



Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc. (COINN) Working Group



## International Neonatal Nursing Competency Framework

Tracey Jones

Tracey Jones, COINN Education Committee Chairperson, on behalf of the COINN Board

Defining the scope of practice and role of a nurse globally is multifaceted, especially given the complex nature of neonatal nursing. UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) recognise the uniqueness of the neonatal nursing and midwifery roles as being instrumental in influencing neonatal outcomes. Training and education are pivotal to achieve this.

It has been highlighted on many global stages that there are too few nurses and midwives taking care of neonates and that there is a huge disparity in training and education. Therefore, a working group to define competencies was developed with representation from countries around the world. It was a priority that the document development could be utilised globally, which required a collaborative approach and contribution. COINN gathered input from many collaborating organisations and practicing nurses across the globe and created COINN Neonatal Nursing Competencies. Information was gleaned from neonatal guidelines, educational standards and governmental directives from many countries to develop the document that would become a foundation for identifying competencies and defining the neonatal nursing role, especially for places where neonatal nursing and nurses' roles are not explicit. These competencies were launched at the COINN International Conference May 2019 in Auckland, New Zealand.

### Core Competencies

Neonatal nursing is a highly specialized field. To meet the complex needs of neonates and their families, there must be uniform qualifications and competencies to support standard knowledge and clinical performance. This document presents a competency framework for the novice through expert neonatal nurse. It is to be used to guide curriculum development, orientation to the specialization, and for performance review.

### Competency Framework (Five Areas)

- I. Clinical Practice
- II. Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice
- III. Leadership and Teamwork

- IV. Infant-Family-Centered Developmental Care
- V. Research

### Values

- Excellence in Quality Neonatal Care, Practice, and Education
- Neonatal nursing as a Global Speciality
- Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care
- Culturally Sensitive Care
- Compassion
- Healthy Work Environment
- Standards of Care, Practice, and Education

### Benner's Model of Skills Acquisition (Benner, 1982)

- Benner Level 1: Novice or Advanced Beginner
- Benner Level 2: Competent
- Benner Level 3: Proficient
- Benner Level 4: Expert

### Competency Framework – Novice Nurse

#### I. Clinical Practice

##### Clinical Practice Standards

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making
- Practices in accordance with professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice
- Fulfils the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing.

##### Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care
- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge
- Defines areas of neonatal deficiencies within their scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies
- Develops and implements a plan of care that is individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines

- Ensures that written documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards
- Demonstrates awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care
- Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care
- Maintains and improves quality in all aspects of neonatal nursing care.

**The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Attending neonatal orientation, training sessions, and educational lectures
- Actively following unit policies and procedures
- Articulating an understanding of neonatal anatomy and physiology to others
- Developing skills in assessment and care of the neonate and family
- Completing professional documentation
- Using initiative to see neonatal learning opportunities
- Beginning to organize one's own clinical work load
- Beginning to recognize variations in clinical parameters
- Developing an understanding of neonatal equipment and participating in the preparation of the equipment's use with a mentor's help
- Developing an understanding of the need for routine diagnostic tests and how to perform tests within the scope of practice and hospital guidelines
- Beginning to understand the need for frequent clinical assessment
- Articulating the rationale for using current evidence to provide care
- Beginning to articulate the principles of cue-based individualized care to meet neonatal needs
- Developing an understanding of accountability for one's own practice
- Participating in medical rounds and discussions regarding neonates in their care
- Consulting with senior neonatal nurses to review the neonatal care when needed
- Beginning to provide information, concise reports, and communication related to the plan of care
- Providing the family with evidence-based care information and support.

## II. Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice

**Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Standards**

- Fulfills the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

**Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies**

- Demonstrates an understanding of professional accountability
- Engages in ethical and lawful practice at all times
- Utilizes institutional policies, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe neonatal/family care
- Communicates effectively with members of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family
- Ensure that evidence-based information is provided in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and is compliant with local and national health and safety regulations
- Upholds excellent practice standards to minimize potential adverse risks to the neonates
- Adheres to infection prevention guidance, risk management requirements, and security policies at the institution on a daily basis
- Acts in the best interest of the neonate and family
- Ensures professional development is a priority for every nurse

- Understands the role professional organizations and professional advocacy
- Begins to engage in the professional body at the institutional level, regionally, nationally, and internationally to advance the neonatal nursing profession.

