

**Melissa C. John**

## **Introduction**

“Nursing encompasses an art, a humanistic orientation, a feeling for the value of the individual, and an intuitive sense of ethics, and of the appropriateness of action taken.”

- Myrtle Aydelotte

Nursing has become more than just a career for me; it has become my passion in life. Through my clinical experience, my vision of what nursing means to me and the impact that this field has on the individuals that we care for has become more evident. As a part of this course, my goal was to complete objectives that would demonstrate personal and professional growth through the use of my clinical experience at Visiting Nurse Services of New York. This paper is a testament of my interactions with my patients and the organization as a whole. The completed objectives is a self-reflection of my experiences as a community health nurse student and the knowledge that I've gain as a result of being part of that experience.

### **Objective 1: Demonstrates individual professionalism through personal behaviors and appearance.**

#### ***Maintains client confidentiality***

In order to maintain client confidentiality, I always safeguard my computer and keep it locked at all times. I also refrained from discussing any patient information in inappropriate areas or with unauthorized personnel.

#### ***Assumes responsibility for own learning***

During my clinical experience, I made sure to ask questions and to get further clarification when needed. I also used pamphlets and literature available in the field office to help facilitate learning, as well as the computerized CE modules available in the office.

#### ***Prepares for clinical learning***

In order to prepare for clinical learning, I to my clinical site on time, get my assignment and contact my patient to set up a visit and then review the patient records and making sure to check pertinent information such as last visit narrative note/COC notes, referral, plan of care, etc.

#### ***Completes assignments within designated time frame***

The assignments that we have been given for this clinical experience were experience blogs and visit documentation within the patient's records. These assignments were completed within the designated time frame.

#### ***Seeks guidance appropriately***

This clinical experience has been very informative and there are always new things to learn and address. I have inquired about procedures in regards to visits and documentation and readily seek out guidance and support when needed.

#### ***Participates actively in clinical conferences***

During clinical pre-conference and post conference, I actively participated by asking questions and inquired about information when further clarification is needed. As individual groups, we also discuss what issues we plan to address prior to the visits and what we accomplish after returning from the visit.

***Attends clinical punctually and in accordance with school Policy***

In order to be in accordance with school policy, I made sure to arrive on time and I have not missed a clinical day.

***Dresses professionally***

As per school and agency policy, I come to every clinical dress appropriately with either black slacks or a black skirt and a white shirt with collar, neat and well groomed.

**Objective 2: Employ analytical reasoning and critical thinking skills when providing care to individuals and families in the community setting.**

***Uses client interview, nursing and medical records, staff nurses and other health professionals to collect client information***

During my clinical experience, I use the patient as a source of information, HHA, patient records (VN notes, COC notes, and physician notes, PT notes) in order to collect information. Any new information or changes to information is documented in the patient's records.

***Assesses the impact of developmental, emotional, cultural, religious and spiritual influences on the client's health status***

While in the home, I address any possible developmental and emotional influences such as asking the patient questions about his/her health and how he/she feels about their condition. I also assess how the patient manages his/her condition and address any possible deficit areas.

***Collects significant data relevant to client's self-care needs***

During every visit, I assess the appearance and mobility of the patient and document my findings. Another area to assess is HHA supervision in the home if present and further need for this service. The patient's neurological functioning is assessed as well as this may greatly affect that patient's ability for self-care.

***Completes a physical assessment of selected clients***

During my visits, an assessment of vital signs, pain, bladder, and bowel, gastrointestinal, metabolic, cardiopulmonary and neurological systems is done on every patient. Some patients may require more assessment in regards to wound care and skin care.

***Prioritizes care based on analysis of data***

The visits usually were ½ hour to 40 minutes. After arriving and meeting with the patient, I begin my assessment of the home while walking to the bathroom to wash my hands and preparing to assess the patient. Next I move to assessing neurological function, take vitals and other measurements that are needed, record those findings, assess pain, nutrition status, bladder and bowel habits, and patient teaching and address any concerns or questions that the patient may have. Ask about any upcoming doctor's appointments, HHA supervision if applicable.

***Applies priority-setting in planning nursing interventions***

Prior to going out to the patient's home, the plan of care is reviewed and I established the nursing interventions by level of priority. The plan of care has been established, but sometimes other concerns come up during the visits, therefore a nursing intervention may be warranted and now that issue becomes a priority.

***Implements safe, appropriate nursing interventions in a timely manner***

Once I receive my patient information for my visit for the day, I immediately contact the patient to set up a visit. After reviewing the patient records and prioritizing my tasks for that patient, then I go out into the field to make my visit. My interventions are based on the patient's individual plan of care. The manner in which, these interventions may differ depends on the patient's ability to effectively understand and complete task for self-management.

