



# NMNEC Concept: **Professional Identity**

**Mega Concept:** Professional Nursing Attributes

**Category:** Professional Attributes

**Concept Name:** Professional Identity

**Concept Definition:**

The demonstration of accountable and responsible behaviors by the nurse that reflect core values integral to the profession of nursing while incorporating legal and ethical principles and regulatory guidelines that comply with standards of nursing practice. (Adapted from Massachusetts Nurse of the Future, 2016, NLN, 2010, as cited by Brussow, 2019)

**Scope:**

The scope of professional identity in nursing emerges through a process by which the individual learns what it is to be a nurse. There eight distinct elements to this process that are essential to the complete development of professional identity.

- **Autonomy:** The authority to make decisions related to nursing practice.
- **Knowledge:** The synthesis of theory, evidence, and practical application.
- **Competence:** The knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the practice setting.
- **Professionhood:** The development of professional nursing, preparing for nursing practice.
- **Accountability:** The assuming of responsibility for one's own nursing practice.
- **Advocacy:** The support and defense of the healthcare participant.
- **Collaborative Practice:** The integration of nursing with other disciplines to provide holistic care.
- **Commitment:** The altruistic dedication to all aspects of the nursing profession.

**Attributes and Criteria:**

In addition to the eight distinct elements, attributes of Professional Identity in Nursing include:

- Self-awareness
- Integrity
- Education, including life-long learning
- Leadership qualities
- Respect for self and others



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- Ethical decision making
- Altruism
- Licensure

### Theoretical Links:

- Social Identity Theory: Humans, by nature, are social beings. Nurses strive to be a part of a community centered in the delivery of healthcare. Being a member of their team, as defined by their own experience and expertise, is important in fulfilling the desire to be immersed in this unique culture. As nurses grow in their professional identity, their social groups expand (Ball, 2011)
- The Care, Cure, and Core Model: Lydia Hall identified the necessity of professional identity through personal and interpersonal growth. When the nurse exhibits the attributes of a professional, they are able to help the care participant understand themselves and participate in their own plan of care (Touhy, 2006).
- Nursing Social Policy Statement (ANA): New: Nursing's Social Policy Statement (ANA): The Essence of the Profession builds on previous work and provides the following contemporary definition of nursing: *"Nursing is the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness, and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, and communities, and populations."* (ANA, 2010b, p.10)

### Context to Nursing/Healthcare:

- Personal values, ethics, beliefs, and experiences provide the framework for each nurse to develop their professional identity.
- Nurses are the hub for the care participant. All other disciplines depend on the nurses' expertise and experience to achieve the desired outcomes for each care participant.
- The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends that at least 80% of nurses be educated, minimally, with a baccalaureate degree in nursing by 2020. Advancing education to meet this goal enhances professional identity through increased knowledge, skills, and personal growth (IOM, 2011).
- Entry into professional practice as a nurse requires successful completion of a State approved program of study and passing the national licensure exam.
- Continuing education and advanced degrees promote maturation of professional identity.



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<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
Understands the concept of accountability for own nursing practice	Demonstrates accountability for own nursing practice.	Accepts responsibility for own behavior.
Justifies clinical decisions	Uses recognized professional standards of practice.	Shows commitment to provision of high quality, safe and effective patient care.
Describes legal and regulatory factors that apply to nursing practice.	Exercises critical thinking and clinical reasoning within standards of practice.	Values professional standards of practice.
Understands the professional standards of practice, the evaluation of that practice, and the responsibility and accountability for the outcome of that practice.	Demonstrates professional comportment.	Recognizes personal capabilities, knowledge base and areas for development.
Describes factors essential to the promotion of professional development.	Provides and receives constructive feedback to/from peers.	Values collegiality, openness to critique, and peer review.
Describes the role of a professional organization shaping the culturally congruent practice of nursing.	Participates in life-long learning.	Committed to life-long learning.
Understands the importance of reflection to advancing practice and improving outcomes of care.	Demonstrates ability for reflection in action, reflection for action and reflection on action.	Values the mentoring relationship for professional development.
Understands the concept of autonomy and self-regulation in nursing practice.	Seeks ways to advocate for nursing's role, professional autonomy, accountability, and self-regulation.	Values and is committed to being a reflective practitioner.
Understands the culture of nursing, cultural congruence and the health care system.	Promotes and maintains a positive image of nursing.	Recognizes the responsibility to function within acceptable behavioral norms appropriate to the discipline of nursing



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<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>
		and the health care organization.
Understands the role and responsibilities as patient advocate.	Recognizes and acts upon breaches of law relating to nursing practice and professional codes of conduct.	Values role and responsibilities as patient advocate.
Understands ethical principles, values, concepts, and decision making that apply to professional nursing practice, interprofesional collaboration and patient care.	Serves as a patient advocate.	Values the application of ethical principles in daily practice.
	Incorporates American Nurses' Association's Code of Ethics into daily practice.	Values acting in accordance with code of ethics and accepted standards of practice.
	Utilizes an ethical decision-making framework in clinical situations.	Clarifies personal and professional values and recognizes their impact on decision making and professional behavior.
	Identifies and responds to ethical concerns, issues, and dilemmas that affect nursing practice.	Values acting with honesty and integrity in relationships with patients, families, and other team members across the continuum of care.
	Enlists system resources and participates in efforts to resolve ethical issues in daily practice.	
	Recognizes moral distress and seeks resources for resolution.	
Adapted from Massachusetts Nurse of the Future (2016)		



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### **Interrelated Concepts:**

- **Advocacy:** Patient advocacy is part of nursing's professional identity.
- **Collaboration:** A hallmark of the nursing profession is collaboration with other health care providers to meet the care participant's needs.
- **Communication:** Communication is a critical skill in the practice of professional nursing.
- **Ethics:** Demonstrating ethical practice is essential to professional identity.
- **Leadership:** The Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing Report calls on the nursing profession to lead the change in improving the nation's health (IOM, 2011).
- **Safety:** The profession of nursing is often the last barrier between a patient and an adverse event.

### **Exemplars:**

#### **New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium (NMNEC) Required Exemplars:**

- Nursing Process
- Caring
- Clinical Judgment / Reasoning
- Nursing History



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### Resources:

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