

Roles of Community Health Nursing

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Learning Objectives

1. Describe and differentiate among **seven different roles** of the community health nurse
2. **Discuss these roles** within the framework of public health nursing functions
3. Describe **seven settings** in which community health nurses practice
4. Identify **principles of nursing practice** in the community

Roles of Community Health Nurses

1. Clinician
2. Educator
3. Advocate
4. Manager
5. Collaborator
6. Leader
7. Researcher

Clinician Role

- **Care provider:** The nurse ensures that health services are not only provided to individuals and families but also provided to groups and populations
- The clinician role has emphasis on holism, health promotion and skill expansion

Holistic practice = considering the broad range of interacting needs that affect the “collective health” of the client as a larger system (Patterson 1998)

Clinician Role (Continued)

- Focus on promoting wellness is a major clinician's role (Frenn 1996)
- Nursing service includes seeking out clients at risk for poor health to offer preventive and health promoting services rather than waiting for them to come for help after problems arise (Caraher 1995)

Examples:

- Employees of a business are helped to live healthier and happier lives by working with a group who wants to quit smoking
- Lessons to discuss fathering skills with a group of men
- Assist several families with terminally ill patients to gain strengths through a support system of accepting death and the dying process

Examples at the UNRWA clinics & Schools

- Immunisation of infants and pre-schoolers
- Family planning programs
- Cholesterol screening
- Prevention of behavioural problems in adolescents

Expanded skills in observation, listening, communication and counseling are integral to your role as a CHN with emphasis on psychological and socio-cultural factors

Educator Role

- Health teacher: one of the major functions of the CHN (Breckon et.al. 1998)

Important role because

- Community clients are NOT usually acutely ill and can absorb and act on health information
- A wider audience can be reached leading to a community-wide impact
- The public has a higher level of health consciousness (وعي صحي)
- Client self-education is facilitated by the nurse. Based on the concept of self-care, clients are encouraged to use appropriate health resources

Advocate Role

- Based on clients' rights: Every patient or client has the right to receive just, equal, and humane treatment.

Why Advocacy?

- Current health care system offers de-personalised and fragmented services. Many clients who are poor and disadvantaged are frustrated and the nurse becomes an **advocate** for clients pleading their cause and acting on their behalf

Goals of advocacy:

1. Help clients gain more independence and self-determination
2. Make the system more responsive and relevant to the needs of clients

Characteristic Actions of an Advocate

1. Being assertive
2. Taking risks
3. Communicating and negotiating well
4. Identifying resources and obtaining results

Manager Role

- Nurse directs and administers care to meet goals by:
 1. Assessing client needs
 2. Planning and organising to meet those needs
 3. Directing and leading to achieve results
 4. Controlling and evaluating the progress to make sure that the results are met
- Nurse oversees client care as:
 1. A case manager
 2. Supervising ancillary staff
 3. Managing caseloads
 4. Running clinics
 5. Conducting community health needs assessment projects

Nurse as Planner

- Sets the goals for the organisation
- Sets the direction -الاجاهات
- Determines the means (strategies) to achieve them
- It includes defining goals and objectives
- It may be strategic (long-term broader goals)

Nurse as Organiser

- Designing a structure for people + tasks to function to reach the desired objectives
- It includes assignments and scheduling

It includes:

1. Deciding what tasks to be done
2. Who will do them
3. How to group the tasks
4. Who reports to whom
5. Where decisions will be made (Robbins 1997)

Questions to be addressed by the organiser

6. Is the clinic, program providing the needed services?
7. Are the clients satisfied?
8. Are the services cost-effective?

Nurse as Leader

- The nurse directs, influences, or persuades others to make change to positively influence people's health.
- Includes persuading and motivating people, directing activities, effective two-way communication, resolving conflicts and coordinating the plan
- **Coordination:** Bringing people and activities together to function in harmony to achieve desired objectives

Nurse as Controller and Evaluator

- Controller: Monitors the plan and ensures that it stays on course.
 - Sometimes plans do not proceed as intended and need to be adjusted
 - Monitoring, comparing and adjusting are activities of controlling
 - Comparing performance and outcomes against set goals and standards = Evaluator role

Management Behaviours

Described by Mintzberg (1973)

1. Decision-making:

- Entrepreneur (Initiating new projects)
- Disturbance handler (conflicts among staff, between staff and clients, between clients)
- Resource allocator (the distribution and use of human, physical and financial resources)
- Negotiator (with higher levels of administration, other agencies)

2. Transferring of information

- Monitor
- Information disseminator
- Spokesperson

3. Engaging in interpersonal relationships

- Figurehead
- Leader and Liaison

Management Skills (Robbins, 1997)

1. **Human:** ability to understand, communicate, motivate, delegate and work with people. They are essential to be successful in your role as a manager
2. **Conceptual:** The mental abilities to **analyse** and **interpret** abstract ideas to **understand** and **diagnose** situations
3. **Technical:** Apply special management-related knowledge and expertise for e.g. computerised management information system

Collaborator Role

- Means working **jointly** with others on a **common project** to cooperate as **partners**

Who?

- Clients
- Other nurses and physicians
- Teachers and health educators
- Social workers
- Physical therapists
- Nutritionists
- Psychologists
- Epidemiologists and Biostatisticians
- Attorneys
- Secretaries
- City Planners and legislators

Researcher Role = to search again

- Systematic investigation, collection, and analysis of data for solving problems and improving community health practice
- This role is at several levels:
 - Agency and organisational studies for job satisfaction among public health nurses
 - Some CHN participate in more collaborative research with other health professionals

The Research Process

1. Identify an area of interest
2. Specify the research question or statement
3. Review the literature
4. Identify a conceptual framework
5. Select a research design
6. Collect and analyse data
7. Interpret the results
8. Communicate the findings

Settings for CHN Practice

1. Homes
2. Community health centres
3. Schools
4. Occupational health settings (business and industry)
5. Residential institutions: Older age residences
6. Parishes or charitable mosques related organisations
7. Community at large