

Sexual Health Competency Standards for Primary Health Care Nurses

PRACTICE SKILL EXAMPLES

Domain 1 – Effective Communication	BACK TO FORM ▶
Establishes rapport that enhances the patient’s ability to express concerns and feelings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes eye contact, where appropriate • Maintains an open posture • Uses open ended questions • Allows for a period of silence after asking a question to enable the patient time to answer 	
Explains confidentiality and privacy policies relevant to patient care	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses issues of limited confidentiality in relation to risk of harm/child abuse/under 16 years • Explains to the patient who in the service is able to access/see their file • Explains to the patient privacy in relation to partners/parents/significant others seeing their health information 	
Communicates effectively to the patient and significant others where appropriate, regarding care and the nurses role in the provision of that care	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses language that is understandable to the patient i.e. no jargon • Ensures the patient has understood what has been explained to them by asking them to reflect back the information • Uses a variety of communication methods; verbal, demonstration, written, visual, to explain the health issue and/or treatment 	
Demonstrates sensitivity, awareness and respect for cultural identity of patient	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifies with the patient how they would like to be addressed • Offers an interpreter if required • Does not make assumptions about the patients’ culture and/or the impact on their sexual health and relationships 	
Ensures that written communication is comprehensive, logical, legible, clear and concise, spelling is accurate and only acceptable abbreviations used	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a concise summary of issues discussed with the patient • Clearly documents a follow up plan • Ensures all written documentation is legible 	
Establishes and maintains effective and collaborative communication with the multidisciplinary team	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Consults or seeks advice with team members when required ~ Communicates test results to team members as appropriate • Accurately documents the provision of nursing care 	

Domain 2 – Assessment, Care Planning and Clinical Management **BACK TO FORM ▶**

Obtains a clear and concise patient history to enable identification of risks and priorities for health screening and education. This may include sexual and reproductive health, medical, psychosocial and lifestyle history

- Asks key questions about a person’s sexual health history
- Seeks elaboration from the patient to ensure assumptions are not made or where more detailed information is required
- Takes time in asking questions and allowing the patient time to answer

Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of priority population groups and the issues relating to their sexual and reproductive health and HIV needs

- Articulates who are the priority population groups and why
- Is knowledgeable about which STI tests should be requested for each priority population group and why
- Refers to the STI testing tool when required

Provides education and support to patient to modify lifestyle and behavioural factors in order to minimise risk for sexually transmissible infections (STIs), blood-borne viruses (BBVs) and unintended pregnancy

- Promotes condom use and discusses with the patient how they may negotiate this with their partners(s)
- Encourages testing/screening and partner notification
- Discusses reducing risky behaviour such as rate of partner change, delaying onset of sex activity, unsafe sex
- Discusses the benefits of immunisation

Ensures informed consent for tests ordered by a Medical Officer has been obtained and prepares appropriate equipment for examination and/or specimen collection

- Ensures patient consent for testing is verbally confirmed
- Prepares appropriate equipment for urine sample and/or self collection swab

Accurately obtains specimens (including self collected samples) with minimal discomfort for the patient

- Checks if the patient has any questions about specimen collection
- Ensures the patient understands how specimens will be obtained including self collection
- Ensures specimens are obtained according to the appropriate procedure to ensure accurate collection

Accurately documents all findings and outcomes of the patient consultation

- Ensures sexual history taking and treatment is accurately documented
- Documents discussions and any information provided in medical records/notes

Ensures patient is aware of follow-up care, treatment and health plans

- Asks patient to reflect back the next steps in their treatment and follow up care
- Clarifies if there are any issues in the patient being able to undertake any of the treatment or follow up
- Provides written information, books appointments etc to assist the patient in follow up and treatment
- Asks patients if there is anything else they would like to discuss
- Encourages patient to make a follow up appointments for continuing care

Explains results of tests, once reviewed through standard organisational procedures, providing appropriate psychological support and refers where appropriate

- Discusses with the patient the test undertaken, result and what this means for future treatment
- Check that the patients has understood the results and implications for their health and future treatment
- Has appropriate and current referral information available for patients

Provides information and assistance for contact tracing and seeks advice when appropriate

- Introduces the reasons for contact tracing
- Helps identify with the patient which partners need to be informed
- Explains the methods and offers choice between:
 - ~ Patient-Initiated Contact Tracing
 - ~ Provider-Initiated Contact Tracing
- Documents discussions in medical records/notes

Domain 3 – Health Promotion and Patient Education

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Demonstrates the ability to initiate discussion about sexually transmissible infection and blood borne virus transmission and prevention

- Asks the patient if they have any concerns about future risk from STIs and BBVs.
- Discusses the benefits of immunisation
- Is open and honest about any concerns for the patient and potential future risk
- Discusses with the patient what strategies together can be utilised to reduce that risk

