Australian College of Neonatal Nurses Incorporated (INC1300211)

Holistic Assessment Tool

Advanced Practitioner/Expert Level

Australian College of Neonatal Nurses Incorporated (INC1300211) *Holistic Assessment Tool for Advanced practitioner/expert Neonatal Nurses 2025



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Version Control

The ACNN Holistic Assessment Tool – Proficient

The ACNN (INC1300211) Holistic Assessment Tool – Proficient will remain current until 2030 (5 years) or earlier when modifications are required.

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Contents

Advanced practitioner/expert level in neonatal nursing 4

Use of the holistic assessment tool 4

Advanced practitioner/expert level holistic assessment 5

- General allocated patient information 5
- Standard 1: Thinks critically and analyses nursing practice 5
- Standard 2: Engages in therapeutic and professional relationships 6
- Standard 3: Maintains capability for practice 7
- Standard 4: Comprehensively conducts assessments 8
- Standard 5: Develops a plan for nursing practice 9
- Standard 6: Provides safe, appropriate, and responsive quality nursing practice 10
- Standard 7: Evaluates outcomes to inform practice 11
- Outcome 12

Advanced practitioner/expert level in neonatal nursing

At advanced/expert level, a neonatal nurse has an intuitive grasp of each clinical situation. They demonstrate higher level knowledge and skill based on extensive clinical and theoretical experience. The advanced neonatal nurse can critically analyse clinical and professional situations according to context and use the information to plan thorough and comprehensive care. They display clear leadership skills and are able to produce significant work in research and quality improvement. The advanced neonatal nurse offers sound mentorship and clinical supervision skills to colleagues and students.

Use of the holistic assessment tool

A holistic approach to assessing nurse knowledge and performance involves observing the neonatal nurse's overall role performance. This includes observing and assessing their communication, ethics, technical skills, cultural awareness, attitudes, knowledge, professional behaviors, clinical decision making, and critical thinking.

As an assessment of practice, assessors must, therefore, carry out the observation in the context of the neonatal nurse's interactions with infants and families. This method is useful in determining the nurse's skills, knowledge, values and attributes within their practice.

A holistic assessment of practice is a valid model of measuring core skills and competencies, but should be conducted via a collaborative relationship between neonatal nurse and the assessor. This ensures mutual understanding of the process, and helps the neonatal nurse feel confident in the process and its purpose.

During the assessment, the assessor uses their knowledge and professional judgement, drawing inferences and tacit awareness to form conclusions about the neonatal nurse's practice. Therefore, use of this tool requires sufficient duration of observation in the nurse's usual clinical context to achieve a reliable assessment.

At the conclusion of the observation period, an essential component of the assessment is the reflection process. Assessor and neonatal nurse discuss the observation, performance, strengths and developing skills/knowledge to provide guidance on further development.

Advanced practitioner/expert level holistic assessment

Neonatal nurse's name:_____ Date:_____

General allocated patient information

Standard 1: Thinks critically and analyses nursing practice

1.4 Advanced Practitioner and Expert – 4 or more years

1.4.1 Advocate for best evidence-based practice by engaging with stakeholders to influence and support change/improvement.

1.4.2 Develop, update and review policies and guidelines to include best available evidence and research outcomes

1.4.3 Undertake additional roles that expand scope of practice, influence team growth and role model critical thinking.

Supporting evidence

Standard 2: Engages in therapeutic and professional relationships

2.4 Advanced Practitioner and Expert – 4 or more years

2.4.1 Applies high-level clinical and theoretical knowledge to critically analyse, delegate, supervise, coordinate and negotiate to develop and support professional relationships.

2.4.2 Engages with families, applying high-level communication skills in discussing research/quality projects and potential inclusion of their infant.

2.4.3 Displays expert leadership and supervision skills through active listening and providing effective and constructive feedback in facilitating development of professional performance.

Supporting evidence

Standard 3: Maintains capability for practice

3.4 Expert- Advanced Practitioner – 4 or more years

3.4.1 Actively engages with professional nursing, midwifery and academic bodies that are relevant to the on-going development of nursing practice.
3.4.2 Leads and role-models the ongoing process of developing and revising guidelines, protocols, and standards related to neonatal care.
3.4.3 Provides professional development activities to maintain own capability in practice and support colleagues ongoing skill and knowledge development.

Supporting evidence

Standard 4: Comprehensively conducts assessments

4.4 Expert – Advanced Practitioner – 4 or more years

4.4.1 When possible, ensures contact with families pre-birth to provide key information in preparation for anticipated admission and discuss care choices.
4.4.2 Comprehensively explores and analyses holistic assessment findings to identify priorities and initiate actions.
4.4.3 Prepares and discusses discharge plan to ensure all specialists and follow up appointments are detailed and organised.

Supporting evidence

Standard 5: Develops a plan for nursing practice

5.4 Expert – Advanced Practitioner – 4 or more years

5.4.1 Critically analyses care in alignment with current best practice and modifies plan of care as required.

5.4.2 Initiates and actively engages in research, quality improvement and auditing activities to improve care planning and implementation.

Supporting evidence

Standard 6: Provides safe, appropriate, and responsive quality nursing practice

6.4 Expert – Advanced Practitioner – 4 or more years

6.4.1 Promotes and co-ordinates safe staffing levels and manages resources for safe and optimal outcomes.

6.4.2 Seeks out, evaluates and incorporates emerging technologies and practices to continuously improve care provision.

6.4.3 Protects the rights of neonates and their families involved in research and/or quality improvement activities.

Supporting evidence

Standard 7: Evaluates outcomes to inform practice

7.4 Advanced Practitioner and Expert – 4 or more years

7.4.1 Critically analyses evidence-based knowledge and applies clinical reasoning in the evaluation of outcomes and adapting planned care.

7.4.2 Monitors clinical reporting, audit data and adverse incidents to evaluate trends and outcomes to inform care improvement.

7.4.3 Evaluates quality improvement and/or research outcomes, identifying relevance and makes recommendations to incorporate into practice guidelines/policies.

7.4.4 Provides clinical guidance and mentorship/supervision to members of the multidisciplinary team in the evaluation of care outcomes, which may include support and debriefing opportunities.

Supporting evidence

Outcome

Meets expected standards ☐

Working towards expected standards ☐

Assessor's name: _____

Assessor's signature:_____

Date: _____

Collaborative discussion and feedback / strengths and areas to improve/ development plan: