WAC 246-841A-400 Standards of practice and competencies for nursing assistants. Competencies and standards of practice are statements of knowledge, skills, and behaviors. They are written as descriptions of observable, measurable actions. All nursing assistant competencies are performed under the direction and supervision of a licensed registered nurse or licensed practical nurse as required by RCW 18.88A.030. The following competencies are considered standards of practice for both nursing assistant-certified and nursing assistant-registered:

(1) The nursing assistant role and knowledge of rules and regulations.

(a) A nursing assistant demonstrates competency in providing holistic, person-centered care that supports the human needs of diverse individuals. The nursing assistant:

(i) Identifies the holistic needs of clients or residents.

(ii) Provides care to support holistic needs in accordance with nursing assistant competencies and clients' or residents' plans of care.

(iii) Provides person-centered care by adjusting care approaches to accommodate the unique needs and preferences of clients or residents.

(b) A nursing assistant demonstrates knowledge of and can explain the practical implications of the laws and regulations which affect nursing assistant practice including, but not limited to:

(i) Mandatory reporting procedures related to client or resident abuse, neglect, abandonment, and exploitation (chapters 74.34 RCW and 246-16 WAC, and WAC 246-841A-720);

(ii) Scope of practice;

(iii) Opportunities for expanding scope:

(A) Nurse delegation; and

(B) Medication assistant certification endorsement;

(iv) Workers right to know (chapter 49.70 RCW);

(v) The Uniform Disciplinary Act (chapter 18.130 RCW);

(vi) Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA);

(vii) Medicare and medicaid.

(2) Client or resident rights and promotion of independence. A nursing assistant demonstrates behavior which maintains and respects clients' or residents' rights and promotes independence, regardless of race, religion, lifestyle, sexual orientation, gender identity, disease process, or ability to pay. A nursing assistant:

(a) Recognizes that clients or residents have the right to participate in decisions about their care.

(b) Recognizes and respects each client's or resident's need for privacy and confidentiality.

(c) Promotes and respects clients' or residents' rights to make personal choices to accommodate their needs.

(d) Reports clients' or residents' concerns and gives assistance with resolving grievances and disputes.

(e) Provides assistance to clients or residents in getting to and participating in activities.

(f) Respects the property of clients or residents and employer and does not take equipment, material, property, or medications for the nursing assistant's or another's use or benefit. A nursing assistant may not solicit, accept or borrow money, material, or property from a client or resident for the nursing assistant's or another's use or benefit.

(g) Promotes clients' or residents' right to be free from abuse, mistreatment, and neglect.

(h) Intervenes appropriately on a client's or resident's behalf when abuse, mistreatment, or neglect is observed.

(i) Complies with mandatory reporting requirements by reporting to the department of health and the department of social and health services instances of neglect, abuse, exploitation, or abandonment.

(j) Participates in the plan of care regarding the use of restraints in accordance with current professional standards.

(3) Communication and interpersonal skills. A nursing assistant uses communication and interpersonal skills effectively to function as a member of the nursing team. A nursing assistant:

(a) Reads, writes, speaks, and understands English at the level necessary for performing duties of the nursing assistant.

(b) Listens and responds to verbal and nonverbal communication in an appropriate manner.

(c) Recognizes how one's own behavior influences a client's or resident's behavior and uses resources for obtaining assistance in understanding the client's or resident's behavior.

(d) Adjusts one's own behavior to accommodate clients' or residents' physical or mental limitations.

(e) Uses terminology accepted in the health care setting to appropriately record and report observations, actions, and pertinent information accurately and timely.

(f) Is able to explain policies and procedures before and during care of clients or residents.

(4) Infection control. A nursing assistant uses standard and transmission-based precautions to prevent the spread of microorganisms. A nursing assistant:

(a) Uses principles of medical asepsis and demonstrates infection control techniques and standard and transmission-based precautions including, but not limited to:

(i) Demonstrates effective handwashing methods.

(ii) Identifies different types of personal protective equipment (PPE) and demonstrates how and when to use each.

(b) Explains how disease-causing microorganisms are spread.

(c) Explains transmission of bloodborne pathogens.

(d) Demonstrates knowledge of cleaning agents and methods which destroy microorganisms on surfaces.

(5) Safety and emergency procedures. A nursing assistant demonstrates the ability to identify and implement safety and emergency procedures, including the Heimlich maneuver. A nursing assistant:

(a) Provides an environment with adequate ventilation, warmth, light, and quiet.

(b) Promotes a clean, orderly, and safe environment including equipment for a client or resident.

(c) Identifies and uses measures for accident prevention.

(d) Demonstrates principles of good body mechanics for self and clients or residents, using the safest and most efficient methods to lift and move clients, residents, and heavy items.

(e) Demonstrates proper use of protective devices in the care of clients or residents.

