



THE CORRECTIONAL NURSE

Inspiring

Professional Correctional Nursing Practice

January 2022

As you know, I am a great advocate for correctional nursing, and frequently discuss scope of practice. I was recently asked by a Correctional Nurse what to do if she was asked to perform an intervention or make a clinical judgment that exceeded her scope of practice. She was not currently faced with the situation, but was thinking about it beforehand so that she was prepared. She shared that it did happen to a colleague, who made the decision to practice beyond her scope, using the thought process that the physician would "back her up" if someone "had a problem with it."

Our correctional environment, unfortunately, lends itself to this happening, more so than in the hospital and clinic environment, because we often work alone or with a few colleagues, and don't always have a provider onsite. Sometimes, the nursing assessment protocols/guidelines that we are supposed to implement may have been written without consideration for the nursing scope of practice in your state.

Articles discussing what to do as nurses when asked to practice beyond our scope have been authored by many organizations, including the American Nurses Association; many Boards of Nursing, including North Carolina, California and Oregon; the Healthcare and Professional Council, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses and others. Please do a search and read a few. All include your obligation to refuse to do the action if you know it exceeds your scope of practice, or if you are not competent to perform it, or if you are not appropriately trained. They also recommend that you discuss your concerns immediately with a supervisor.

I say it often, but I cannot state it enough - you must first know what your scope of practice is for your licensure in the state in which you are working. Scopes of practice may vary from state to state; working in different states requires you to know and adhere to each one's scope of practice.

You must then ensure that any nursing activity you perform falls within that scope. If you are unsure, or you know that what you are being asked to do exceeds your scope of practice; or have not been trained to do the task even though it is within your scope, you must not perform it and must immediately discuss your concerns with your supervisor. That conversation may be challenging, especially if it involves you stating definitively that you cannot do what is asked of you, because you may be perceived as being "difficult" and just not wanting to work, but the alternative (not refusing, not discussing, and doing something that exceeds your scope of practice) places your patient's safety and your career at risk. Be difficult!

Remember, too, that your patient still requires whatever it was that was asked of you that exceeded your scope of practice, like the administration of a medication, an intervention, or determining a medical diagnosis and treatment plan, and if you cannot do it, you are obligated to ensure that the need is addressed by healthcare staff whose scope of practice allows such actions. Refusing and notifying a supervisor does not release you from the obligation to care for your patient.

In this new year, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with your scope of practice, and look at your correctional nursing practice to ensure that it is congruent. Are there trainings or continuing education classes you need to take to improve your knowledge and skills so that you can practice to the fullest extent of your licensure? Enroll in them! Are the policies, procedures and nursing assessment protocols at your facility aligned with your scope of practice? If not, have the conversation with your supervisor/administration before you are in a position that requires you to "be difficult."

My Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Newsworthy Notes

The [American Correctional Association](#) will hold its Winter Conference on January 6-9, 2022 in Phoenix, Arizona and registration is now open.

The [National Commission on Correctional Health Care](#) has a call out for presentations for its Mental Health conference to be held July 31 - August 1, 2022 in Denver.

The National Commission on Correctional Health Care will hold its Spring Conference on April 9-12, 2022 in Atlanta. The members of the Nursing Advisory Council have been asked to present their 4-part webinar series, How to Achieve Success as a Correctional Nurse Manager, originally held during the month of August 2021, as a pre-conference session on Sunday April 10th. [Get all the information on the NCCHC website.](#) We invite you to join us!

The [American Jail Association](#) is holding its national conference in Long Beach, CA on May 21-25, 2022.

The American Correctional Nurses Association is busy planning activities for 2022, including six accredited continuing education offerings. The first one will be held in January. Check out the [website](#).

Remember that you can find our past Newsletters on the CorrectionalNurse.Net website in the Newsletter Archive.

Thanks for all you do, and Be Safe!!

CorrectionalNurse.Net

This month at [CorrectionalNurse.Net](#) our clinical discussion will include Women's health and KOP medication. Our professional practice discussion will include The Top Five Posts of 2021 and how to build a trusting relationship with our incarcerated patients.

As always, announcements for new blog posts will be posted on our FaceBook pages and on Instagram.

Please [FOLLOW US](#) and check back often to ensure that you get notification of new posts!

VISIT CORRECTIONALNURSE.NET NOW

Correctional Nurse Educator

Our 50% off featured class this month is Abdominal Assessment: Basic Assessment for the Correctional Nurse. I hope that you enjoy it!

Remember that The Correctional Nurse will work with your group to provide accredited continuing education classes at a discounted and affordable cost.

VISIT THE CORRECTIONAL NURSE EDUCATOR NOW

Nursing Behind the Wall

This month at [Nursing Behind the Wall](#), you will meet Ms. Roper, who has Great Toe pain.

VISIT NURSING BEHIND THE WALL NOW

In closing, I appreciate you taking the time to read this newsletter, and I hope that you will find our sites interesting and educational. Our profession of Correctional Nursing is unique and sometimes challenging, but always very important to our patients. The impact we make is far-reaching, even if it is not always evident as we care for our patients. I have ALWAYS been proud to say that I am a Correctional Nurse - I hope that you are as well!!

Lori

Inspiration



IN A GENTLE WAY, YOU CAN SHAKE THE WORLD.
-MAHATMA GANDI

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