

## **Effective Communication Strategies for Nurses**

### **Background**

Effective Communication Strategies for Nurses (ECSN) was developed to address the needs of working nurses within the Canadian healthcare sector.

ECSN is geared towards an intermediate to advanced level of English (Canadian Language Benchmark levels 6-8). It is intended to target a variety of demanding nursing communication tasks, namely communicating by telephone (Unit 1), asserting oneself in a culturally appropriate manner (Unit 2), dealing with clients and family members (Unit 3), and effectively working on a team and documenting progress notes (Unit 4). These modules may be taught as a single 60-hour course or as individual stand-alone sessions (15-hour modules), depending on the needs of the nurses or institution.

All curriculum materials and supports have been designed by language specialists in close consultation with nurses and nurse educators. Their intended purpose is to provide authentic nursing contexts for the development of language and socio-cultural communication skills. They are not intended to provide instruction related to clinical practice.

### **Course Objectives and Outcomes**

The objective of this course is to develop the supporting language and socio-cultural skills for participants to confidently and effectively demonstrate the following nursing communication tasks:

- Open, manage and close common workplace calls, including receiving telephone orders from doctors and reporting change-of-status reports; record a professional voicemail message
- Use culturally appropriate assertive communication skills to advocate for one's clients and one's self
- Communicate with clients and family during challenging interactions in a confident, effective manner
- Effectively function as part of interdisciplinary teams, both orally and in writing

## **Snapshot of the Curriculum**

Below is a snapshot of the four units of the curriculum and their corresponding learning outcomes. Recommended timeframes are also provided, with the understanding that the time spent on each section will ultimately be determined by the needs and levels of a particular class.

### **Unit 1: Telephone Skills**

- Appropriately open, manage and close common workplace calls
- Receive doctors' orders by telephone
- Give change-of-status reports by telephone
- Record a professional telephone greeting and voicemail message

**Recommended Time:** 15 hours (5 classes x 3 hours/class)

### **Unit 2: Intercultural Communication**

- Use culturally appropriate assertive communication skills to: express opinions, make suggestions and requests, ask for help and advice, refuse unreasonable requests, and deal with challenging interactions

**Recommended Time:** 15 hours (5 classes x 3 hours/class)

### **Unit 3: Communication with Clients and Family Members**

- Inform, explain, and instruct in the context of health teaching
- Provide comfort and support to clients and family members
- Manage a challenging interaction with a client or family member

**Recommended Time:** 15 hours (5 classes x 3 hours/class)

### **Unit 4: Interprofessional Collaboration**

- Effectively utilize the language and socio-cultural communication skills needed to consult and problem solve with various team members within a Canadian healthcare setting
- Become more proficient with email writing by improving structure, tone, and formatting techniques
- Identify the information commonly included in progress notes
- Clip, abbreviate, and organize progress notes according to common policies and procedures
- Write concise, coherent, and grammatically accurate progress notes, with appropriate use of professional language

**Recommended Time:** 15 hours (5 classes x 3 hours/class)