



## **South African Nursing Council**

(Under the provisions of the Nursing Act, 2005)

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## **COMPETENCIES FOR NEPHROLOGY NURSE SPECIALIST**

### **1. BACKGROUND TO NEPHROLOGY NURSING**

The present healthcare environment mandates high quality, cost-effective, patient and family-focused care. Trends in the incidence and prevalence of chronic kidney disease (CKD) indicate that this patient population will continue to grow. This growth will be accompanied by an increased need for specialised healthcare providers who have the knowledge and skills to manage, provide and coordinate the care of this complex patient population.

### **2. NATURE/DEFINITION OF NEPHROLOGY NURSING**

Nephrology Nursing is a distinct area of specialised nursing practice addressing the prevention, promotion and management of the health and wellbeing of individuals with kidney disease.

### **3. CONTEXT**

Nephrology Nursing occurs in primary, secondary and tertiary care settings in which patients experience or are at risk of acute or chronic kidney disease (CKD). This includes optimising individual and family functioning throughout all phases of disease management.

Care requirements also extend beyond CKD to address chronic causative disease processes as well as subsequent co-morbid complications.

Nephrology Nursing occurs throughout the lifespan and includes individuals from a variety of cultural groups, along a continuum of care and across delivery settings.

The practice of Nephrology Nursing encompasses the roles of direct caregivers to healthcare users in renal and kidney transplant units, educators, coordinators, consultants, administrators and researchers.

The core concepts and interventions specific to Nephrology Nursing Practice are:

- o CKD disease management in the pre-dialysis phase;
- o management of complications of CKD;
- o self-management of CKD and renal replacement therapy (RRT);
- o extracorporeal therapies;
- o peritoneal dialysis;
- o kidney transplantation; and
- o renal palliative care.

The Nephrology Nurse Specialist requires specific evidence-based knowledge and demonstrated excellent clinical competencies in kidney disease care beyond that acquired in a basic nursing programme.

#### 4. COMPETENCIES

DOMAIN	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
<b>DOMAIN 1: PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL &amp; LEGAL PRACTICE</b>	
<b>1.1 Professional Practice</b>	1.1.1 Accepts accountability for increased responsibility for own professional judgment, actions, outcomes of care and continued competence in accordance with scope of practice, relevant acts and regulations
	1.1.2 Accepts responsibility for own continuing development
	1.1.3 Recognises the limits of scope of practice and own competence as a Nephrology Nurse Specialist
	1.1.4 Consults with or refers to appropriate others when encountering situations beyond own knowledge, competence or scope of practice
	1.1.5 Recognises and respects different levels of accountability for the range of available staff within the renal and transplant facilities
	1.1.6 Ensures that healthcare users obtain information with regard to the availability of different renal and kidney transplant services
<b>1.2 Ethical Practice</b>	1.2.1 Recognises that nephrology professionals have frequent encounters with ethical dilemmas due to the nature of the specialisation, namely the:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appropriateness of kidney replacement therapy including initiation, withdrawal/withholding of treatment</li> <li>- patient's decisional capacity</li> <li>- allocation of scarce resources;</li> <li>- application of the principles of justice, equality, efficiency, transparency and objectivity to organ procurement, allocation and distribution</li> <li>- provision and application of guidelines on the ethical concerns of solicitation of organs</li> </ul>
	1.2.2 Practices in a manner that conforms to the Code of Ethics for Nurses and the Employer's Code of Conduct
	1.2.3 Respects the healthcare user's rights to privacy, confidentiality and dignity
	1.2.4 Complies to the Patient's Rights Charter
	1.2.5 Contributes to resolving ethical issues as evidenced in such activities as participating on ethics committees
	1.2.6 Identifies practices and beliefs of ethnic/religious groups that might influence care management and through consensus discussions, accommodate these issues to ensure positive treatment outcomes
<b>1.3 Legal Practice</b>	<p>Practices in accordance with all relevant national legislative frameworks, local policies, procedural guidelines and protocols developed for work settings, namely the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Health Act, Act No. 61 of 2003 (Chapter 8)</li> <li>- Human Tissue Act, Act No. 65 of 1983</li> </ul>
DOMAIN 2: CLINICAL PRACTICE – CARE PROVISION & MANAGEMENT	
<b>2.1 Health Promotion</b> The Nephrology Nurse is accountable for delivering care within the framework of the Nursing Process	2.1.1 Establishes support groups for healthcare users with CKD
	2.1.2 Conducts awareness campaigns, especially on World Kidney Day
	2.1.3 Conducts selected home visits to monitor the progress of the healthcare user
	2.1.4 Provides health teaching that addresses such topics as healthy lifestyles, risk-reducing behaviours and preventive self-care

