the problem.
- Explain what *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice in the Yukon* or other standards are not being met and what effect this is having on clients or how the problem prevents you from practising according to these standards.
- Be specific and factual, include all relevant information.
- Offer to work together to resolve the problem.

Following your discussion, record in writing everything you verbally reported and the response received.

STEP 3: Document the Problem

When documenting the problem:

- Treat all documentation as confidential.
- Use the proper form for this purpose. If there is no such form in your workplace, write it as a letter or a memo (see examples).
- Begin with the date then indicate the name and title of the person to whom you are sending the documentation.
- Start with a general opening statement such as: “This is a follow-up to our discussion of the professional practice problem . . .”
- Describe the problem in detail: date, time, place, who was involved (use initials for client names), what happened, how it affected/impacted client care, what standards were not met.
- Describe what your actions were in relation to the problem and proposed solutions.
- Request a written response by a specific date (be sure the date is reasonable for the problem).
- Sign your name. Keep a copy for your records.
- If you do not receive a response by the specified date, ask what progress is being made. If the problem is not being addressed:
 - Send a second memo or letter to the same person. State that this is

APPENDIX E *(continued)*

Guidelines for Resolving Professional Practice Problems

follow-up to your earlier memo. Re-state the problem or attach the first memo. Request assurance that the problem will be addressed right away.

- Forward copies to all levels of administration in the workplace and note this by writing “c.c. Jane Doe/John Doe” at the bottom of the last page of the memo.
- Keep a copy for your records.

STEP 4: Resolve the Problem

Most professional practice problems can be resolved within the workplace. Usually, you will receive responses to your letter or memo either in writing or verbally. Often, a meeting will be arranged. During the meeting:

- Listen with an open mind to the manager’s perspective of the problem and response to it. Pay attention to any new information the manager provides.
- Be prepared to work together to resolve the problem. Some negotiation and compromise may be necessary as long as clients are not in danger.
- If the problem and your concerns are not being addressed to your satisfaction, say so. Be prepared to take your concerns further, indicating why you think further action is necessary. If the problem has not been resolved, consider repeating the necessary steps and addressing the problem with the next level of management. If the problem remains unresolved and you believe you have exhausted all avenues for resolution within your workplace, request formal involvement of YRNA. The Association has a legal mandate to ensure that registered nurses maintain standards of practice and provide safe and appropriate nursing care.
- Review documents to assure accuracy and client confidentiality.
- Write a letter asking YRNA for assistance. Outline the steps you have taken to confirm, communicate, document, and resolve the problem within your workplace. Include dates and copies or a description of all the responses and results received.
- Arrange a meeting with the senior manager in your workplace to discuss the letter to YRNA and give the manager a copy.
- Forward your letter and all documentation in an envelope marked “Confidential” to the *Executive Director, Yukon Registered Nurses Association, 204—4133—4th Avenue, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 1H8*. Keep a copy of everything for your records.

Once formally involved, YRNA staff will contact you and the senior manager to assist in resolving the problem. YRNA may involve other appropriate organizations such as other professional regulatory organizations or government departments.

Sample Letter

CONFIDENTIAL

Day/month/year

*Jane Doe, RN
Manager, Program W
Workplace
Anywhere, Yukon*

Dear Ms. Doe:

This letter is a follow-up to our discussion today of the professional practice problem related to the communication difficulties among . . .

Sample Memo

CONFIDENTIAL

*To: Donald Black, RN, Manager, Program X
From: Jane Doe, RN
Date: Day/month/year
Subject: Professional Practice Problem*

This memo is a follow-up to our discussion today of the professional practice problem related to inadequate staff. . .

APPENDIX F: Guidelines for Taking Action on Unacceptable Behaviour

Professional Conduct

The professional conduct of all YRNA members is guided by the *Registered Nurses Profession Act (S.Y.1992)*, the *Standards for Registered Nursing Practice* and the *Canadian Nurses Association Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*.

