

UK Career Framework for Pain Nurses

Level Five

CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the RCN Pain and Palliative Care Forum for its support in developing this document and to the project team: Martin Galligan (Project Lead), Julie Gregory (Forum Chair), Karin Cannons, Sue Jenkins, Zoe Thomson, Siobhan Jones and Niamh Molloy.

Thanks also to those that took part in the consultation and review of the career framework – without their comments and insights we would not have been able to complete this project: Felicia Cox, Dr Donna Brown, Ofrah Muflahi, Adebukola Lawal, Laserina O'Connor, Emma Davies, Christine Waters, Geinor Bean and Dr Helen Makins.

We would also like to say a special thank you to Erica Gleeson and the New Zealand Pain Society, upon which the original Pain Knowledge and Skills framework was based. Thank you for your continued support in the design and development of this framework.

This document has been designed in collaboration with our members to ensure it meets most accessibility standards. However, if this does not fit your requirements, please contact corporate.communications@rcn.org.uk

RCN Legal Disclaimer

This publication contains information, advice and guidance to help members of the RCN. It is intended for use within the UK but readers are advised that practices may vary in each country and outside the UK. The information in this booklet has been compiled from professional sources, but its accuracy is not guaranteed. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the RCN provides accurate and expert information and guidance, it is impossible to predict all the circumstances in which it may be used. Accordingly, the RCN shall not be liable to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by what is contained in or left out of this website information and guidance.

Published by the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0RN

© 2021 Royal College of Nursing. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the Publishers. This publication may not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by ways of trade in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published, without the prior consent of the Publishers.

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Level Five..... | 4 |
| Domain One: Recognition of pain..... | 5 |
| Domain Two: Assessment of pain | 6 |
| Domain Three: Treatment – physical strategies to manage pain..... | 7 |
| Domain Three: Treatment – self management strategies | 8 |
| Domain Three: Treatment – use of pharmacological strategies | 9 |

Level Five

This document has been designed to be used **in combination with** the appropriate standards / competency assessment framework, for example, for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales.

This document should be used as evidence for your own practice development and can be used as part of a personal development plan or as part of professional body revalidation.

Those working at level 5 will have obtained the knowledge and skills as outlined in the previous levels and this is a natural progression in their development.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Example role title: | Newly qualified/competent health care professional i.e. staff nurse |
| Qualification: | Diploma or degree and professional registration such as Nursing and Midwifery Council. |
| Role descriptor: | Working in an acute or community setting, providing care to people experiencing pain. This professional is part of a multidisciplinary team. They have factual and theoretical knowledge in pain management to assess and use decision-making skills to deliver care. They contribute to service and personal development. They may delegate, supervise staff or provide training to junior members of their team or unregistered staff. |

Domain One: Recognition of pain

This aspect of care examines definitions of pain, its anatomy and physiology, psychological, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of pain.

| Knowledge | Skills |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describes the role of the nervous system in the transduction, transmission, perception and modulation of pain. 2. Describes with examples fundamental knowledge of acute, chronic and cancer pain and of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nociceptive pain • neuropathic pain • visceral pain • somatic pain. 3. Identifies the potential relationship of the following to the person's experience of pain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anxiety • depression • fear/avoidance • spirituality • quality of life • cultural beliefs/experiences. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Identifies, with examples relevant to clinical practice, the potential adverse effects of acute, persistent and cancer-related pain from the perspective of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cardiovascular and respiratory systems • gastrointestinal system • musculoskeletal system • endocrine system • genitourinary system • neurological and central nervous system • development of chronic (persistent) pain. 5. Assesses the patient and family's knowledge/understanding of their pain. 6. Modifies approach to patients according to the characteristics of their pain when performing observations and assessments. 7. Recognises that medicines may impact mental capacity. 8. Describes specific investigations which may aid diagnosis of pain. 9. Accurately documents and communicates data/findings with relevant health personnel. 10. Escalates issues in relation to pain anatomy and physiology with nursing staff, clinicians and managers. |

Domain Two: Assessment of pain

This aspect of care outlines how pain can be assessed, measured and communicated.

| Knowledge | Skills |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discusses the rationale for assessment of pain as a multi-dimensional experience and the barriers that can occur. 2. Uses valid and reliable tools for assessing and measuring pain. 3. Demonstrates the ability to undertake a fundamental pain history. 4. Performs a focused physical assessment to identify the location and affected areas of pain. 5. Assesses the impact of interventions on pain and function. 6. Identifies appropriate assessment strategies for those with cognitive impairment/communication difficulties. 7. Identifies social populations with potential challenges to assessment and demonstrates fundamental knowledge of appropriate assessment frameworks/tools where relevant to practice. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Discusses clinical rationale for investigations in the assessment of the person with pain. 9. Accurately documents and communicates data/findings with relevant health personnel. 10. Negotiates and implements a culturally responsive individualised management plan that incorporates a biopsychosocial approach to pain management. 11. Documents timeline for reassessment of pain and evaluation of pain management interventions. 12. Accurately evaluates effectiveness of the pain management plan in partnership with the person in pain and communicates amendments required to appropriate health personnel. 13. Escalates issues in relation to pain assessment with nursing staff, clinicians and managers. 14. Within the health history, identifies situations such as complex pain problem/ suicidal ideation/memory problems that require a more comprehensive assessment and seeks advice or refers as appropriate. |