Demonstrates the ability to initiate discussion about implications of a positive test result and contact tracing requirements

- Discusses how a patient can collect a positive test results (in person, phoning the practice)
- Discusses how partner(s) might react and problem solves this
- Highlights different options for telling a partner (in person, telephone, SMS, email)
- Schedules a follow up visit or phone call with the patient
- Knows where to get support

Utilises appropriate patient resources to support preventative health decision making including contact tracing

- Provides appropriate written STI information
- Provides and promotes condom use
- Provides and promotes immunisation
- Facilitates discussion around contact tracing using available resources and websites
- Knows where to get support

Initiates discussion about preventive health checks and screening

- Raises the importance of re-testing for chlamydia after a positive diagnosis and books an appointment
- Discusses with the patient at what stages re-testing or screening should occur e.g. regular HIV test for men who have sex with me (MSM) with any recent partner change.
- Makes appointments for future re testing/screening if appropriate

Domain 4 – Research

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Demonstrates ability to access and evaluate health information and research evidence

- Uses a range of skills and networks to access information on current research, evidence and/or guidelines for practice
- Is able to provide a rationale for any care given

Participates in quality improvement programs and incorporates outcomes of quality improvement programmes within the general practice

- Identifies issues/problems in nursing practice as the basis for a quality improvement (QI) program
- Actively seeks involvement in current QI activities in the practice

Domain 5 – Legal and Ethical Nursing Practice

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Articulates and practises within own scope of practice

- Explains the role of the nurse to the patient and how it relates to other members of the general practice team
- Seeks advice /consults when the needs of patients are beyond own scope of practice

Advocates for privacy and confidentiality when providing care

- Ensures the patient has time alone, if appropriate, in the consult with the nurse
- Ensures the nurse has a space/room to see patients privately
- Ensures any discussion about the patients treatment occurs in a professional context with colleagues

Complies with nursing standards, codes, guidelines, legislation and regulations

- Uses the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council codes and competency standards for registered and enrolled nurses and other relevant standards
- Uses general practice specific standards and guidelines such as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' Standards for General Practices, Red Book and the Medicare requirements
- Ensures the organisations Professional Indemnity insurance is adequate for the practice

Practises in a way that acknowledges the dignity, culture, values, beliefs and rights of individuals/groups

- Does not make assumptions about any patient as a result of culture, religion, gender or sexuality
- Ensures the patient understands the tests and treatment being undertaken and consents to these
- Allows time for the patient to ask questions

Domain 6 – Collaborative Care and Partnerships

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Seeks guidance and leadership from senior members of the multidisciplinary team to provide best practice nursing care

- Consults with the GP or other colleagues to discuss holistic patient care
- Understands the roles the multidisciplinary team hold and what each role they can offer
- Can explain when they would consult/refer to team members

Utilises referral pathways to external services where appropriate

- Is aware of the range of referral pathways and what these services can provide for their patient
- Has resources or information readily available to make referrals
- Encourages the patient to take information or be aware of resources available

Identifies and disseminates knowledge to colleagues and other health professionals eg. in-service and case presentations

- Joins a key agency mailing list e.g. in NSW STIPU and shares information and new tools with the practice
- Presents at a practice meeting on an interesting sexual health history taking/assessment
- Joins email lists that keeps them update to with new research evidence e.g. APNA, ASHHNA and shares this with colleagues

Domain 7 – Leadership and Development of the Role

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Applies current evidence based practice to clinical care

- Demonstrates that sexual history taking is based on current guidelines
- Utilises up to date resources to plan STI testing

Contributes to the development of nursing knowledge through reflection on practice

- Uses reflective practice identify areas where practice could be improved or enhanced
- Documents in continuing professional development plan opportunities/areas where the practice could increase their response to sexual health care and how they might do this

Participates in professional development activities eg. seminar attendance, conference attendance, professional readings and disseminates information to colleagues

- Attends sexual health education at a local level such as from the Medicare Local or Local Health District
- Takes up opportunities to become involved in sexual health with the local sexual health service
- Is a member of a professional nursing organisation such as APNA, CAN or ANF
- Uses a range of skills and networks to access information on current research, evidence and/or guidelines for practice
- Seeks out a mentor

Advocates for the role of the primary healthcare nurse in sexual health within the general practice setting

- Sets up recalls/remainder systems in the general practice
- Manages resources on chlamydia for the staff and patients including in the waiting room
- Contributes to team meetings
- Facilitates a practice information session on STIs

Acts as a mentor and/or preceptor for peers undertaking education in sexual healthcare

- Assists other nurses to become competent in the sexual health nursing competency standards
- Shares information from APNA, ASHM and the Medicare Local on sexual health courses/education to peers