



RN & RPN PRACTICE: THE CLIENT, THE NURSE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
College of Nurses of Ontario (2014)

MODULE 06 | THE THREE FACTOR FRAMEWORK ENVIRONMENT FACTORS

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The purpose of Module Six is ensure that as a nurse making effective decisions about which category (RN or RPN) to match with client needs involves considering three (3) factors of equal importance: the client, the nurse and the environment, and deliberating on how they apply to the situation.

Outcomes

By completing this Learning module you will learn how to determine the following:

- Which environmental factors associated with effective decision-making related to the utilization of an RN and an RPN;
- What influences the environmental factors related to effective-decision making for the RN and RPN.

Process

- Build on your own nursing knowledge, experience and expertise;
- Based on the matching exercise you will be able to complete a self-reflection and an analysis of the client factors and influence the utilization of an RN and RPN practice;
- From the College of Nurses of Ontario's Professional Standards (2002) and Guidelines;
- By applying what you have learned to your professional nursing practice.

Keep a notebook or journal to document your ideas and answers to the questions in this learning module.

Building On Your Experience

Environment Factors that Influence RN and RPN Practice

Making effective decisions about which nursing category (RN or RPN) to be congruent with client needs and expectations involves important environmental factors.

After determining both the client and nursing factors, the overall practice environment must be assessed for supports to ensure safe performance of care to be assigned. Conditions vary between practice settings where care is assigned and within settings from one point in time to another.

Consider the following factors:

1. Does the staffing patterns/skill mix allow for adequate nursing assessment of clients' health status, needs for nursing care and responses to care?
2. What are the human and material resources in the practice environment that are needed to provide quality and safe patient care?
3. What are the roles and responsibilities of other interprofessional healthcare team members?
4. Are there role descriptions and responsibilities?
5. Are policies and procedures current?
6. Are family members available to appropriately enhance client care?

The Environment Continuum

As outlined above, environmental factors include practice supports, consultation resources and the stability/predictability of the environment. Practice supports and consultation resources support nurses in clinical decision-making.

The less stable these factors are, the greater the need for RN staffing. The less available the practice supports and consultation resources are, the greater the need for more in-depth nursing competencies and skills in the areas of clinical practice, decision-making, critical-thinking, leadership, research utilization and resource management.



Determine if the following Environmental Factors are More Stable or Less Stable

Place a check mark beside the column

Environmental Factors Practice Supports	More Stable	Less stable
1. Unclear or identified procedures, policies, medical directives, plans of care, care pathways, and assessment tools		
2. High proportion of nurses familiar with the environment		
3. High Proportion of expert nurses or low proportion of novice nurses		
4. Low proportion of expert nurses or high proportion of novice nurses and unregulated staff		
5. Low proportion of nurses familiar with the environment		
6. Clear and identified procedures, policies, medical directives, protocols, plans of care		
Consultation Resources		
7. Few consultation resources available to manage outcomes		
8. Many consultation resources available to manage outcomes		
Stability and predictability of the environment		
9. Low rate of client turnover		
10. Few unpredictable events		
11. High rate of client turnover		
12. Many unpredictable events		

Answers:

More Stable: 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10 | Less Stable: 1, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12

Consider a Time When

The more complex the situation and the more dynamic the environment, the greater need for the RN to provide the full range of care, assess changes, re-establish priorities and determine the need for additional resources.

Decisions about utilizing an RN or RPN are made after considering the client care requirements and the nurses' cognitive and technical expertise in a given environment.

By considering the client, nurse and environmental factors, nurses and key stakeholders can determine which category of nursing is appropriate for specific roles in client care.

The application of the three factor framework will help decision makers determine which roles and activities are not appropriate for autonomous RPN practice. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- Triage nurse
- Circulating nurse
- Administering conscious sedation and/or monitoring sedated clients based on the employer's policy

Case Scenario

Carmella arrives to the Long-Term-Care facility for her initial shift following orientation. Carmella's colleagues are surprised to see her as they were expecting to have someone with more experience on this shift.

Carmella approaches the team leader, and she explains that there is only one experienced nurse on for the entire building due to the sick calls and emergency leave of absences.

The team leader also expressed concerns about the number of new admissions they had today and as a result of this, has not been able to complete all that is required for the client's admission history.

Family members have been demanding and concerned about how their loved ones will adapt to their new environment.

Carmella is now working with another nurse who finished orientation two weeks ago and there are a number of unregulated care providers that are new to this unit as well.

What should happen now?

What are your nursing responsibilities?

A worksheet allows you to capture your ideas!

Critical-Thinking

1. What guiding principles are you most concerned about in Carmella's situation?
2. How does this issue conflict with CNO's Three Factor Framework - Standard of Practice - RN and RPN Practice - the Client, the Nurse and the Environment? Which Standards?
3. What practice setting or unit policies/procedures does Carmella have the potential in not meeting in this situation?
4. Who else is potentially affected by this request?
5. How could Carmella resolve this issue or problem? If Carmella is not able to, who could/should she approach?
6. What resources might give direction to resolve the issue/problem?