

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE IN NURSING

Published: October 2019

BACKGROUND

In Alberta the three regulatory bodies for the nursing professions are the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA), the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA), and the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA). Nursing regulatory bodies carry out governance responsibilities in a manner that protects and serves the public interest. The colleges define and interpret the scopes of practice for their regulated members, approve nursing education programs, establish or adopt codes of ethics and standards of practice, and intervene when a registered member's practice does not meet the standards.

Collaborative practice is a foundation for quality care. Effective teamwork and professional partnerships create a supportive care environment where team members are empowered to work together within their respective scopes of practice. The three nursing bodies have prepared this document as a resource to assist nurses in understanding their contribution to collaborative nursing practice.

Collaborative practice is a deliberate and committed professional approach to communication and decision-making. Collaborative practice enables a professional practice culture where the individual and shared knowledge and skills of care providers contributes to quality care, improved outcomes, and enhanced client safety and experience¹.

Nursing care delivery models must focus on collaborative practice principles that uphold the ethical and professional standards of nursing care to promote safe transitions and effective divisions in care².

¹ Bendaly, L., & Bendaly, N. (2012). *Improving healthcare team performance: The 7 requirements for excellence in patient care*. Mississauga, ON, Canada: John Wiley & Sons.

² MacKinnon, K., Butcher, D.L., & Bruce, A. (2018). *Working to full scope: The reorganization of nursing work in two Canadian community hospitals*. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, Volume 5: 1–14.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide clarification and increase understanding of collaborative practice principles. These principles support nurses to practice collaboratively in any setting.

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

In order to provide safe, competent, and ethical client care, nurses must practise in an environment that fosters collaboration between health professionals for the benefit of clients and the health-care system³. The term client refers to the individual, family, group, community, or population who is the recipient of nursing services. Common practice values foster collaborative spirit, respect and knowledge-sharing to foster a positive and cross-functional healthcare culture⁴. CLPNA, CRNA and CRPNA believe that incorporating the following principles maximize client health-care outcomes and effective teamwork.

Client-Centered Care

1. A priority in collaborative practice is to ensure clients are active partners in their care and that all decisions are based on the health and well-being of the client.
2. Nurses provide client-centered and evidence-informed care in response to client needs.
3. Care outcomes are measured and aim to improve the health outcomes that matter to clients.

Role Clarity

4. Nurses are accountable and responsible for their own practice and expected to follow the requirements of legislation, regulations, and the standards of their regulatory body.
5. Nurses practise within their own individual level of competence and seek additional guidance when aspects of the care a client requires are beyond their level of competence.
6. When working in teams, nurses know the capabilities and role of all team members and respect and acknowledge their team member's contributions.

³ Canadian Nurses Association. (2019). *Interprofessional collaboration: Position statement*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

⁴ Alberta Health. (2012). *Alberta Health framework for change*. Edmonton, AB: Author

7. Nurses from regulated nursing professions have differences in entry-level education, scope of practice, knowledge, skills, and judgement and these differences merit understanding and respect.
8. Nursing roles cannot be defined solely by a list of tasks.

Trust and Respect

9. Nurses understand, trust, and respect each other's roles and expertise and work together in the best interest of the client.
10. Nurses engage in building trust with their collaborative team and participate in opportunities to share their expertise.
11. Collaborative practice requires a commitment to shared team values.

Communication

12. Nurses seek constructive and collaborative approaches to communication.
13. Nurses use effective communication skills to share information, using language the client understands and by engaging in processes such as planning, shared decision making, interventions and evaluation of client care.
14. Nurses recognize the importance of addressing misunderstandings and use conflict resolution strategies to promote healthy professional relationships and optimal client outcomes.

Shared Decision Making and Collaborative Leadership

15. Nurses identify the influence of personal values, beliefs, and assumptions on their practice and work towards reducing bias for enhanced client care.
16. Nurses value the opportunity to share expertise and decision-making and incorporate learning to build trust in clinical partnerships.
17. Nurses commit to developing leadership, team building, effective communication, and conflict resolution skills.

Collaborative practice is based on a foundation of client-centred care, open communication, mutual trust, shared decision-making and accountability, and respect and value of the knowledge and experience each unique nursing profession provides as part of the care team.

Acknowledgement

This document was developed collaboratively by the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA), the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA), and the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA). Members of the public, other regulated health professionals, or regulated members of these regulatory colleges should contact these respective organizations if they have any questions about this document or are seeking practice guidance about collaborative practice in nursing.

For further information on each nursing profession (such as the legislated practice statement, scope of practice, standards, and guiding documents) please visit:

[College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta](#)

[College of Registered Nurses of Alberta](#)

[College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta](#)