

VENTURA COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES

Introduction

Certain functional abilities are essential for the delivery of safe, effective nursing care. These abilities are essential in the sense that they constitute core components of nursing practice, and there is a high probability that negative consequences will result for patient/clients under the care of nurses who fail to demonstrate these abilities. A program preparing students for the practice of nursing must attend to these essential functional abilities in the education and evaluation of its students.

The nursing faculty at Ventura College has identified those functional abilities considered to be essential to the practice of nursing. Reference materials used in the development of these standards include the Rules and Regulations for the Commonwealth Board of Nurse Examiners; The Functional Abilities Essential for the Delivery of Safe, Effective Nursing Care (a 1999 descriptive research study conducted by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing); and Core Components and Competencies of ADN graduates developed by the Council of Associate Degree Nursing of the National League for Nursing (1999). The Functional Abilities are reflected in course objectives and in clinical evaluation tools, which are the basis for teaching and evaluating all nursing students.

Applicants seeking admission into the nursing program who have questions about the functional abilities and appropriate reasonable accommodations are invited to discuss their questions with one of the nursing program faculty or the program director. Reasonable accommodation will be directed toward providing an equal educational opportunity for students with disabilities while adhering to the standards of nursing practice for all students.

Standards

The practice of nursing care requires the following functional abilities with or without reasonable accommodations:

- 1. Visual acuity** sufficient to assess patients and their environments and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities:

Detect changes in skin color or condition

- Collect data from recording equipment and measurement devices used in patient care
- Detect a fire in a patient area and initiate emergency action
- Draw up the correct quantity of medication into a syringe

- 2. Hearing ability** sufficient to assess patients and their environments and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Detect sounds related to bodily functions using a stethoscope
- Detect audible alarms within the frequency and volume ranges of the sounds generated by mechanical systems that monitor bodily functions
- Communicate clearly in telephone conversations
- Communicate effectively with patients and with other members of the health care team

3. Olfactory ability sufficient to assess patients and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Detect foul or unusual odors of bodily fluids or spoiled foods
- Detect smoke from burning materials

4. Tactile ability sufficient to assess patients and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Detect changes in skin temperature
- Detect unsafe temperature levels in heat-producing devices used in patient care
- Detect anatomical abnormalities, such as subcutaneous crepitus, edema, or infiltrated intravenous fluid

5. Strength and mobility sufficient to perform patient care activities and emergency procedures.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Safely transfer patients in and out of bed
- Turn and position patients as needed to prevent complications due to bed rest
- Hang intravenous bags at the appropriate level
- Accurately read the volumes in body fluid collection devices hung below bed level
- Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation

6. Fine motor skills sufficient to perform psychomotor skills integral to patient care.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Safely dispose of needles in sharps containers
- Accurately place and maintain position of stethoscope for detecting sounds of bodily functions
- Manipulate small equipment and containers, such as syringes, vials, ampules, and medication packages, to administer medications

7. Physical endurance sufficient to complete assigned periods of clinical practice.

8. Ability to speak, comprehend, read, and write in English at a level that meets the need for accurate, clear, and effective communication.

9. Emotional stability to function effectively under stress, to adapt to changing situations, and to follow through on assigned patient care responsibilities.

10. Cognitive ability to collect, analyze, and integrate information and knowledge to make clinical judgments and management decisions that promote positive patient outcomes.