

Tools for Ethical Community Health Nursing Practice

Community Health Nurses Association of Canada

Katie Dilworth
Carol Timmings

Calgary, Alberta
June 2009

Presentation Outline

-  Why the unique practice realm of CHN's positions them in ethical dilemmas
-  Tools to address ethical challenges for CHNs
-  Application of the tools to practice scenarios

Professionalism

- + Accountability
- + Unique knowledge and skills
- + **CHN values and ethics**

Ethics

- + Ethical dilemmas
- + Ethical decision-making

Community Health Nurses

- ✚ Have a proud history
- ✚ Unique practice setting
- ✚ Touch people
- ✚ Have enormous public trust

Why?

- ✚ Autonomous practice
- ✚ Often in peoples homes
- ✚ Accountability to multiple stakeholders
- ✚ Population health context

Results

- ✚ Complex ethical situations
 - Issues are contextual and relational in nature
 - Expedient decisions needed

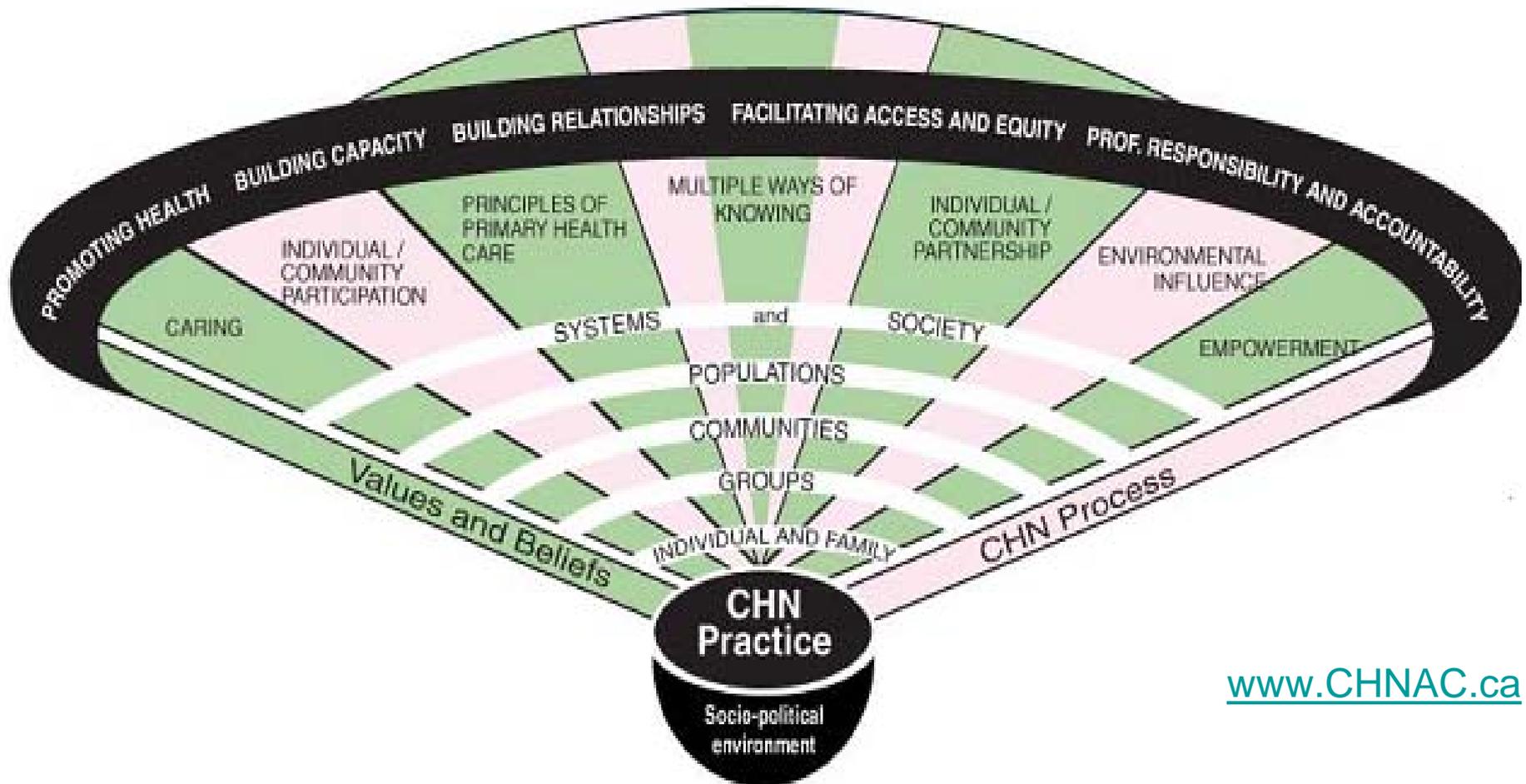
Examples:

- ✚ Public right to know
- ✚ Allocation of resources
- ✚ Gifts
- ✚ Surveillance
- ✚ Maintaining therapeutic relationships
- ✚ Un-pasteurized milk
- ✚ Maintaining confidentiality

Ethics Tools

- ✚ CHN Standards of Practice
- ✚ Regulatory standards
- ✚ Legislation
- ✚ New ethical frameworks
- ✚ CNA code of ethics
- ✚ More

Canadian Community Health Nursing Practice



1. Promoting health
2. Building individual and community capacity
3. Building relationships
4. Facilitating access and equity
5. **Demonstrating Professional Responsibility and Accountability**

Why is #5 a CHN standard?

