

**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) Uses a health and social determinants framework to determine risk factors and protective factors that lead to health and illness in communities, systems, individuals and families
 - 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. Creates public health strength, risk and asset-based diagnoses for communities, systems, individuals, and families
 - D. 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 supported by current literature as evidence-based
 - b. Reduce health determinant risk factors and strengthen health determinant protective factors
 - c. Have the greatest potential for improving the health of the population
 - d. Respect and are consistent with the culture and ethnic beliefs of the community
 - e. 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)

- E. 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
- F. Evaluates
 - 1) Measures outcomes of public health nursing interventions using evidence-based methods and tools.
 - 2) Documents public health nursing process by completing forms, records, and charts for communities, systems, individuals and families
 - 3) Uses information technology to collect, document, analyze, store, and retrieve health status of communities, systems, individuals and families

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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 promotion/disease prevention 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 an epidemiological framework when assessing and intervening with communities, systems, individuals and families

- 3. Utilizes the principles and science of environmental health to promote safe and sustainable environments for individuals/families, systems, and communities**
 - A. Promotes environments that facilitate holistic wellbeing and health, healing, and healthy lifestyles for individuals/families, systems, and communities
 - a. Assesses environmental risk factors and protective factors for individuals/families, systems and communities
 - b. Engages in actions to reduce environmental risk factors and strengthens protective factors for individuals/families, systems, and communities
 - c. Takes actions to reduce and manage harmful waste products from individuals/families, systems, and communities
 - d. Evaluates the outcomes of actions to promote healthy environments
 - B. Seeks to protect individuals/families, systems, and communities from environmental hazards.
 - a. Educates individuals, families, systems, and communities about environmental hazards and harmful lifestyle factors.

- b. Recommends modifications in home, neighborhood, workplace, and community environments to increase safety for individuals and families across the lifespan
- c. Supports right to know legislation and regulations that protect and inform the public about hazardous products
- C. Considers the diverse values, beliefs, cultures and circumstances of individuals/families and populations when recommending and implementing healthy environmental interventions
 - a. Attentive to diverse lifestyle factors and assesses potential health and safety risks related to them
 - b. Accepts and supports diversity in environmental lifestyle factors
 - c. Makes referrals when appropriate to governmental agencies when harmful environmental lifestyle factors place children and vulnerable adults at risk
- D. Promotes stewardship of the environment at local, national, and international levels
 - a. Advocates for sustainable natural and built environments
 - b. Advocates for environmental justice for vulnerable and under-represented population
 - c. Supports policies that promote safe and sustainable natural and built environments and water and food systems

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

4. 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
- G. Considers how to practice public health nursing in a variety of public and private health care settings.

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

5. 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. Understands practice implications for laws, regulations, and rules relevant to public health
- D. Adheres to legal mandates such as data privacy and mandated reporting
- E. Differentiates the public health model from medical model
- F. Understands the independent public health nursing role as described in the Scope and Standards of Public Health Nursing
- G. Describes the role of government in the delivery of community health services
- H. Identifies components of health care system
 - 1) Funding streams such as Medicare, Medicaid, Prepaid Medical Assistance Plan (PMAP), categorical grants
 - 2) Programs utilized by state and local health departments, such as Women, Infant and Children's (WIC) program, home visiting, and school health
 - 3) Community resources

6. Utilizes collaboration to achieve public health goals

- A. Demonstrates effective participation on inter-professional teams
- B. Develops relationships and builds partnerships with communities, systems, individuals and families
- C. Utilizes community assets and community engagement to empower communities, systems, individuals and families

7. Effectively communicates with communities, systems, individuals, families and colleagues

- A. Interacts respectfully, sensitively, and effectively with everyone
- B. Selects appropriate communication methods to reach target audience(s)
- C. Utilizes sound teaching/learning strategies that tailor communication to target individual, family, community, organizational, or system audiences
- D. Presents accurate demographic, statistical, programmatic, and scientific information

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

8. 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
- F. Interacts with others in a culturally sensitive manner.

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

9. Incorporates mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of health into assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation

- A. Assesses mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health
- B. Develops and implements holistic public health interventions that meet the needs of individuals, families, communities and systems
- C. Evaluates the impact of public health nursing interventions on the mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental health of individuals, families, communities, and systems

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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

10. Demonstrates nonjudgmental/unconditional acceptance of people different from self

- A. Listens to others in an unbiased, respectful manner
- B. Promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives
- C. Identifies the role of diverse factors when selecting or designing public health interventions tailored to specific individuals, communities, or systems
- D. Interacts respectfully, sensitively, and effectively with individuals, families, and communities

11. Shows evidence of commitment to social justice, the greater good, and the public health principles

- A. Applies principles of social justice to promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of populations
- B. Understands the impact of the social determinants of health on vulnerable and at-risk populations.
- C. Advocates for the disadvantaged and underserved
- D. Participates in collaborative social actions to reduce health disparities and inequities

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12. Demonstrates leadership in public health nursing with communities, systems, individuals and families

- A. Seeks learning opportunities when working with peers, organizations, and communities
- B. Demonstrates ability to be flexible, adapt to change, and tolerate ambiguity while working in an unstructured environment
- C. Seeks from and provides consultation and support to peers and community partners
- D. Respond to population health needs in collaboration with systems and communities
- E. Contributes to team efforts to improve the quality of care provided to client populations
- F. Prioritizes and organizes workload, time, materials and resources to maximize benefits to clients and stakeholders
- G. Participates in the political process to advocate for changes in health and social policies that affect population health, workforce health, and public health services delivery

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

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