



Australian  
College of  
Nursing

INSTITUTE OF  
**LEADERSHIP**

# NURSE EXECUTIVE CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

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- ACN National Nursing Executive Community of Interest
- Fellows and Members who are Nursing Executives and Academic Leaders
- Delphi Panel

The Delphi Panel was drawn from the following positions:

- Nurse Executives – public and private sectors
- Education sector
- Health Executives/Chief Executive Officers – state/territory and local health district levels
- Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The social, political and economic challenges in health care today, and over the coming years, make it critical that leaders are equipped to respond to these challenges. The role of nurse executives has evolved from a focus on nursing services to broader accountability for patient or client care services across aged/residential care, hospital and community settings in public and private, not-for profit and non-government organisations. They exemplify the mission and vision of their organisation; are effective communicators and architects of change; encourage creativity and innovation; and provide learning and growth opportunities. They must be dynamic, innovative and strategic in their approach to facilitate the design of care delivery systems which are safe and cost effective.

To this end, the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) has developed a Nurse Executive Capability Framework (NECF) to guide the development of those in, or aspiring to, nurse executive roles and thereby setting the standard nationally on the capabilities required.

The NECF was validated using a panel of experts through the Delphi technique. Through this process the Delphi Panel agreed that the statements which appear in the Nurse Executive Capability Framework are essential to the role of nurse executives.

ACN holds the position that nurse executives play facilitating or leadership roles to ensure the quality of health services provided. Nurse executives may not always be required to be experts in or complete actions personally. The role of the nurse executive is to ensure the actions are undertaken and to do so they must possess adequate knowledge around the items which appear in this Capability Framework. Nurse executives work collaboratively to facilitate the undertaking of tasks by others, individuals and/or multidisciplinary teams, with the required expertise. Feedback from the Delphi panel of experts indicates that a nurse executive is responsible for:

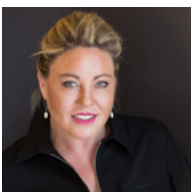
- Balancing expectations related to operational management and executive leadership
- Influencing, monitoring, guiding at a strategic level, networking, partnering, being across the latest evidence and making decisions
- Leading the strategy and facilitating implementation
- Building capacity in the next leadership level and throughout the organisation

The Nurse Executive Capability Framework should be interpreted in this context.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Duffield".

**PROFESSOR CHRISTINE DUFFIELD** FACN  
AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF NURSING PRESIDENT



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Ward".

**ADJUNCT PROFESSOR KYLIE WARD** FACN  
AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF NURSING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# NURSE EXECUTIVE CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

LEADING THE SERVICE	LEADING OTHERS	LEADING SELF
<p><b>Managing Resources</b></p> <p>Demonstrate efficient and safe care delivery and improved outcomes</p> <p>Demonstrate financial accountability</p>	<p><b>Building Teams</b></p> <p>Build productive relationships within networks and sectors</p> <p>Work collaboratively with other health service executives</p>	<p><b>Developing Self Awareness</b></p> <p>Display highly developed self awareness</p> <p>Demonstrate an active commitment to personal development</p>
<p><b>Managing Performance</b></p> <p>Develop an organisational culture of excellence achievement</p> <p>Manage the performance of nursing staff</p> <p>Implement best practice models of care</p>	<p><b>Empowering Others</b></p> <p>Empower others to become leaders</p> <p>Empower others to reach their full potential</p>	<p><b>Demonstrating Professionalism</b></p> <p>Contribute to the advancement of the nursing profession</p>
<p><b>Planning for the Future</b></p> <p>Focus on the future</p> <p>Translate the nursing vision into meaningful performance expectations</p>	<p><b>Building Capacity</b></p> <p>Building organisational capacity and responsiveness</p>	

# LEADING THE SERVICE

## Managing Resources

### Demonstrate efficient and safe care delivery and improved outcomes by:

- Exerting influence to gain appropriate type and level of physical, human and financial resources
- Establishing and maintaining appropriate staff numbers and skill mix for the clinical practice environment
- Monitoring delivery of services within allocated resources
- Facilitating an ethical, transparent, and effective use of resources
- Developing strategies and policies for promoting a safety culture for consumers and staff within the service
- Directing a change agenda that improves care delivery and displays an understanding of the complex range of factors which effect change
- Driving service compliance with workplace health and safety legislation and relevant organisational policies and managing risk
- Supporting the digitisation of health initiatives through nursing representation on all relevant committees and system selection processes

### Demonstrate financial accountability by:

- Understanding budgetary processes and financial constraints
- Incorporating transparency in budget preparation and maintenance
- Undertaking comprehensive analysis and data driven decision making in all resource allocation processes
- Remodelling care to meet current and future financial needs

## Managing Performance

### Develop an organisational culture of excellence achievement by:

- Guiding and advising health service executives on the direction for nursing services and the integral value of nursing work
- Directing service excellence through the development, establishment, and maintenance of quality clinical outcome-focused standards of nursing practice
- Creating evidence based nursing services and data driven decision making
- Maximising opportunities to reduce variation and standardise policies, practices and outcomes to achieve efficacy
- Selecting reporting systems that initiate momentum for improvement efforts
- Benchmarking measurable validated key performance indicators
- Sponsoring the identification, recognition, and celebration of nursing and organisational success
- Being highly regarded within and outside the organisation, and being pursued as an expert

### Manage the performance of nursing staff by:

- Holding self and others to account for achieving results and agreed upon targets
- Providing an environment for nursing staff to engage in critical reflection, develop critical reasoning, and identify further learning opportunities through clinical supervision and shared governance
- Implementing a validated performance management framework to assist in goal development, activity prioritisation, task follow through, and reporting on activity progress
- Initiating corrective action in response to incompetent or sub-optimal performance
- Demonstrating confidence in challenging conversations with colleagues whose actions have been associated with poor performance
- Employing strategies to manage conflicts of interests and differences of opinion
- Exhibiting consistency and fairness in all deliberations
- Creating an environment where equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion are adopted and celebrated within and outside of the service

### Implement best practice models of care by:

- Creating nursing care that partners with and advocates for consumers and their families
- Driving clinical governance as it relates to the delivery of effective, efficient and safe nursing care
- Valuing relevant interprofessional input and specialist expertise, and contextualising the value of nursing work to their specific goals
- Establishing service delivery against relevant National Standards e.g. quality and safety, and accreditation organisations
- Using data to analyse patient/consumer outcomes against an evidence based criteria set
- Developing a mind-set that fosters focus on quality and outcome improvement, and acting on information which challenges existing processes and leads to improved practices and services
- Critically analysing the success of implemented actions and policies, and adjusting future processes and solutions accordingly
- Participating in the evaluation of services and wider healthcare systems relevant to the organisation

### Translate the nursing vision into meaningful performance expectations by:

- Formulating and articulating a strategy for nursing staff that is evidence based, linked to organisational objectives, informed by industry and professional imperatives, financially sound, leverages cutting-edge technologies, and cascades through the nursing service
- Balancing strategic directions with organisational imperatives
- Disseminating relevant analysis of nursing and health policy throughout the organisation
- Anticipating strategic risks through a comprehensive risk assessment, addressing them quickly and assisting others to recognise them
- Generating a sense of shared purpose and direction through sound governance models

## Planning for the Future

### Focus on the future by:

- Demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of the historical, economic, social and political trends to determine future service requirements
- Maximising political opportunities through providing advice to facility board/corporate office/government departments in relation to nursing
- Driving service development through recognising current and future local, national, and international political imperatives
- Engaging nurses on critical issues about the future and disseminating information using a variety of communication channels
- Collecting and filtering information for relevance, importance and practicality to identify best practice and emerging trends that will have an impact on health outcomes
- Encouraging innovative alternatives to resolve complex problems that may not have been experienced previously
- Driving a risk-tolerant culture of innovation and imagination through challenging self and others to expand thinking
- Stimulating changes that lead to work and facilities design, system redesign, and in-future design



