



BCCNM LEARNING MODULE — WORKBOOK

Clinical Decision Making

Within the Standards of Nursing Practice



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WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Describing clinical decision-making

In this activity you will describe a clinical decision-making scenario from your practice. Please take the time to complete this description as this scenario will be the focus of many of the subsequent learning activities in the workbook.

Begin by considering your clinical decision-making in your nursing practice during the last few days at work. Select one decision that you

made in the course of providing care for clients. The decision does not need to be 'difficult' or 'complex', but it is important that you can recall it clearly. Mentally review the situation (what was happening) and the process you went through (what were your thoughts and actions) in making those decisions. Now write down that information in any format that works for you. You may wish

to write a description, list steps, or perhaps even draw a picture or two! Be sure to provide a reasonable degree of detail – this will be helpful in completing learning activities later in the module.

When you have completed this activity, please continue with Workbook Activity #2 before returning to the module.

2

WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Common elements in clinical decision-making

This activity will help you discover the common elements or themes in your own clinical decision-making.

Begin by reading your clinical decision-making scenario and, if you wish, reflect on your clinical decision-making in general. From this basis, note the common elements that make up your clinical decision-making.

Your response does not need to be complex or detailed. The goal is to develop a sense of how you would describe clinical decision-making. When you have completed this, compare your 'common elements' with the themes you identified in the nurses' descriptions of clinical decision-making provided in the module.

Here are some strategies that you might find helpful in completing this activity:

- Imagine you were describing 'the basics' of clinical decision-making to someone who was unfamiliar with nursing practice.
- Complete the sentence: "When I make clinical decisions I ..."
- If you have nursing colleagues that are also completing this module, have a discussion and possibly compare your conclusions with theirs.

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WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Clinical decision-making frameworks

In this activity you will consider the various elements or steps in your clinical decision-making process and how they relate to one another. Begin by reviewing the description you completed in Workbook Activity #1 and the themes or common elements in your clinical

decision-making that you identified in Workbook activity #2. Using this information, and your creative talent, create a 'map' or a framework that depicts your clinical decision-making process. We will return to this framework later in the module.

If you would like more information in how to go about developing a map or framework, please see the example included in Appendix 1 at the end of this workbook.

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WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Contextual factors in clinical decision-making

1. Return to the clinical scenario from Workbook Activity #1 and consider each of the levels of context influencing your clinical decision.
 - Identify contextual factors that influenced the way the decision(s) unfolded. Try and locate at least one factor at the micro, meso and macro-levels.
 - Consider the influence these factors had on your clinical decision-making: To what extent did they help or hinder your decision-making process?
- What, if any, modifications to context would you see as helpful in similar situations in your future practice? i.e. if you could change these contextual factors, what would you do?



2. Now take a few moments to reflect on the section of the module and the associated Workbook Activity that you have just completed. What have you learned about clinical decision-making in your nursing practice? Perhaps this discussion and workbook activity has affirmed some aspects of your

clinical decision-making? Or maybe you have experienced an ‘ah-ha’ moment regarding a challenge you experience in making clinical decisions?

Record your conclusions on the “Affirmations and Insights” page in this Workbook. At the completion

of the module, you will have an opportunity to use the insights and affirmations gained in various learning activities, as part of your planning for future professional growth and development.

5

WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

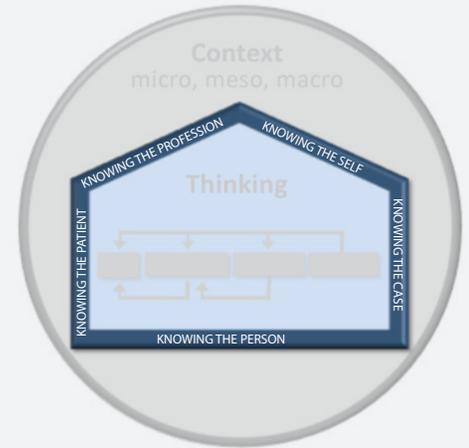
Foundational knowledge in clinical decision-making

1. Using the clinical scenario from Workbook Activity # 1, consider the dimensions of foundational knowledge you used in this clinical decision: Can you see evidence of the five dimensions of knowledge described in the module in your situation?

- For dimensions that are evident, in what ways did they contribute to your decision-making process?
- For dimensions that are not apparent, what difference did this make to your decision-making

process? In a future occurrence of a similar situation, would it be helpful to access other dimensions of knowledge in making your decision?