Domain Three: Treatment – physical strategies to manage pain

This aspect of care outlines the importance of physical strategies to improve and maintain function in acute and persistent pain.

| Knowledge | Skills |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates a good knowledge of examples of physical strategies with patients to empower them to utilise these appropriately to improve and maintain function within activities of daily living. 2. Actively monitors the effectiveness of physical methods and strategies and integrates different aspects of practice to improve outcomes for patients. In the context of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range of movement, muscle strength and stamina • cardiovascular activity • pain relief • weight and appetite management • activities of daily living • sleep • mood. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Accesses and utilises evidence-based guidelines to discuss the purpose and recognise the benefits and limitations of physical strategies and is able to discuss with patient. 4. Exhibits ways of engaging and empowering patients in the utilisation of physical strategies. 5. Has detailed knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of health care professionals within the team. 6. Utilises policies that guide practice as a resource to guide own practice and advise patients. 7. Knows when to request assistance from seniors. 8. Raises issues in relation to quality and service development with line manager. |

Domain Three: Treatment – self management strategies

This domain describes how the nursing team contribute to enabling patients to engage with self-management strategies for managing acute and chronic pain.

| Knowledge | Skills |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates an understanding of how chronic pain differs from acute pain and can discuss the rationale for the role self-management plays in helping improve the physical and psychological impact of pain. 2. Identifies potential barriers to effective self-management. 3. Assesses the impact of the interventions on the physical and psychological wellbeing of the patient. 4. Identifies the different ways in which acute and chronic pain can be managed and the role of self-management. 5. Displays confidence in guiding the patient to self-management strategies by promoting movement, reducing anxiety, improving comfort, facilitating sleep, distraction and involving the family. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Applies knowledge to facilitate patient in adopting self-management strategies to optimise their pain management. 7. Assesses patient’s level of ability to apply these strategies and facilitates knowledge and understanding of pain and related pain behavior, beliefs, goals and expectations, highlighting how these may contribute to their pain. 8. Actively takes part and contributes to promoting self-management strategies as part of the interdisciplinary team. 9. Discusses clinical rationale for the self-management strategies chosen for the patient and how they have been applied. 10. Accurately documents and communicates with the relevant personnel any outcomes related to chosen strategies. 11. Recognises issues and applies agreed protocols to escalate problems in relation to self-management strategies that may occur as a result of their intervention(s). 12. Within the health history, identifies situations such as complex pain history, suicidal ideation or cognitive dysfunction, which may require a more comprehensive assessment and management. |

Domain Three: Treatment – use of pharmacological strategies

This domain explores how nurses contribute to the safe, timely and appropriate use of pharmacological therapies.

| Knowledge | Skills |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Takes histories to include drug ranges, efficacy, side-effects of medication and intolerance to analgesia. 2. Evaluates and articulates a clear rationale for the choice of pharmacological strategies. 3. Is aware of any potential signs and symptoms/contra-indication of pharmacological strategies. 4. Takes responsibility for day-to-day management of routine care using pharmacological strategies. 5. Knows the therapeutic uses of the medication to be administered, its normal dosage, side-effects, precautions and contra-indication. 6. Considers the dosage, weight and, where appropriate, method of administration, route and timing. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Develops the skills to give simple and clear instructions for patients in their care and at discharge. 8. Recognises that medicines may impact mental capacity. 9. Assists in the development of protocols and guidelines for treatment of side effects and complications associated with pharmacological strategies. 10. Works closely with pharmacy and other relevant health care professionals. 11. Aware of the roles of the regulatory agencies involved in medicine use, monitoring and licensing (for example the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence, the Committee on Safety of Medicines, and local formulary committees). 12. Recognises and uses protocols to appropriately escalate potential problems in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clinical signs and symptoms of adverse effects • knows when to request help from senior colleagues. 13. Supports junior colleagues when they report incidents or concerns. 14. Applies knowledge in discussing medication with patient to optimise their pain management. |

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes
excellence in practice and shapes health policies

RCN Direct
www.rcn.org.uk/direct
0345 772 6100

Published by the Royal College of Nursing
20 Cavendish Square
London
W1G 0RN

020 7409 3333
www.rcn.org.uk

August 2021
Review date: August 2024
Publication code: 009 754