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	2.1.5 Designs health information and uses health teaching methods appropriate to the situation/condition and the healthcare user's developmental level, learning needs, readiness, ability to learn, language preference and culture
	2.1.6 Seek opportunities for feedback and evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies used
	2.1.7 Uses information technologies to communicate health promotion and disease prevention information to the healthcare user in a variety of settings
	2.1.8 Evaluates health information resources, such as the Internet, within the area of practice for accuracy, readability, and comprehensibility to help healthcare users access quality health information
	2.1.9 Provides education on kidney disease to the public, people at risk of kidney disease and other community groups
	2.1.10 Employs all strategies to create and promote a healthy and safe environment in renal and kidney transplant units
<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	2.2.1 Identifies relevant and appropriate sources of information involving the patient, family, other healthcare providers and the environment
	2.2.2 Collects comprehensive data pertinent to the patient's health or the situation
	2.2.3 Uses appropriate evidence-based assessment techniques and instruments in collecting pertinent data
	2.2.4 Analyses available data and knowledge relevant to the situation to identify a disease pattern and variances
	2.2.5 Accurately documents relevant data in a retrievable format
	2.2.6 Applies ethical, legal and privacy guidelines for the collection, use and dissemination of data and information
<b>2.3 Diagnosis</b>	2.3.1 Analyses the assessment data to determine the diagnoses or renal health issues

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	2.3.2 Derives the diagnoses or issues based on assessment data
	2.3.3 Validates the diagnoses or issues with the patient, family and other healthcare providers or members of the multidisciplinary team
	2.3.4 Documents diagnoses or issues in a manner that facilitates the determination of the expected outcomes and plan
<b>2.4 Care Planning</b>	2.4.1 Develops an individualised plan, considering the nature and severity of the renal disease and patient characteristics and/or the situation
	2.4.2 Develops a plan that prescribes strategies and alternatives to attain expected outcomes
	2.4.3 Determines priorities in healthcare planning, taking into cognisance the economic impact of the plan
	2.4.4 Identifies a range of appropriate interventions, selecting programme options to address specific renal or kidney transplant problems
	2.4.5 Collaborates with healthcare user, family and other relevant health professionals in developing the plan of care/course of action
	2.4.6 Includes strategies in the plan that address each of the identified diagnoses or issues, which may include strategies for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- promotion and restoration of health</li> <li>- prevention of illness, injury and disease</li> <li>- alleviation of suffering</li> <li>- supportive care for the dying</li> <li>- promotion of independence and self-reliance</li> </ul>
	2.4.7 Modifies the plan according to the ongoing assessment of the healthcare user's response and other outcome indicators
	2.4.8 Documents the plan in a manner that uses standardised language or recognised terminology
<b>2.5 Implementation</b>	2.5.1 Initiates the implementation of the care plan in a safe and timely manner, using evidence-based interventions and treatments specific to the diagnosis or problem

