



South African Nursing Council

(Under the provisions of the Nursing Act, 2005)

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COMPETENCIES FOR FORENSIC NURSE

1. NATURE OF SPECIALISATION

A Forensic Nurse is a professional Nurse who has an additional qualification in Forensic Nursing, specializing in the application of forensic science and Clinical Nursing Practice and is registered as such by the South African Nursing Council.

2. CONTEXT

The Forensic Nurse will work at all levels of care, across families, communities, and the entire life-span.

He/she provides medico-legal forensic services to individuals, families within the home, community, primary health care and health establishments. In addition, they work in policy development, research, advocacy and education.

3. CONTINUUM OF CARE

Forensic Nurse provides promotive, preventative, curative and rehabilitative services to individuals, family and communities in collaboration with the legal system. In addition, the Forensic Nurse will collaborate and work with related professionals.

4. OVERLAP OF COMPETENCIES WITH OTHER NURSING SPECIALIZATIONS

The competencies of the Forensic Nurse overlaps with several nursing disciplines including but not limited to:

- o Medical-Surgical Nursing
- o Community Health Nursing
- o Psychiatric Nursing
- o Midwifery
- o Primary Care Nursing
- o Paediatric Nursing
- o Emergency/Trauma Nursing
- o Orthopaedic Nursing
- o Ophthalmic Nursing
- o Reproductive health and HIV and AIDS counselling services

Referrals are expected to come from preceding services, among others. The Forensic Nurse will collaborate and work with all related professionals and communities.

DOMAIN 1: PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL AND LEGAL PRACTICE	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
1.1 Professional Practice	1.1.1 Works within the realms of the Forensic Nurses' Scope of Practice and knowledge base in relation to current trends and advances in Forensic Nursing practice
	1.1.2 Applies the legal provisions governing Nursing Practice including the Scope of Practice of the Professional Nurse and the Nursing Act and omissions in relation to Forensic Nursing Practice
	1.1.3 Accepts the increased responsibility and accountability of a Forensic Nurse
	1.1.4 Takes personal accountability for ones' decisions and actions and/or omissions taken in the course of Forensic Nursing Care delivery
	1.1.5 Upholds the role and integrity of the Forensic Nursing Profession in actions and words
	1.1.6 Applies the knowledge the Nursing Act and all other related Acts in the execution of her/his roles and responsibilities
1.2 Ethical Practice	1.2.1 Observes national and international codes, treaties e.g. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Human Rights and Ethical Code of Conduct
	1.2.2 Observes the Victim's Rights Charter while taking cognizance of the rights of the alleged perpetrator
	1.2.3 Collects, preserves and maintains a chain of custody of all the evidence
	1.2.4 Keeps safely all medico-legal records
	1.2.5 Documents meticulously all medico-legal chains of events
	1.2.6 Obtains informed consent from the victim or an eligible person for medico-legal management
	1.2.7 Observes privacy, confidentiality and safety of clients in accordance with medico-legal requirement
	1.2.8 Advocates for and respects the rights of the mentally and physically disabled; institutionalised clients; sex workers; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTIs) and other marginalised groups

DOMAIN 1: PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL AND LEGAL PRACTICE	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
1.3 Legal Practice	1.3.1 Functions within the broader legislative framework e.g. National Health Act, Nursing Act and its Regulations, Legislation and Regulations specific to Forensics, including but not limited to Sexual Offences Act (SOA), National SA Policy and Guidelines: Provincial policies, guidelines and protocols; Human Tissue Act, Criminal Procedure Act, Domestic Violence Act, Child Care Act, Human Trafficking Act, Children's Act, Child Justice Bill, Medicine and related substances Act, Promotion of Access to information Act
	1.3.2 Presents expert legal testimony and an opinion in an unbiased and objective manner
	1.3.3 Applies knowledge and interpretation of all relevant documents e.g. the SAPS form 308 and 308A in management of cases
	1.3.4 Applies national guidelines and policies; National Health Directives; Batho Pele Principles; Constitution 108 of 1996, TOP Act and National Road Traffic Act. Gw 7/54 or similar form in the care of cases