***Administers medications and treatments safely***

During this clinical experience, I did not administer any type of medications or treatments.

***Evaluates the outcomes of nursing care***

In order to evaluate the outcomes of nursing, I utilize the plan of care and patient teaching to establish how the outcomes were met. For example, a congestive heart failure patient plan of care includes diet modification, medication management and activity intolerance. I evaluate if the patient is following a low salt diet by patient diet log or patient's knowledge about the type of foods that he/she may eat. The patient is further evaluated by discussing the side effects of her medication and what safety measures to take such as fall risk.

***Is reflective about practice. Modify client care as indicated by evaluation of client outcomes.***

During my visits, I tried to obtain if the patient has been compliant with their plan of care by evaluating the patient knowledge about their diagnosis, medication, diet, etc. When I'm doing patient teaching, I'm evaluating whether the patient is comprehending and able to carry out instructions and demonstrate any skills if taught. If teaching has been unsuccessful, I'll try a different approach, maybe pictures or timelines. It could be anything that may make it easier to remember any aspect of managing their disease.

***Utilizes principles of personal safety when working in the community setting***

At all times, I'm always vigilant of my surroundings and belongings. We also travel with one of our classmates on patient's visits. I also made sure not to take any valuables or draw attention to myself during visits.

**Objective 3: Effectively communicate with diverse groups and disciplines using a variety of strategies regarding the health needs of individuals and families in the community setting.**

***Utilizes therapeutic communication skills with individuals and families in the community setting***

Some of the communication techniques used in my clinical experience include, open-ended questions, reflective statements, clarification and most all being respectful and courteous.

***Utilizes appropriate channels of communication***

During my clinical experience I used different channels of communications such as face to face discussion, phone calls, documentation in patient's record, follow up notes.

***Communicates clearly and effectively with instructor, peers and the health care team***

I made sure to communicate all information in a concise manner, making sure all pertinent information was given in order to better assess the situation and determine the next step. Also I documented all information into the patient's records.

***Communicates significant data to instructor and the health care team***

The clinical instructor and coordinator of care is notified of issues/concerns and need to know information such as issues with taking medication/obtaining information, upcoming physician's appointments, and unavailability of the patient to make a visit. I also have updated the regular visiting nurse for a particular patient on my visit and any possible recommendations and follow up that needs to be address with that patient.

***Adapts communication skills to the developmental needs of the client***

During my visits, I made sure that the information being communicated to the patient is short, concise and in simple terms for better understanding. Also the use examples such as, pictures from the literature to help the patient further understand information of their condition is helpful.

***Reports and documents assessments and nursing interventions accurately***

Each of my visits is documented in areas such as, the narrative note, clinical findings, including vital signs, other measurements, pain assessment, cardiopulmonary, metabolic/nutrition, genitourinary, gastroenterology.

**Objective 4: Establish environment conducive to learning and use a plan for learners based on evidence-based practice.**

***Develops and implements teaching plan for an adult and/or family in the community setting***

The plan of care established for each patient serves as guide. I followed the established teaching plan based on the plan of care and patient's needs by providing discussion, providing handouts/literature and getting feedback on what the patient has learned. For example, the important considerations for nutrition, weighing, activity tolerance, medication management and oxygen therapy for a patient that has COPD and Congestive Heart Failure.

***Establish environment conducive to learning***

I create a positive environment by showing respect and courtesy to the patient. I also assess the patient's motivation and readiness to learn. It also to keep the patient involved in every aspect of their care by asking about the patient's concerns or questions they he/she may have.

***Evaluates client/family learning outcomes***

Through the plan of care I focused on learning objectives for the patient, after patient teaching I'm able to evaluate the patient's outcomes. For example diet management, I reinforce teaching that has been already learned and that ask the patient how she manages her diet and then she is able to tell me the things that she does, such as reading labels, not using salt or eating more fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Objective 5: Utilize informational technology when managing individual and families in the community.**

*Utilize principles of nursing informatics in the clinical area*

Proper documentation is done in the appropriate areas, client records are kept under password locked and access pertinent information for assigned patient. It allows me to save and data transfer documentation.

*Maintain strict confidentiality with client records*

My tablet with my patient's information was always locked and my password was kept confidential. My tablet was never left unattended. Patient's information was only discussed with the appropriate individuals in a secure environment, such as in the coordinator of care office or in our clinical cubicle.

**Objective 6: Demonstrate a commitment to professional development**

*Uses appropriate current literature in planning care for clients in the community setting*

After reviewing my case and going through the plan of care, I determined the patient's primary diagnose and what factors have to be address and turn to literature, such as congestive heart failure. This literature serve as guide for patient to understand his condition and how to maintain positive health outcomes, but also serves as a resource for me to brush up disease management for this condition.