(f) Demonstrates knowledge of and follows fire and disaster procedures.

(g) Identifies and demonstrates principles of health and sanitation in food service.

(h) Demonstrates the proper use and storage of cleaning agents and other potentially hazardous materials.

(6) Basic nursing skills. A nursing assistant demonstrates basic technical skills which facilitate an optimal level of functioning for clients or residents, recognizing individual, cultural, and religious diversity. A nursing assistant:

(a) Demonstrates proficiency in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and can perform CPR independently.

(b) Takes and records vital signs.

(c) Measures and records height and weight.

(d) Measures and records fluid and food intake and output.

(e) Recognizes normal body functions, deviations from normal body functions and the importance of reporting deviations in a timely manner to a supervising nurse.

(f) Recognizes, responds to, and reports clients' or residents' emotional, social, cultural, and mental health needs.

(g) Recognizes, responds to, and reports problems in clients' or residents' environment to ensure safety and comfort of clients.

(h) Participates in care planning and the nursing reporting process.

(7) Basic restorative services. The nursing assistant incorporates principles and skills in providing restorative care. A nursing assistant:

(a) Demonstrates knowledge and skill in using assistive devices in ambulation, transferring, eating, and dressing.

(b) Demonstrates knowledge and skill in the maintenance of range of motion.

(c) Demonstrates proper techniques for turning, positioning, and repositioning clients or residents in a bed and chair.

(d) Demonstrates proper techniques for transferring and ambulating clients or residents.

(e) Demonstrates knowledge about methods for meeting the elimination needs of clients or residents.

(f) Demonstrates knowledge and skill for the use and care of prosthetic devices by clients or residents.

(g) Uses basic restorative services by training clients or residents in self-care according to their capabilities.

(8) Personal care. A nursing assistant demonstrates basic personal care skills. A nursing assistant:

(a) Assists clients or residents with bathing, oral care, and skin care.

(b) Assists clients or residents with grooming and dressing.

(c) Provides toileting assistance to clients or residents.

(d) Assists clients or residents with eating and hydration.

(e) Uses proper oral feeding techniques.

(9) Life transitions. A nursing assistant demonstrates the ability to support the care needs of clients or residents during life transitions with competency in the following areas:

(a) Uses basic procedures for admitting, transferring, and discharging clients or residents and maintains professional boundaries.

(b) Applies knowledge of psychosocial and mental health considerations during life transitions. Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Human responses to stress and stressors;

(ii) Stages of psychosocial development across the lifespan; and

(iii) Human responses to grief and loss.

(c) Demonstrates ability to support clients' or residents' holistic needs at the end of life.

(d) Demonstrates knowledge of legal documents affecting care and the nursing assistant role in using the documents:

(i) Advance directives (living wills, durable power of attorney);

(ii) Portable orders for life sustaining treatment (POLST);

(iii) Do not resuscitate (DNR).

(e) Demonstrates the ability to provide postmortem care with respect for clients' or residents' rights and sensitivity to the grieving process of their loved ones.

(f) Demonstrates awareness of the need for self-care and support in response to grief and loss.

(10) Care of clients or residents with developmental disabilities. A nursing assistant demonstrates basic care of clients or residents with developmental disabilities.

(11) Mental health and social service needs. A nursing assistant demonstrates the ability to identify psychosocial needs of clients or residents based upon awareness of the developmental and age specific processes. A nursing assistant:

(a) Addresses individual behavioral needs of the client or resident.

(b) Knows the developmental tasks associated with the developmental and age specific processes.

(c) Allows the client or resident to make personal choices but provides and reinforces behaviors consistent with the client's or resident's dignity.

(d) Is sensitive and supportive and responds to the emotional needs of the clients or residents and their sources of emotional support.

(12) Care of clients or residents with cognitive impairment. A nursing assistant demonstrates basic care of clients or residents with cognitive impairment. A nursing assistant:

(a) Uses techniques for addressing the unique needs and behaviors of individuals with cognitive impairment including Alzheimer's, dementia, delirium, developmental disabilities, mental illnesses, and other conditions.

(b) Communicates with clients or residents with cognitive impairment in a manner appropriate to their needs.

(c) Demonstrates sensitivity to the behavior of clients or residents with cognitive impairment.

(d) Appropriately responds to the behavior of clients or residents with cognitive impairment.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.79.110, 18.88A.030, 18.88A.060, 18.88A.087, 18.130.040, 18.130.175, and 2025 c 5. WSR 26-13-119, s 246-841A-400, filed 6/17/26, effective 7/1/26. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.79.110, 18.79.260, 18.88A.030, 18.88A.060, 18.88A.090, 18.88A.082, 18.88A.087, 43.70.040, 43.70.250, and 43.70.280. WSR 23-20-117, § 246-841A-400, filed 10/3/23, effective 11/3/23.]