YRNA is responsible for establishing and enforcing the standards of practice of its members so that the public receives safe and appropriate nursing care. While the Association has the statutory responsibility to take action when a registered nurse's ability to provide safe and appropriate nursing care is questioned, all registered nurses have a responsibility to report unsafe practice or unacceptable behaviour when the efforts of co-workers, managers and others fail to resolve the problem.

The following guidelines can help you to meet your legal and ethical obligations to protect the public both within and beyond the workplace.

STEP 1: Defining Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour may be unethical behaviour, impaired practice or incompetence. Incompetence is a pattern of behaviour that demonstrates a failure to meet the standards of practice because of lack of ability, capacity or fitness to practise. It results from repeatedly making the same or similar mistakes, not from an isolated act or a single error.

Registered nurses demonstrating unacceptable behaviour may have no idea of wrong doing. They may rationalize that what they are doing is all right, or they may attempt to cover up something that jeopardizes client welfare.

The following questions can help you assess the behaviour of a registered nurse:

Yes No

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is the registered nurse failing to provide safe and appropriate nursing care? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does this behaviour involve theft, falsification of records, or a breach of accepted ethical standards in some other way? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Has there been a pattern of questionable behaviour and is it likely to continue? |

Yes No

- Is the registered nurse unable or unwilling to recognize and correct the problem behaviour?
- Have clients been harmed by this behaviour or are they likely to be in the future?
- Is there documentation or other evidence of problem behaviour?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you should take action.

STEP 2: Deciding to Take Action on Unacceptable Behaviour

Consider whether the most appropriate action is for you to discuss your concerns directly with the registered nurse. This is often a difficult decision and the following questions may help you decide what to do:

- What would you want done if you were the registered nurse with unacceptable behaviour?
- What is your relationship with the registered nurse involved (e.g., credibility, reporting relationship, personal relationship)?
- What are the usual procedures for dealing with these issues in your workplace?
- Can you discuss the facts of the situation objectively and without emotion?
- Can you create an opportunity to discuss the behaviour privately with the registered nurse?
- What is the likelihood of the registered nurse understanding and responding to what you say?

If you discuss your concerns directly with the registered nurse and the matter is resolved, it may not be necessary for you to take further action. If your concerns are not addressed or if you decide that it is not wise for you to discuss your observations and concerns directly with the registered nurse, then you should use the reporting mechanisms in your workplace so others can take action. Talk to your manager or the person to whom you report.

APPENDIX F *(continued)*

**Guidelines for Taking Action
On Unacceptable Behaviour**

STEP 3: Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour to Your Manager

Document your concerns and discuss them with your manager. When documenting and reporting unacceptable behaviour:

- Describe the unacceptable behaviour in detail. Give the date, time, place, who was involved (use initials for client names), what happened, how it affected client care, what standards were not met.
- Obtain support. Consult resource people in the workplace or call YRNA to assist on a confidential basis regarding appropriate standards of practice (this is not reporting a colleague; you don't have to name the nurse).
- Sign your name. Anonymous reporting is less credible.
- Treat all documentation as confidential.
- Request acknowledgment that your information has been received and assurance that the problem will be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- Be patient, as long as clients are not in danger, as these problems often require time to resolve.
- If the unacceptable behaviour has not been dealt with appropriately within a reasonable time frame, inform your manager that you are considering reporting to YRNA.

Minimizing Conflicting Feelings About Reporting

Registered nurses may have feelings of conflict, between loyalty to the profession and clients, and loyalty to colleagues and the employer. These feelings may discourage appropriate action because registered nurses may believe they are letting colleagues down. The following practices can prevent this situation from occurring and minimize the feelings of conflict:

- *focus on decreasing risks to client safety, not on penalizing registered nurses;*
- *use standards of nursing practice to evaluate performance based on measurable expectations;*
- *adhere to principles of fairness, dignity, respect, and honesty in the workplace;*
- *maintain confidentiality and share information about the situation only with those who require it.*

STEP 4: Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour to YRNA

When to Report to YRNA

Reporting to YRNA should usually be considered as a last resort in dealing with the problem. Reporting to YRNA may be appropriate when:

- the employer's actions in the workplace fail to resolve the problem; or
- the registered nurse resigns from the workplace before the unacceptable behaviour has been remedied; or
- the registered nurse is employed in several places simultaneously.