**The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Employing the regional and national safety/health regulations.
- Utilizing infection prevention techniques and articulating neonatal risk for infection
- Practicing within the scope of practice regarding medication preparation and administration
- Identifying the steps needed to intervene in emergency situations
- Following unit-based protocols and policies
- Developing a plan for increasing and reviewing clinical skills in partnership with the supervisors or mentors
- Seeking opportunities for continuing education and records Clinical Professional Development (CPD) hours or continuing education.

## III. Leadership and Teamwork

**Leadership and Teamwork Standards**

- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a support environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources

**Leadership and Teamwork Competencies**

- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Actively strives to attain skills and knowledge in neonatal care
- Provides an ongoing portfolio of continuing education
- Takes responsibility for developing themselves and others
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities
- Manages resources effectively
- Participates in clinical governance.

**The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Collaborating with a mentor to provide a rapid response when a colleague requires assistance
- Observing how others develop flexible and creative approaches in challenging situations
- Developing an awareness of the financial resources needed in the unit
- Using resources appropriately.

## IV. Infant – Family Centered Developmental Care

**Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Standards**

- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

**Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies**

- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families
- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates

- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team
- Communicates with other departments and health care workers that need to be involved in care of the neonate.

**The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Practicing infant- family-centered developmental care
- Giving accurate and timely communication to the family guided by a mentor
- Observing strategies that encourage and maintain the participation of the family in the planning, delivering, and evaluating neonatal care
- Observing mentor's use of systems' knowledge and resources to negotiate optimal continuum of care for the neonate and family
- Recognizing opportunities for bonding and attachment for the family and neonate
- Recognizing the need for continuity of care to build a professional relationship with family and where possible adhere to the continuity of care
- Documenting and recording the care input from the family
- Developing a high level of sensitivity to identify individuality and the cultural needs of the family
- Articulating an awareness of stress placed on families and providing appropriate support
- Following educational programs developed to meet the educational needs of the family
- Refraining from disclosure of information to any interested parties without prior family consent
- Applying knowledge of how to support families receiving distressing information.

## V. Research

### Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice

### Research Competencies

- Establishes a culture that incorporates evidence and research, to support best practices
- Demonstrates the ability to offer clinical practice guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills
- Collaborates in unit-based research, quality of care projects, and audits.

**The novice neonatal nurse demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Adopting a spirit of inquiry toward clinical practice
- Utilizing evidence-based guidelines
- Articulating an awareness of why research must be conducted in an ethical manner
- Developing the ability to challenge or question practices based on research
- Developing the ability to participate in an interdisciplinary research team
- Participating in research where appropriate
- Reading peer review journals.

---

## Competency Framework – Competent Nurse

### I. Clinical Practice

#### Clinical Practice Standards

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making
- Practices in accordance with the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice
- Fulfills the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing

#### Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care
- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge
- Defines areas of neonatal deficiencies within their own scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies
- Develops and implements a plan of care that is individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines
- Ensures that written documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards
- Demonstrates an awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care
- Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care.

**The competent neonatal nurse, having achieved all the novice nurses' skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Explaining unit policies, procedures, and guidelines
- Understanding of and applying accountability for individual practice
- Reviewing and evaluating variations in clinical vital signs
- Applying neonatal cues/observations to individualize direct nursing activities
- Exhibiting strong time-management skills and can assist others with their workload
- Articulating the importance of cue-based individualized care and applies this to neonatal care
- Providing informative, concise reports and communication related to the plan of care.
- Reviewing one's own practice to improve skills, knowledge, and attitudes about quality care
- Understanding the importance of working within an interdisciplinary health care team.

### II. Professional, Ethical and Legal Practice

#### Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice Standards

- Fulfills the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

#### Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies

- Engages in ethical and lawful practice at all times
- Utilizes institutional policy, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe care for the neonate and family
- Works and communicates effectively with every member of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family as a team member by ensuring that evidence-based information is provide in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and be compliant with local and national health and safety regulation, and upholds excellent practice to minimize potential adverse risk to the neonates
- Adheres to infection prevention techniques, risk management requirements, and security policies at the institution on a daily basis
- Acts in the best interests of the neonate and family
- Participates in professional neonatal nursing organizations and advocates for specialization.

**The competent neonatal nurse, having achieved all the novice nurses' skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Collaborating with others to follow hospital's safety and security protocols guide by risk management
- Exhibiting competence in relation to the equipment utilized on the neonatal unit
- Articulating the role of the nurse in emergency situations and possesses the clinical ability to support other team members in such situations

- Utilizing active listening skills, empathy, and interpersonal relationship skills facilitating trust in family and staff
- Articulating and utilizing conflict resolution skills
- Adhering to performance reviews as stipulated by the employer and maintaining a record of Clinical Professional Development (CPD) hours
- Articulating an understanding of the use of evidence-based hospital policies and guidelines and support of other members of the team to access and understand them
- Complying with the profession's Code of Ethics.