DOMAIN 2: CLINICAL PRACTICE: CARE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
2.1 Health Promotion and Prevention	2.1.1 Assesses Health Education needs specific to the area of Forensic Nursing
	2.1.2 Plans, develops and implements crime victims' needs-based programmes to promote health and well being
	2.1.3 Develops and uses follow-up systems to ensure that health care users receive appropriate services
	2.1.4 Advocates, develops and designs health policies responsive to needs of survivors of crime and violence
	2.1.5 Raises awareness on crime and violence and relevant legislation and rights of victims
	2.1.6 Communicates impact of crime and violence on family and community
	2.1.7 Raise awareness around re-victimization of the abused
	2.1.8 Informs victims of right to access protection orders and mandatory HIV testing of sexual offences perpetrators

DOMAIN 2: CLINICAL PRACTICE: CARE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
	2.1.9 Prepares and distributes information pamphlets and posters at strategic places including health facilities, Community Service Centre (Police Stations) and libraries
	2.1.10 Collaborates with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other groups involved for an integrated awareness on violence and crime
2.2 Assessment	2.2.1 Gathers accurate and relevant objective and subjective data required for practice in Forensic Nursing area through Systematic Health, Nursing and Medico-Legal Assessment
	2.2.2 Gives accurate medico-legal interpretation of findings
	2.2.3 Orders diagnostic tests and procedures in line with Scope of Practice of Forensic Nursing
	2.2.4 Organizes, synthesizes, analyses and interprets data from different sources to derive on a nursing diagnoses and determine a care plan
	2.2.5 Shares and documents findings accurately, completely and in a timely manner, complying with Nursing Practice Standards and institutional policies
	2.2.6 Recognize dynamics of violence at individual, family and community level
	2.2.7 Provides holistic care to individuals, family and the community affected by crime and violence
	2.2.8 Conducts comprehensive routine screening for gender based violence
	2.2.9 Conducts specific assault history taking
	2.2.10 Conducts physical assessment to corroborate the history given by the victim
	2.2.11 Collects accurate forensic evidence using evidence collection kits
	2.2.12 Assess, measures and describes wounds accurately
	2.2.13 Obtains consent specific for collection of forensic evidence
	2.2.14 Observes and complies to specific time frames for the collection and preservation of evidence and provision of medication
2.3 Planning	2.3.1 Formulates an individualized comprehensive care plan with identified care outcomes based on nursing diagnoses, findings from a Nursing and Health Assessment, inputs from other health team members, relevant stakeholders and Forensic Nursing Practice Standards
	2.3.2 Applies critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills underpinned by knowledge of the area of Forensic Nursing and other disciplines to the care planning process

DOMAIN 2: CLINICAL PRACTICE: CARE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
	2.3.3 Establishes priorities of care in collaboration with other health care providers and health care users
	2.3.4 Reviews and revises regularly the care plan, where possible in collaboration with other members of the health care team and relevant stakeholders
	2.3.5 Maintains accurate care plan and related records
	2.3.6 Plans trauma containment prior to proceeding with medico-legal examination and evidence collection
	2.3.7 Plans the sequencing of evidence collection
	2.3.8 Prioritizes procedures according to the assessment needs
	2.3.9 Ensures chain of evidence is maintained throughout
	2.3.10 Ensures the accurate prescription of medication at appropriate stages
	2.3.11 Maintains both legal and nursing records
2.4 Implementation	2.4.1 Maintains safe keeping and records of bar-coded evidence collection kit
	2.4.2 Implements a range of advanced procedures, treatments and interventions in accordance with the developed care plan and best practice standards
	2.4.3 Documents interventions and health care user responses accurately and in a timely manner
	2.4.4 Responds appropriately and timeously to unexpected or rapidly changing situations
	2.4.5 Responds immediately and appropriately to emergency situations taking a leadership role and coordination of care for health care users with special care needs
	2.4.6 Provide evidence in forensic cases
2.5 Evaluation	2.5.1 Monitors and evaluates progress towards expected outcomes
	2.5.2 Consults with health care users, families and/or carers and a health care team on evaluating progress towards planned outcomes
	2.5.3 Utilizes monitoring data to modify and improve quality of services
	2.5.4 Provides necessary support to the team members according to the identified gaps in the care provided
	2.5.5 Monitor the quality of service rendered and provide necessary support