Reporting to YRNA is necessary when:

- the behaviour involves a pattern of unacceptable practice, physical or sexual abuse, significant physical or emotional harm, theft, fraud, breach of trust, continuing inappropriate relationships with clients or former clients; or
- there is a relevant criminal charge or conviction.

Who to Contact at YRNA

You will receive confidential guidance about your concerns by contacting:

*Executive Director
Yukon Registered Nurses Association
204—4133—4th Avenue
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 1H8
Phone: 867-667-4062*

The Executive Director will work with you and assist you in resolving your concerns. Together, you will look at various options for action. Your identity during this consultation process is kept confidential. Should you decide to submit a complaint, you will be asked to provide detailed information about your complaint (see below) and you may be asked to participate in the process to resolve the concerns.

APPENDIX F *(continued)*

**Guidelines for Taking Action
On Unacceptable Behaviour**

How to Submit a Complaint

A letter of complaint is most useful when it includes the information listed below. If you do not have all of the information or access to it, do not let this stop you from submitting the complaint.

- Full name and, if possible, registration number of the registered nurse whose behaviour is unacceptable.
- A detailed description of the unacceptable behaviour with examples of specific incidents that support the complaint. For each incident provide date, time, place, who was involved, names of other registered nurses, clients and others who have direct knowledge of the behaviour, what happened, how it affected client care, as well as specific standards, workplace policies, procedures or guidelines that have not been met.
- Copies of documents¹⁹ supporting the complaint. This may include copies of incident reports, chart pages, narcotic records, performance appraisals or other reports of nursing performance, written statements from co-workers, other staff, clients or clients' relatives.
- An outline of any action taken by the employer and others since the unacceptable behaviour was first noticed, and a description of the registered nurse's responses to those actions.
- The date the registered nurse started working for the employer and, if applicable, when the employment was terminated.

Complaints should be submitted to:

*Executive Director
Yukon Registered Nurses Association
204—4133—4th Avenue
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 1H8*

When a Complaint is Received

When YRNA receives a complaint, it may be dealt with through consensual resolution, or it may proceed through to a formal inquiry.

In the first process, YRNA negotiates directly with the nurse in question to determine appropriate action to address the concern.

¹⁹ Appropriate permission to release documents to YRNA must be obtained prior to submitting them.

In the second process, the Association gathers evidence and holds a formal hearing before the Discipline Committee. This method is judicial in nature, similar to a court proceeding.

Sample Letter

CONFIDENTIAL

Day/Month/Year

*Jane Doe
Anywhere Yukon*

Dear Executive Director:

This letter is a submission of a formal complaint concerning the professional practice of . . .

- *Give full name of registered nurse and registration number (if known).*
- *State nurse's employment history, including start date and dates of performance appraisals (if known).*

Provide a factual description of incidents causing practice concerns . . .

- *Identify what standards, policies, procedures or guidelines were/are not being met.*
- *Indicate what supporting documentation is available to support the complaint.*

Outline actions taken to address the concern and the response to these actions . . .

- *Where applicable include the date the registered nurse started suspension, was terminated, etc.*

Sincerely,

Signature

Jane Doe

(Note: an original signature is required for YRNA to follow up the complaint.)

Both processes are designed to deal with complaints in a way that is effective and fair to all concerned, to carry out YRNA's responsibility to the public, and to maintain the integrity and standards of the profession.

As far as is possible, YRNA will let you know about the outcomes of action related to the complaint you have submitted.

If you have questions regarding the procedures for submitting a complaint, contact YRNA at 867-667-4062; fax 867-668-5123; e-mail yrna@yknet.ca.