### III. Leadership and Teamwork

#### Leadership and Teamwork Standards

- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a supportive environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources

#### Leadership and Teamwork Competencies

- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Actively strives to attain skills and knowledge in neonatal care
- Provides an ongoing portfolio of continue education
- Takes responsibility for developing themselves and others
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities
- Manages resources effectively
- Participates in clinical governance.

#### The competent neonatal nurse, having achieved all the novice nurses' skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Seeking advice from a proficient or expert nurse when the needs of the neonate/family require expertise beyond one's own ability and qualifications
- Participating in the developmental and delivery of educational programs according to the level of knowledge
- Fostering an environment of learning for self and others
- Actively taking part in the organization and delivery of care when neonatal transfers are required.

### IV. Infant – Family Centered Developmental Care

#### Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Standards

- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

#### Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies

- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families
- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates
- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team.

#### The competent neonatal nurse, having achieved all the novice nurses' skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Understanding and applying supportive developmental care interventions
- Providing strategies that encourage and maintain the participation of the family

- Supporting all family integrated care strategies that support bonding and attachment for the neonate and family
- Actively participating in and advocating for family education
- Communicating information to the family which may cause distress in a sensitive manner
- Accurately documenting and understanding the significance of neonatal data-reporting to senior team members as required
- Applying confidentiality at all times through clinical discussions and the storage of neonatal/family information.

### V. Research

#### Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice

#### Research Competencies

- Establishes a practice that incorporates evidence, research, and tools to follow-up on best practices
- Demonstrates the ability to offer clinical practice guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills
- Collaborates in unit-based research, quality of care projects, and audits.

#### The competent neonatal nurse, having achieved all the novice nurses' skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Encouraging questioning and reviewing their clinical practice in themselves and others
- Actively participating in quality improvement activities in practice
- Employing auditing skills
- Providing evidence of competency in searching and critically appraising literature
- Exhibiting the ability to critically evaluate research
- Seeking opportunities to participate in research.

---

### Competency Framework – Proficient Nurse

#### I. Clinical Practice

##### Clinical Practice Standards

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making
- Practices in accordance with the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice
- Fulfills the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing

##### Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care
- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge
- Define areas of neonatal deficiencies within their own scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies
- Develops and implements a plan of care that is individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines
- Ensures that documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards
- Demonstrates an awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care
- Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care.

#### The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Ensuring the management and implementation of quality evidence-based care for all categories of neonates admitted to the neonatal unit

- Practicing sound time management through one's own workload management and the supervision of other team members
- Using evidence to support minimum staffing ratios for a safe environment
- Challenging practice decisions and treatment when appropriate using evidence and research
- Providing informative, concise reports and communication related to the plan of care
- Actively working to ensure the availability of equipment and staff needed for safe unit functioning
- Identifying the need for and implementing variations from planned care and reviewing ongoing care.

## II. Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice

### Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Standards

- Fulfills the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

### Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies

- Engages in ethical and lawful practice at all times
- Utilizes institutional policy, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe care for the neonate and family
- Works and communicates effectively with every member of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family as a team member by ensuring that evidence-based information is provide in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and be compliant with local and national health and safety regulation, and upholds excellent practice to minimize potential adverse risk to the neonates
- Adheres to infection prevention techniques, risk management requirements, and security policies at the institution on a daily basis
- Acts in the best interests of the neonate and family
- Participates in professional neonatal nursing organizations and advocates for specialization.

### The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Mentoring others to follow regional and national safety/health regulations
- Providing leadership in relationship to ensuring infection prevention techniques are followed and promoted
- Engaging closely with the hospital risk management committees for safety and security
- Leading in an emergency situation
- Managing the staffing resources related to workload to ensure safety according to the national and international staffing standards
- Actively participating in performance reviews for competent and novice nurses
- Seeking multiple ways to advance clinical skills
- Acting as a change agent in practice to improve neonatal/family outcomes and align with evidence
- Addressing unprofessional practice as it relates to confidentiality and privacy legislation
- Addressing inconsistencies between legal principles and local policies and practice
- Leading others in a systematic approach to ethical decision-making.