*Assumes responsibility for lifelong learning*

I have engaged in ongoing learning through literature and a home care course taken this semester at Kingsborough Community College, which emphasis the role and different components of visiting home care nurses.

*Engages in self-evaluation*

During and after ever my clinical experience, I evaluate me performance and brain storm on new strategies with each case that would suit the needs of my patients. I strive for improvement each time and analyze each performance throughout the clinical experience

*Is committed to adjusting to the challenges of independent practice in community health nursing*

Although the hospital setting is very different form the community health setting, I made every attempt to adapt to the new environment of community health and do the best to uphold the vision and mission of VNSNY. This experience gave me a better view and understanding of what community health nursing is about.

**Objective 7: Incorporate professional nursing standards and accountability into practice**

*Utilizes American Nurses Association Standards in clinical practice*

I completed tasks that are within my scope of practice such as assessment, and implementing the POC. I also carried out skills such as taking vitals, checking medication and medication teaching such as actions and side effects, providing teaching and disease management on diagnosis such as CHF, CAD, and Diabetes,

***Complies with agency standards of practice***

During my experience, I completed the task assigned and upheld the standard of practice by identifying the plan of care and completed task such as managing clinical status, HHA supervision, patient teaching and medication management.

***Is accountable for actions in the clinical area***

My actions within the clinical site represented one of maturity, courteous and respect to all. I'm accountable for my actions and uphold myself in a professional manner at all times.

***Is aware of the assigned agency's mission***

The mission of VNSNY is to provide high quality, cost-effective, charitable and compassionate care while continuing to be leaders and innovators within the community that helps to shape policies that will better the communities in which they serve as well as the healthcare system.

**Objective 8: Collaborate with clients, significant support persons and members of the health care team**

***Collaborates effectively with health care team to address client problems***

As part of the healthcare team, it is very important to collaborate with the appropriate healthcare providers. I've contacted the assigned physician and coordinator of care to discuss concerns about the patient, such as the patient not taking his medication or clarification with new prescriptions.

***Coordinates client-care based on client needs and therapeutic interventions***

During this experience the care that was provided was based on the plan of care that was individual designed to address that particular patient's needs. When it came to patient teaching on diet management, I was able to assess and determine which type of learning and domains that should be focused on in order to provide interventions that are better suited for the patient's needs. For example, some patients need to be told, shown and then show return demonstration to better grasp a concept.

***Identifies health care resources for client/families***

Although I wasn't able to identify specific health care resources for the client/families, I recommended that my patients look for posters in their local pharmacies when there are health fairs that then can participate in.

***Guide clients/families to make appropriate lifestyle and treatment choices***

During my clinical experience, I provided teaching on better lifestyle choices such as nutrition, smoking cessation, exercise habits and medication management. During this time, I also use motivational interviewing in order to empower the patients to want to make lifestyle changes on their own.

**Objective 9: Recognize the impact of economic, political, social and demographic forces that affect the delivery of health care services**

***Recognize gaps in care system***

Based upon my experience at my clinical site, gaps in the care system exist with the eligibility of services provided and the impact of health insurance. For example, a patient may not be eligibility for HHA, but

the service is needed. The patient has to wait for approval and the case has to become active status for the services. In the meantime, there aren't services in the home during that waiting period. During this time, patient is at risk for readmission to the hospital.

***Begin to identify solutions to complex problems in the clinical area***

One of my patients had a medication discrepancy and I had to contact her primary care physician, cardiologist and pharmacy that she fills her medication at in order to make sure that the patient was taking the correct medication and correct dose. By collaborating, I was able to get new prescription orders for the patient, which the PCP called into the pharmacy. Later on that afternoon the patient would be able to pick up her filled prescriptions.

***Acts as change agent in advocating to appropriate health care resources for client/families***

As a nurse in general, one of the many roles involve advocating for the patient. Based on my observation, I served as a change agent, when the patient was in need of HHA when the service became inactive. I also recommended for a social worker consult for additional support for services.

### **Summary**

Overall the experience with Visiting Nurse of New York has brought me closer to the community setting and allowed me to see that there is a lot of work to be done in the community from a healthcare perspective. In the community, patient teaching is especially vital and it has a profound impact on how independent the patients are for self-care or their ability to continue to stay and function within the community. This experience has also solidified that community health nursing is an area of nursing that has drawn me in and that I would like to pursue even further. This community health experience has opened my eyes to the fact that individuals within the community are at a great disadvantage for access to healthcare and that the services that is being provided through this organization, is not only necessary, but is dependent on the well-being of those individuals. It's amazing how much community resources that an agency such as Visiting Nurse has and the many opportunities that are provided for those individuals in need to access those resources.