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	2.5.2 Partners with the healthcare user, family, significant others, interdisciplinary team and others to implement and integrate the plan in a safe, realistic and timely manner
	2.5.3 Determines and applies appropriate care options and therapeutic interventions in collaboration with the healthcare user and family
	2.5.4 Advocates for healthcare that is sensitive to the needs of healthcare users, with particular emphasis on the needs of diverse populations
	2.5.5 Utilises scarce resources to help healthcare users and their families achieve optimal health
	2.5.6 Utilises evidence-based knowledge, relevant legislation, emergency protocol and policies to advance the course of action and the therapeutic intervention
	2.5.7 Integrates traditional and complementary healthcare practices as appropriate
	2.5.8 Documents the implementation of and modifications to the identified plan
<b>2.6 Evaluation</b> Evaluates progress towards the attainment of outcomes	2.6.1 Evaluates the accuracy of the diagnosis and the effectiveness of the interventions in relation to the healthcare user's attainment of expected outcomes
	2.6.2 Conducts a systematic, ongoing and criterion-based evaluation of the outcomes in relation to the structures and processes prescribed by the plan and the indicated timeline
	2.6.3 Includes the patient and others involved in the care or situation in the evaluative process
	2.6.4 Documents the results of evaluation
	2.6.5 Disseminates the results to the healthcare user, family and others involved in the care, as appropriate
	2.6.6 Uses the results of the evaluation analyses to make or recommend changes to the process or structure, including policy, procedure or protocol documentation, as appropriate
	2.6.7 Determines the impact of the plan on the affected healthcare user and families

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	2.6.8 Revisits the care plan in line with ongoing and changing healthcare needs
DOMAIN 3: QUALITY OF PRACTICE	
<b>3.1 Quality Improvement</b>	3.1.1 Participates in the compilation, implementation and evaluation of practice standards, policies and protocols for Nephrology Nursing Practice
	3.1.2 Designs quality improvement initiatives and implements them to evaluate the need for change
	3.1.3 Compiles appropriate assessment tools for systems review and clinical audits
	3.1.4 Conducts or participates in the systematic reviews and clinical audits related to Nephrology Nursing
	3.1.5 Participates in the compilation of protocols to guide personnel and patients in a renal and kidney transplant unit
	3.1.6 Identifies potential and actual risks that might be detrimental to the health of personnel and patients in renal and transplant units
	3.1.7 Acts according to set protocols to ensure the safety of all healthcare users and all role players in renal and kidney transplant units
	3.1.8 Participates in specialised professional association activities
<b>3.2 Continuing Education</b>	3.2.1 Undertakes a regular review of own practice by engaging in reflection, critical examination and evaluation and seeking peer review
	3.2.2 Assumes responsibility for lifelong learning, own professional development and maintenance of competence
	3.2.3 Participates in uni- and multidisciplinary teaching and learning
	3.2.4 Uses current research findings and other evidence to expand knowledge, enhance role performance and increase knowledge on professional issues
	3.2.5 Contributes to a work environment conducive to the education of healthcare professionals
	3.2.6 Participates in formal and informal consultations to address issues in Nephrology Nursing Practice as

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	an application of education and knowledge base
	3.2.7 Shares educational findings, experiences and ideas with peers
DOMAIN 4: MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP	
	4.1 Provides expertise about Nephrology Nursing to colleagues, allied health personnel and all healthcare consumers in a consultant role to assist in the policymaking processes
	4.2 Provides leadership within the area of Nephrology Nursing through consultation, clinical practice and education
	4.3 Contributes to the advancement of Nephrology Nursing and the profession as a whole through research
	4.4 Engages in teamwork in the care of healthcare users in renal and kidney transplant units
	4.5 Initiates and revises protocols or guidelines to reflect evidence-based practice
	4.6 Works collaboratively with other healthcare professionals to influence decision-making with regard to improving patient care
	4.7 Directs the coordination of care across renal and kidney transplant settings and among all caregivers
	4.8 Serves in key roles in the work setting by participating on committees and administrative teams and relates this to renal nursing
	4.9 Promotes the advancement of the profession through participation in professional organisations, presentations and professional audiences
	4.10 Provides direction to enhance the effectiveness of the healthcare team
DOMAIN 5: RESEARCH	
	5.1 Participates actively in the conducting of research and reporting of research findings with reference to Nephrology Nursing
	5.2 Collaborates with other members of the healthcare team to identify research needs and opportunities



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	5.3 Reviews research findings and the clinical application thereof
	5.4 Implements relevant research outcomes in line with protocol of the facility
	5.5 Compiles evidence-based outcomes to influence and improve Nephrology Nursing Practice
	5.6 Promotes a climate of research and clinical inquiry
	5.7 Disseminates research findings through activities such as presentations, publications, consultation and journal clubs
	5.8 Accepts responsibility for and is actively involved in the continued process of data collection and dissemination to ensure an accurate reflection of a National RRT Profile

## 5. REFERENCES

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