## III. Leadership and Teamwork

### Leadership and Teamwork Standards

- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a supportive environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources

### Leadership and Teamwork Competencies

- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities
- Manages resources effectively
- Participates in clinical governance.

### The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Contributing to quality improvement and change management
- Leading and accepting responsibility for the orientation of new colleagues as part of the professional role
- Encouraging a culture of learning and providing opportunities for others to expand skills in the clinical area
- Supporting and promoting an environment that facilitates cultural sensitivity
- Encouraging a positive work environment and recognizing when work levels exceed safe limits
- Coordinating team support in crisis and challenging clinical situations
- Providing professional leadership, facilitating change, and participating in neonatal unit management
- Developing action plans utilized to address areas that require improvement
- Serving on a hospital committee or board
- Networking and maintaining relationships with other professionals outside the neonatal unit
- Proposing policy and service changes
- Arranging or requesting debriefing sessions as appropriate
- Facilitating and planning conflict resolution preparation and training for team members.

## IV. Infant – Family Centered Developmental Care

### Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Standards

- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

### Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies

- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families
- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates
- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team
- Communicates with other departments and health care workers that need to be involved in care of the neonate.

### The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Facilitating the education of team members about brain physiology and the underlying principles of developmental care
- Communicating proficiently with collaborating teams, families, and others about neonatal status changes
- Advocating for neonate and family to influence decision-making and the plan of care.

## V. Research

### Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice

### Research Competencies

- Establishes a practice that incorporates evidence, research, and tools to follow-up on best practices
- Practice will be guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills.

**The proficient neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one and two skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Demonstrating the ability to examine and evaluate evidence-based practice and research findings to support practice and implement change
- Identifying clinical questions and developing research strategies to address these questions
- Making recommendations that have an impact on neonatal care
- Fostering a culture of inquiry
- Leading evidence-based practice change
- Contributing to the development and use of evidence-based guidelines
- Teaching how to challenge or question practice as a basis for research
- Leading an interdisciplinary research team
- Teaching how to validate current practice through research
- Encouraging health care teams to participate in research
- Publishing or presenting original work, reviews, and commentaries.

---

## Competency Framework – Expert Nurse

### I. Clinical Practice

#### Clinical Practice Standards

- Uses theory, research evidence, observations, and experience in clinical decision-making
- Practices in accordance with the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities affecting neonatal practice
- Fulfills the conduct requirement for the profession of nursing

#### Clinical Practice Competencies

- Practices within agreed parameters, apply knowledge, clinical judgment, and a range of skills to provide safe and effective neonatal care
- Maintains ongoing neonatal knowledge
- Define areas of neonatal deficiencies within their own scope of practice and find ways to alleviate those deficiencies
- Develops and implements a plan of care that is individualized to the neonate/family according to unit policies and guidelines
- Ensures that documentation is clear and follows local guidelines and standards
- Demonstrates an awareness of current practices available in neonatal nursing care
- Provides evidence-based neonatal nursing care
- Maintains and improves quality in all aspects of neonatal nursing care.

**The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Developing and maintaining competencies to perform an independent role

- Utilizing technology for measurement, monitoring, and evaluating treatment outcomes
- Critically analyzing plans of care to ensure use of evidence-based interventions and best practices
- Monitor care for quality and safety issues
- Accepting responsibility for staff practice reviews
- Developing ongoing policies and strategies to improve neonatal nursing care
- Advocating for the neonate and family locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally
- Developing and implementing documents that ensure informative, concise reports and communication related to neonatal nursing care
- Ensuring continued availability of resources
- Analyzing and revising unit guidelines and policies as needed.

### II. Professional, Ethics and Legal Practice

#### Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Standards

- Fulfills the conduct requirement of the neonatal nursing profession
- Uses communication effectively and maintains confidentiality
- Enhances professional development of self and others

#### Professional, Ethics, and Legal Practice Competencies

- Engages in ethical and lawful practice at all times
- Utilizes institutional policy, procedures, guidelines, and protocols to provide safe care for the neonate and family
- Works and communicates effectively with every member of the interdisciplinary neonatal team including the family as a team member by ensuring that evidence-based information is provided in a timely manner
- Maintains a safe and secure environment
- Demonstrates knowledge of and be compliant with local and national health and safety regulation, and upholds excellent practice to minimize potential adverse risk to the neonates
- Adheres to infection prevention techniques, risk management requirements, and security policies at the institution on a daily basis
- Acts in the best interests of the neonate and family
- Participates in professional neonatal nursing organizations and advocates for specialization.