- Consider your use of the various dimensions of knowledge in your decision-making in general. Are there dimensions of knowledge that you favor/ feel unsure about in your decision-making processes? What influence does this have on your clinical decision-making?



2. Now take a few moments to reflect on the section of module and the associated Workbook Activity that you have just completed. What have you learned about clinical decision-making in your

nursing practice? Perhaps this discussion and workbook activity has affirmed some aspects of your clinical decision-making? Or maybe you have experienced an 'ah-ha' moment regarding a challenge

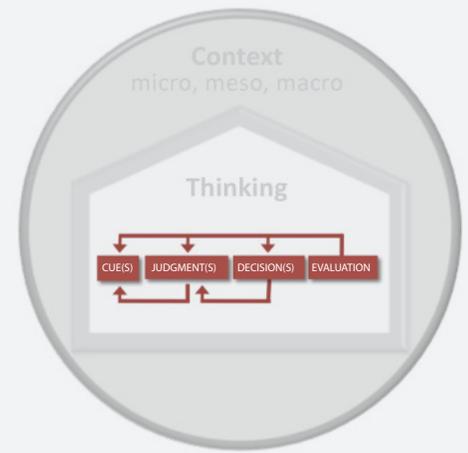
you experience in making clinical decisions?

Record your conclusions on the "Affirmations and Insights" page in this Workbook.

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WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Cues, judgments, decisions and evaluation in clinical decision-making



1. Return to the clinical decision-making scenario described in Workbook Activity # 1. Using your understanding of the phases of the

clinical decision-making process within this decision and within your nursing practice generally, answer the following questions.

Cues

- Using the various sources of cues identified in the Situated Clinical Decision-Making framework as a prompt, evaluate the effectiveness of your cue collection in this situation.
- In what ways did your knowledge, skills and abilities support and hinder your cue collection?

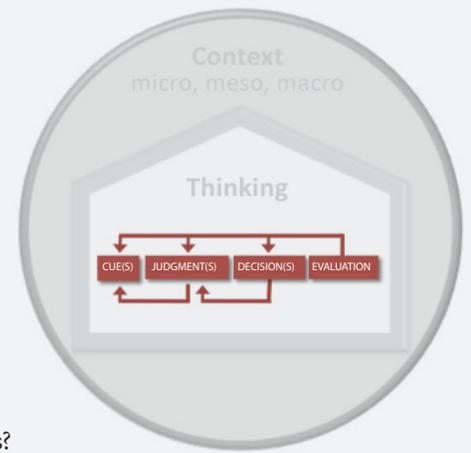
Judgment(s)

- Consider the process of moving between cue collection and forming a judgment in your situation. Did your process support formation of a sound judgment? If so, why? If not, why not, and how will this understanding influence your practice in the future?
- To what extent were you open to revising the judgment after you had formed your 'best conclusion'?
- Did you involve or consult other health care professionals in the process of forming a judgment? If not, why not? If you did, was this process effective and why?
- Consider the process of assigning a priority to the judgment(s). What was the basis for the priority you assigned? What contextual factors, in any, influenced the prioritization?

6

WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Cues, judgments, decisions and evaluation in clinical decision-making *(continued)*



Decision(s)

- Consider the process you used to determine a course of action in this situation. What decision did you make? Was the decision made independently or did you work collaboratively in some way in this process? To what extent did the course of action move the client toward the overall goals in their care?

Evaluation

- What process did you use to evaluate the effectiveness of the decision? On reflection, were there additional steps that you could have used to enhance the effectiveness of our evaluation process?

2. Now take a few moments to reflect on the section of module and the associated Workbook Activity that you have just completed. What have you learned about clinical decision-making in your nursing practice? Perhaps this

discussion and workbook activity has affirmed some aspects of your clinical decision-making? Or maybe you have experienced an ‘ah-ha’ moment regarding a challenge you experience in making clinical decisions?

Record your conclusions on the “Affirmations and Insights” page in this Workbook.

7

WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Thinking processes in clinical decision-making



1. Review the clinical decision-making scenario described in Workbook Activity #1

- Identify the types of thinking processes that you used in this decision-making scenario.