# LEADING OTHERS

## Building Teams

### Build productive relationships within networks and sectors by:

- Seeking input from colleagues, consumers and the community with a view to sustaining organisational excellence
- Advancing nursing through involvement of nursing experts in all collaborative ventures
- Using networks to create opportunities for collaboration and promoting the sharing of information and resources
- Advocating and orchestrating person-focused cross-team cooperation and collaboration to deliver service agreements

### Work collaboratively with other health service executives by:

- Approaching negotiations with a strong understanding of the issues while using long-term plans to influence others
- Leading meetings, bringing together consumers, carers and the wider healthcare team
- Contributing to national forums and presenting at conferences, meetings, workshops, and seminars on professional and/or service developments
- Positioning self as a leader within and beyond the nursing profession

## Empowering Others

### Empower others to become leaders by:

- Inspiring autonomous practice, individual initiative, and innovative thinking
- Encouraging participation from other staff within multidisciplinary team meetings and clinical case reviews and enabling all present to learn about each other's contributions
- Facilitating the development of others through the provision of mentoring and coaching to colleagues
- Acting with moral courage to make difficult decisions, and explaining the impact of decisions on staff

### Empower others to reach their full potential by:

- Respecting, valuing and acknowledging the roles, contributions and expertise of others
- Fostering opportunities for people to engage in decision making and to challenge constructively
- Motivating and inspiring staff to unlock their potential and achieve individual, team, and organisational and professional excellence
- Developing and maintaining positive nursing morale through celebrating successes and exceptional achievement, and offering support in times of high pressure
- Creating an inclusive and safe environment where people can contribute ideas and facilitate the exchange of resources

## Building Capacity

### Build organisational capacity and responsiveness by:

- Fostering a culture of continuous learning, leadership development, and knowledge sharing across the profession and nursing service, the organisation, and with partner organisations
- Utilising workforce planning principles to develop and maintain the capability and capacity to deliver services effectively
- Promoting nursing research to support the development of clinical practice
- Establishing effective succession planning in order to sustain workforce capability
- Ensuring the nursing service has an integrated and reliable information and knowledge management system to support decision making
- Championing an environment that is safe for both healthcare providers and consumers and based on feedback and recognition
- Creating a climate which encourages and supports openness, persistence, courage, and genuine debate about critical issues
- Creating a learning environment that facilitates the identification and development of talent

# LEADING SELF

## Developing Self Awareness

### Display highly developed self awareness by:

- Engaging in self-reflection to identify strengths and areas for development, learning from past experiences, and drawing on information from psychometric and behavioural measures
- Maintaining individual health and wellness, and identifying the effect of stress on own behaviour
- Monitoring own emotional reactions and prejudices and recognising how these can affect judgement, behaviour and interaction with others
- Remaining calm and retaining focus when faced with criticism or pressure
- Scanning the environment and cues from others to assess when and how to change planned approaches
- Acknowledging mistakes and treating them as a learning opportunity

### Demonstrate an active commitment to personal development by:

- Modelling the effective management of own personal and professional development
- Initiating regular feedback on own leadership style and impact to enhance reflective practice e.g. mentoring and coaching
- Exhibiting a strong capacity and willingness to modify own behaviours through integrating feedback and being accountable for own actions
- Foreseeing reactions and assessing issues from different perspectives
- Displaying empathy and active listening, and checking to ensure views of others have been understood
- Adhering consistently to the NMBA Code of Conduct and any other relevant codes of practice

## Demonstrating Professionalism

### Contribute to the advancement of the nursing profession by:

- Holding postgraduate qualifications
- Exemplifying personal drive and integrity, role modelling expected behaviours and incorporating cultural safety with high levels of ethics and probity to openly challenge personal and organisation breaches of values, standards and inconsistent behaviour
- Integrating a deep understanding of one's own discipline with the ability to communicate highly complex issues with people (internal and external) across a broad range of disciplines
- Participating in continuing professional development activities
- Displaying resilience and personal courage when leading responses to emergency scenarios and adapting readily to new and rapidly changing situations
- Demonstrating effective writing, public relations, marketing and public speaking skills
- Displaying political astuteness to ensure the advancement of the nursing profession and nursing services in line with contemporary care needs in all settings



