![Nurse Executives of New Zealand Inc. logo — DEVELOPING NEW ZEALAND'S NURSING LEADERS]

Position statement   **Patient safety culture**

The purpose of this position statement is to outline key considerations when building a Patient Safety Culture

Commitment to Te Tiriti and equity

The Ministry's definition of equity as approved by Director-General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield, in March 2019 and reads:

'In Aotearoa New Zealand, people have differences in health that are not only avoidable but unfair and unjust. Equity recognises different people with different levels of advantage require different approaches and resources to get equitable health outcomes.'

To care for people safely and provide relevant, culturally appreciative service, nursing needs to be guided by its code of conduct[1], be cognisant of patients' rights[2] and have a working knowledge on application of Te Tiriti O Waitangi[3]. This understanding of Te Tiriti, equity and the meaning of Tikanga, will support nursing to safely address the challenging disparity for particularly our Māori populations and our Pacific Island people. Knowing we have inequities requires nursing to deliberately address the gaps and actively challenge poorer health outcomes. An integral part of ensuring patient safety culture is to enable nursing leaders to know themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, to identify and dismantle their conscious or unconscious biases.[4]

Alongside bicultural appreciation is a commitment from NENZ to embrace our wider cultures and populations through inclusivity, understanding and respect. Added to this is our responsibility to embrace diversity and be open to the differences between people, needing care and service. This stated intent from nursing leaders to ensure deliberate and considered service is driven by our recognition of cultural appreciation as an integral aspect of patient and whānau safety.

Regulation

The New Zealand Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (HPCA, 2003), and the HPCA Amendment Act (2019)[5] continues to provide one legislative framework for consistency in the regulation of health practitioners with the principal purpose to protect the health and safety of the public. Fundamental to this is the ongoing competency and

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[1] https://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/Public/Nursing/Code_of_Conduct/NCNZ/nursing-section/Code_of_Conduct.aspx
[2] https://www.hdc.org.nz/disability/the-code-and-your-rights/
[3] https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/he-korowai-oranga/strengthening-he-korowai-oranga/treaty-waitangi-principles
[4] https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/blog/maori-health-advancement-how-can-we-do-it/
[5] https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/regulation-health-and-disability-system/health-practitioners-competence-assurance-act/updates-health-practitioners-competence-assurance-act

demonstrated fitness to practice throughout the duration of professional practice. As a regulated profession, nursing operates within the Act and Nurse Executives of New Zealand is committed to the ongoing protection of public safety within a rapidly changing health environment.

Organisational positioning
NENZ supports the International Council of Nursing (ICN) position statement on Patient Safety[6] that acknowledges that patient safety is fundamental to high quality health and to nursing care. In addition, it endorses it as the prevention of harm to patients through preventing errors, learning from errors and developing professional and organisation culture or climate of patient safety.

This approach to patient safety includes system actions in the recruitment, training, retention and return to practice of health care professionals, performance improvement, environmental safety and risk management; and includes infection control, safe use of medicines, prescribing, equipment safety, safe clinical practice and maintenance of a safe environment of care. Reference to the body of scientific knowledge focused on patient safety and the infrastructure to support its development is a key success factor.

A patient safety culture relies on inter-disciplinary commitment to a safety culture. Nurse leaders need to be able to work in a clinical governance model with senior medical, allied health and management colleagues utilising professional relationships and communication, safety technology, adopting best practice as well as effective systems and processes. The New Zealand Health Quality and Safety Commission Clinical Governance guidance for health and disability providers[7] supports a useful reference for nursing to model the way to ensuring comprehensive service delivery and outcome focussed care which maintains the person, their families and whānau and carers as central to wellbeing and safety.

A patient safety culture requires investment in people and processes so that there is open dialogue, trust in a 'just' culture and team review of actual/potential errors and evaluation of progress.

Effective nursing practice is a key focus in a safe patient care delivery system. This includes having the right numbers of appropriately skilled people, in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing to achieve the right outcome. Workforce capability development and career progression is central to ensuring this is a realistic deliverable.

Care delivery models must support sufficient numbers of qualified nurses to undertake skilled assessment, care planning, expert intervention, appropriate delegation and supervision and effective evaluation of health outcomes.
Patient Safety is a key strategic priority for NENZ, which supports national initiatives to build a patient safety culture.

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[6] https://www.icn.ch/sites/default/files/inline-files/D05_Patient_Safety_0.pdf
[7] https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Capability-Leadership/PR/HQS-ClinicalGovernance.pdf

Nurse Leader Considerations

- The Lead Nursing role in any health provider organisation is to set and manage the standard of nursing practice expectations, based on recognised evidence.
- The Lead Nursing role co-leads the Clinical Governance framework through which the organisation is accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards in an environment in which excellence in clinical care flourishes and where continuous quality improvement is the norm.
- Systems and processes to monitor nursing indicators and provide evidence of quality improvement support a safe workplace and proactive service setting. Further references to support this can be found via the New Zealand Health Quality and Safety Commission[8]
- Nurse commitment to a patient safety culture is fostered through supporting initiatives and achievements.
- Nursing leaders have a responsibility to identify and challenge individual, management and organisational issues that do not promote patient and whanau safety within a person-centred framework of care.

Additional useful documents

Department of Health. (2013). Treating patients and service users with respect, dignity and compassion and protecting patients from avoidable harm. Author: Don Berwick. (August 2013). A promise to learn – a commitment to act: improving the safety of patients in England.

Health Safety and Quality Commission: www.hqsc.govt.nz

Institute for Healthcare Improvement. (2007). http://www.ihi.org/IHI/Programs/Campaign/

International Council of Nursing http://www.icn.ch/pspatientsafe.htm

Kohn, L.T., Corrigan, J.M., Donaldson, M.S. (1999). To Err Is Human, Building a Safer Health System. *Committee on Quality of Health Care in America. Institute of Medicine*. USA.

Aiken, L.H., Clarke, S.P., Sloane, D.M., Sochalski, J., & Silber, J.H. (2002). Hospital Nurse Staffing and Patient Mortality, Nurse Burnout, and Job Dissatisfaction, *JAMA. 288:* 1987-1993.

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[8] https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/health-quality-evaluation/projects/health-quality-and-safety-indicators/