- Using insights gained from the reflection points in the module, consider the contribution of critical, systematic, creative, and anticipatory thinking in your clinical decision-making in general. What dimensions of your thinking processes do you see as strengths in your clinical decision-making and which thinking processes would you like to develop further?

2. Now take a few moments to reflect on the section of module and the associated Workbook Activity that you have just completed. What have you learned about clinical decision-making in your nursing practice? Perhaps this

discussion and workbook activity has affirmed some aspects of your clinical decision-making? Or maybe you have experienced an 'ah-ha' moment regarding a challenge you experience in making clinical decisions?

Record your conclusions on the "Affirmations and Insights" page in this Workbook.

8

WORKBOOK ACTIVITY

Revisiting your clinical decision-making framework

1. In Workbook Activity #3, you created a framework that represented your clinical decision-making in nursing practice. Return to that framework now and review

it in light of what you have learned about your clinical decision-making as you have worked through this module. Is there anything you would like to add to your

framework that is not there? Make any additions or alterations that you need to at this time.

Now that your framework is 'completed', consider the possibility of using this framework as a guide in your clinical decision-making

in practice. Perhaps you will find it helpful to carry a copy of it with you to prompt you when you are challenged in your clinical decision-

making. Or alternatively, you may wish to select another framework (from this module or otherwise) for the same purpose.

Clinical decision-making: Planning for professional growth

This final learning activity will guide you in developing a plan for future growth in clinical decision-making. A sample plan outline is included in this Workbook.

1. Begin by reviewing “Affirmations and Insights” insights page in this Workbook. This page includes some of the conclusions you have formed about your clinical decision-making in your nursing practice as you have worked through this module. It is, in other words, a comprehensive self-assessment of all the components that are part of, or influence, your clinical decision-making. Now its time to put that to use!

Take some time to read through these conclusions: First, notice and acknowledge your strengths. Now pay attention to the areas that you have identified as areas for development and growth. As you read these, notice which ones seem to resonate with you or feel

most important to you. Use these conclusions to determine the goals that will support ongoing growth of your clinical decision-making.

2. Create three goals that reflect your focus for development in your clinical decision-making. Write these in the appropriate place in “My Plan for growth in clinical decision-making”. (located on p. 13 of the Workbook)

3. The next step is to develop an action plan that will help you meet those goals. Begin by identifying resources that you could use to assist you in meeting your goals. If you are not aware of specific resources, then begin by listing the sources you will explore in order to learn what you can do to support your growth toward your goals.

4. Once you are familiar with the learning opportunities that are available to you, create an action plan that outlines specific strategies

you will use, what resources you need in order to implement these strategies (e.g. who do you need to talk to, learning materials you want to acquire, learning experiences you need to arrange etc) and, importantly, a target date for completion.

Not sure how to do identify goals and create an action plan? The planning for growth page has provided a brief example of this process is included in Appendix 3. As well, it is recommended that you use the BCCNM Quality Assurance resources to assist you in this process. You may wish to review these now.

5. Finally: Add your plan to your Quality Assurance file, workbook or portfolio. And remember to update it once you have completed the actions!

Notes from Reflection Points



My clinical decision-making: Affirmations and Insights

My plan for growth in clinical decision-making

Goals

1.

2.

3.

Action plan

Places or people that I can explore for learning strategies to help me meet my goals for growth are:

1.

2.

3.

Specific strategies that will help me in meeting my goals are

STRATEGY	RESOURCES I NEED TO IMPLEMENT THIS STRATEGY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	OTHER THOUGHTS

Reminder: Add your completed action plan to your Quality Assurance Portfolio.

Developing a concept map or framework: example

Some of you will be familiar with the process of linking steps or ideas related to a process into a 'concept map'. For others, this will be a new activity. If you are not sure how to get started, here are some thoughts to help you. Remember – there is no 'right or wrong' in this - These are your ideas and you can depict them any way that makes sense to you!

1. Begin by identifying the key components of your decision-making process. You will likely find these are the 'steps' in the scenario you described and/or the key elements that you identified in Workbook Activity #1 Part 2. You might think of them as the key 'chunks' that together make up the whole process of clinical decision-making.