**The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:**

- Taking responsibility for the neonatal environment including compliance with unit, local, and government requirements
- Ensuring guidelines and policies are regularly reviewed and updated according to new evidence, disseminating to the neonatal team to guide best practices
- Participating in scholarly activity through links with relevant professional journals and evidence of publications and presentations
- Maintaining membership and actively participates in professional nursing or other professional organizations
- Leading risk management (quality and safety) activities and incident monitoring
- Developing a culture of safety governance by complying with risk management (quality and safety) strategies
- Upholding best practices in health, safety, and security
- Managing and facilitating education/training and competency of less experienced team members
- Supporting and developing policies related to inappropriate interventions and unprofessional practice
- Contributing to the interdisciplinary team by acting as a consultant for other health care teams providing neonatal care
- Supporting or developing a conflict resolution policy

- Organizing the process of clinical handovers and documentation policies
- Facilitating resolution of ethical dilemmas by mediation or conflict resolution
- Advocating for the development of or adherence to a code of ethics for neonatal nurses within the country context.

### III. Leadership and Teamwork

#### Leadership and Teamwork Standards

- Engages in collaborative practice to achieve planned outcomes
- Provides a supportive environment for colleagues
- Manages the use of staff and physical resources
- Engages in ethical justifiable nursing practice

#### Leadership and Teamwork Competencies

- Demonstrates leadership skills within nursing practice
- Takes responsibility for developing themselves and others
- Contributes to the overall unit operation where employed
- Actively contributes to neonatal working groups
- Contributes to the orientation of new staff
- Collaborates with outside agencies and community health facilities
- Participates in clinical governance.

#### The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Ensuring that neonatal care includes interdisciplinary staff and the family
- Utilizing knowledge of public policy to influence programs impacting neonatal nursing
- Establishing new strategies and policies for neonatal care at local and national levels
- Seeking advice when the needs of the neonate/family requires expertise beyond one's own ability and qualifications
- Accepting responsibility for policy and guideline review and update
- Evaluating models of care delivery to accommodate nursing and neonatal acuity levels.

### IV. Infant – Family Centered Developmental Care

#### Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Standards

- Promotes the participation of families in the neonatal developmental care
- Advocates and protects the rights of the neonate and family
- Develops therapeutic and caring relationships

#### Infant- Family-Centered Developmental Care Competencies

- Utilizes their interpersonal relationships and communication skills to care for neonates and families
- Incorporates the concepts of infant- family-centered developmental care in the daily planning and implementation of neonatal care
- Provides all infant- family-centered developmental care per unit policy and practice
- Act as the neonate's/family's advocate
- Ensures integration of families in the care of the neonates
- Fosters an environment of open communication between the family and care team
- Communicates with other departments and health care workers that need to be involved in care of the neonate.

#### The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Writing developmental care protocols, standards, and educational programs
- Strategically influencing policies and making effective family change through conferences, presentations, publication, or health policies
- Identifying neonate/family care barriers, using communication and policies to overcome them
- Acting as a resource for the health care team about systems' knowledge and resources to negotiate for optimal continuum of care for the neonate and family
- Developing policies and guidelines that meet the needs of the neonate and family through planned and opportunistic activities related to all areas of practice
- Negotiating work distribution within hospital systems to ensure continuity of care for the neonate and family
- Encouraging an environment with a high level of sensitivity to individual and cultural needs of the family.

### V. Research

#### Research Standards

- Understands the importance of research in neonatal practice

#### Research Competencies

- Establishes a practice that incorporates evidence, research, and tools to follow-up on best practices
- Practice will be guided by critical thinking coupled with established problem-solving skills
- Collaborates in unit-based research, quality of care, and audits.

#### The expert neonatal nurse, having achieved all the levels one, two, and three skills demonstrates knowledge and skill competency by:

- Identifying gaps between practice and research then producing action plans to address these gaps
- Developing a research solution for complex professional, clinical, or managerial problems
- Leading research projects
- Revising protocols, procedures, and guidelines utilizing evidence-based practice
- Acting as a role model for developing evidence-based guidelines
- Utilizing research findings-evidence to guide and inform practice changes and the development or review of practice frameworks
- Disseminating evidence-based guidelines
- Disseminating research findings to colleagues-internal and external
- Teaching how to validate current practice with research.

### Acknowledgements

For the full list of acknowledgments as well as the supporting references, please refer to the COINN News pages website: <https://coinnurses.org/2019/05/29/coinn-news-pages/>.

Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc. Working Group (COINN-WG) specialist nursing panel of the Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc. (COINN). ©2019