DOMAIN 2: CLINICAL PRACTICE: CARE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
2.6 Therapeutic Communication and Relationships	2.6.1 Initiates, develops and discontinues therapeutic relationships using a range of advanced communication and interpersonal skills
	2.6.2 Maintains a relationship that respects the boundary between health care user and self
	2.6.3 Listens to others in an unbiased manner, respects points of view of others, and promotes the expression of diverse opinions and perspectives
	2.6.4 Communicates clear, consistent and accurate information verbally, or in written and electronic forms, that falls within professional responsibility and maintains confidence in care
	2.6.5 Facilitates access to information or refers request to the appropriate person
	2.6.6 Communicates and shares information including views of health care users, families with relevant stakeholders

DOMAIN 3: PERSONAL AND QUALITY OF CARE	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
3.1 Quality Improvement	3.1.1 Promotes dissemination, use, monitoring and review of Forensic Nursing Practice standards and best practice guidelines
	3.1.2 Uses appropriate assessment tools to identify actual and potential risks to safety and security, takes appropriate action and reports concerns where necessary to relevant authority
	3.1.3 Ensures safe and proper storage, administration and recording of all forensic material
	3.1.4 Complies with infection prevention procedures and challenges breaches in other practitioner's practice
	3.1.5 Maintain proper chain of evidence of collected forensic material
	3.1.6 Leads and participates in developing and adapting Forensic Nursing Practice standards to the health care environment
	3.1.7 Plans for dealing with clinical forensic disasters in an Advanced Practice Area

DOMAIN 3: PERSONAL AND QUALITY OF CARE	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
3.2 Continuing Education	3.2.1 Undertakes regular review of own practice by engaging in reflection, critical examination and evaluation and seeking peer and multisectoral review
	3.2.2 Assumes responsibility for lifelong learning, own professional development and maintenance of competence
	3.2.3 Participates in Unilateral and Multidisciplinary Teaching and Learning

DOMAIN 4: MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
	4.1 Ensures that required policies, guidelines and protocols are in place
	4.2 Develops and ensures implementation of required medico-legal policies, guidelines and protocols in relation to Forensic Nursing
	4.3 Exercises oversight and audits to ensure compliance with the above policies, guidelines and protocols
	4.4 Improves the quality of Forensic Nursing Services
	4.5 Championing for the profession and speciality
	4.6 Instils activism around the specialization in terms of the service and the victim's rights
	4.7 Mobilizes resources for provision Forensic Nursing Services
	4.8 Acts as mentor/teacher to nurses, doctors and continuous professional development of others within the medico-legal services
	4.9 Facilitates regular meetings, peer support, case reviews and debriefing
	4.10 Maintains intersectoral coordination of stakeholder relevant to Forensic Nursing
	4.11 Facilitates case review meeting with Multidisciplinary Team
	4.12 Monitors, evaluation and audits evidence collection and gives feedback on findings to improve service delivery
	4.13 Manages Information and data collection that will inform research

DOMAIN 5: RESEARCH	
SUBDOMAIN/CORE COMPETENCY	SPECIFIC COMPETENCY
	5.1 Conceptualise and conduct research to improve Forensic Nursing Practice
	5.2 Use research findings to inform/improve Forensic Nursing Practice i.e. operationalize research findings
	5.3 Dissemination of research findings to improve Forensic Nursing Practice
	5.4 Writes proposals for grants/funding for Forensic Nursing related research

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