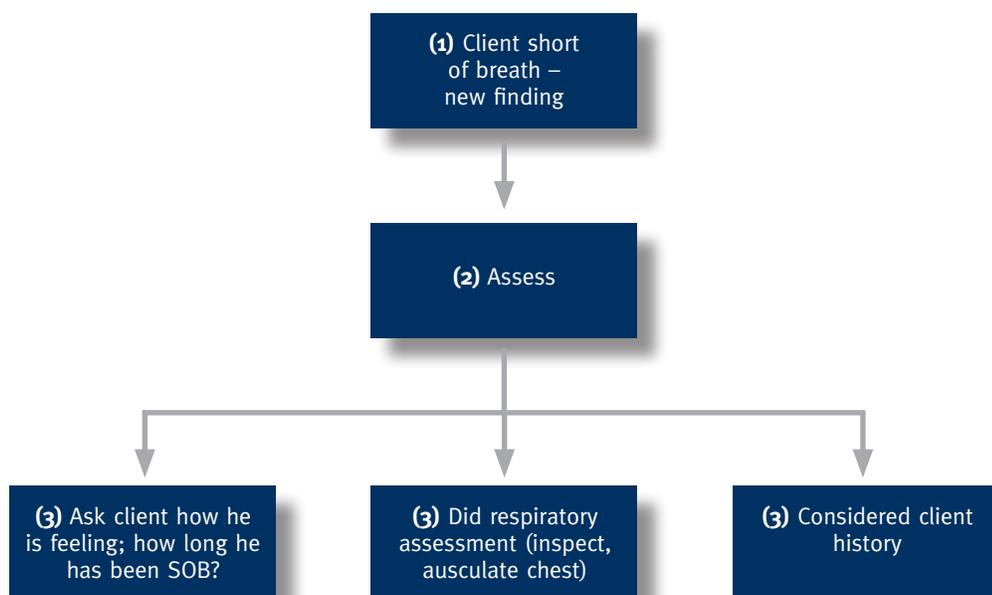
2. Choose a key word or two to represent these steps, elements or component. Write these on a page (in a circle or a box if you want to) in an order or positioning that makes sense to you.

3. Now link these key words up so that the interconnecting lines make the relationships between these key components evident. You can use arrows to indicate the direction of influence between components..

4. And voila! Your very own clinical decision-making framework!

As an example, here is the beginning of a concept map based on the decision scenario that was included in the previous Workbook activity. As you 'read' the map, following the direction of the arrows, we can

see my clinical decision-making process in this situation. At the top, labeled # 1, I noticed a change in the client. This resulted in me (2) assessing (3) several factors (asked the client questions, did an assessment, considered client history). I used (4) knowledge to guide my assessment. The example map stops at this point, but if I had continued it would highlight and link the relationships between remaining steps or components of my decision-making process in that situation.



Clinical decision-making process

<p>Cues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Statements from patients or others • Assessment and laboratory data • Atypical responses/behavior/data • Intuition
<p>Judgments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could be happening? • What data/evidence supports this? • Do I need more information? From whom? • Who should I involve or consult? • What priority is it?
<p>Decision(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should I wait and watch? • Should I try something? • Should I inform someone? • Should I involve or consult someone else? • How will I know if I made the best decision?
<p>Evaluation of outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the decisions achieve what I wanted to happen? • Should I make another decision? • Should I collect more information? • Who should I involve or consult?

Source: Gillespie, M & Paterson, B. (in press).

My plan for growth in clinical decision-making: example

Goals

1. *To become familiar with best practices related to preventing falls with elderly clients*

2.

3.

Action plan

Places or people that I can explore for learning strategies to help me meet my goals for growth are:

1. *Talk to Clinical Nurse Educator and/or Nurse Leader in geriatric care unit for suggestions about learning resources*

2.

3.

Specific strategies that will help me in meeting my goals are

STRATEGY	RESOURCES I NEED TO IMPLEMENT THIS STRATEGY	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	OTHER THOUGHTS
Example: detailed plan 1. <i>Review resources available in my nursing unit</i>	1. <i>None – just look on the shelves!</i>	1. <i>During my next set of scheduled shifts</i>	
2. <i>Review RNAO Best Practices web site and Joanna Briggs Institute Best Practices web site for specific documents</i>	2. <i>Use work computer to do this. Web site URLs in Learning resource section of CDM module</i>	2. <i>By end of this month</i>	
		3. <i>By end of next month.</i>	<i>Ask the nurse educator at work – maybe she can help me with this?</i>

Reminder: Add your completed action plan to your Quality Assurance Portfolio.