Professional Responsibility and Accountability

About the overall quality of your practice

...‘strive for excellence’...

...‘use evidence informed practice’...

...‘maintain our competency’...

...‘make ethical decisions about practice’...

Nursing

- ✚ Legislated as 'self regulating'
- ✚ Practice in accordance with standards

- ✚ Responsibility to the public
- ✚ Standards of Practice
- ✚ Basic expectation for all CHNs

Knowledge of regulatory standards helps CHNs to follow CHN Standard 5.

Guidance and Support

- ✚ Privacy Legislation (e.g., Personal Health Information and Protection Act)
- ✚ Regulatory Regulated Health Professionals Act
- ✚ Consent Act
- ✚ Freedom of Information (access to Information Act)
- ✚ Nursing Act
- ✚ Occupational Health and Safety
- ✚ Health Promotion and Protection Act
- ✚ Child Protection Laws

CHN Framework Tools

-  Harm principle
-  Reciprocity
-  Precautionary principle
-  Principle of least restrictive means
-  Transparency

- ✚ **Joint Center for Bioethics; University of Toronto
Community Health Ethics Toolkit**
http://www.jointcentreforbioethics.ca/partners/documents/cen_toolkit2008.pdf
- ✚ **CNA Code of Ethics: Ethical Values for Nurses**
http://www.cna-nurses.ca/CNA/practice/ethics/code/default_e.aspx
- ✚ **CNA Social Justice Gauge**
http://www.cna-aiic.ca/CNA/documents/pdf/publications/Social_Justice_e.pdf
- ✚ **Ethics in Practice Papers such as ‘Public Health Nursing
Practice and Ethical Challenges’**
http://www.cna-aiic.ca/CNA/practice/ethics/inpractice/default_e.aspx

Excellence in professional practice includes ethical decision making:

Knowledge of available tools is key

- ✚ Engage in reflective practice
- ✚ Assess your professional development needs
- ✚ Evaluate your practice
- ✚ Develop and implement a learning plan
- ✚ Consult with colleagues

Scenario 1

You work as a CHN in a rural community and your next door neighbour becomes your client.

While providing care she discloses to you that she is experiencing physical abuse from her husband.

What ethical tools do you have to inform your practice?

What CHN action is directed by these tools?

Scenario 2

You have been visiting the L family for several months.

Today, as you have your hand on the doorknob to leave, Mrs. L hands you an envelope. You can see this is likely a cheque.

What ethical tools do you have to inform your practice?

What CHN action is directed by these tools?

Scenario 3

Mr. K is a homeless methadone patient at your clinic. He has recently been diagnosed with TB.

You are required to report his disease to the local health authorities in your jurisdiction.

What ethical tools do you have to inform your practice?

What CHN action is directed by these tools?

Tools for Ethical Decision-making for CHNs

CHN Standards of Practice

- ✚ Regulatory standards
- ✚ Legislation
- ✚ New ethical frameworks
- ✚ CNA code of ethics
- ✚ Community ethics toolkit, etc.

Privilege of being a CHN

- ✚ A time of growth and development in CHN
- ✚ CHNs: valuable resource
- ✚ CHNs are accountable, responsible and above all, professional

Ethical nursing practice = maintaining trust.

Thank You

Katie Dilworth kdilwor@toronto.ca

Professional Practice Consultant, Professional Practice Leader: Nursing,
Toronto Public Health

Carol Timmings ctimming@toronto.ca

Interim Director, Planning and Policy: Toronto Public Health

References

- ANDSOOHA (2009). *Orientation to Public Health Nursing* <http://www.andsooha.org/news/details.asp?d=161>
- Atlantic Provinces Public Health Collaboration (2007). *Public health 101: An introduction to public health*. <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/publications/PH-101.pdf>
- College of Nurses of Ontario (2008). *Compendium of Standards*. <http://www.cno.org/prac/index.htm>
- Community Health Nursing Association of Canada (2008). *Community Health Nursing Standards of Practice* http://www.chnac.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=36
- CNA (2008). *Nursing Ethics Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses*. http://www.cna-aiic.ca/CNA/practice/ethics/code/default_e.aspx
- CNA (2001). *Self regulation safeguarding the privilege available at Nursing Now: Issues and trends in Canadian Nursing* Number 10. http://www.cna-nurses.ca/cna/documents/pdf/publications/SelfregulationFeb2001_e.pdf
- CNO (2008). *What is CNO? Supporting Members in Self-Regulation*. http://www.cno.org/docs/general/45024_fsSelfregulation.pdf
- CNO (2008). *Data query: Nurses employed in Ontario/Practice Sector by employment place*. http://www.cno.org/about/stats/dqt_disclaimer.htm
- Merriam Webster Dictionary (2008). *Mirriam Webster on line Dictionary* <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- Emory F. H. (1945). *Public Health Nursing in Canada*. Vancouver: The Wrigley Printing Company Limited
- Pollera (1997). *Public Trust Index*. <http://www.pollara.com/Library/Reports/TRUST.HTML>
- Public Health Agency of Canada (2008). *Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada*. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ccph-cesp/index-eng.html>
- RNAO (2008). *Professionalism in Nursing; Healthy Work Environment Best practice Guideline*. http://www.rnao.org/Page.asp?PageID=122&ContentID=1201&SiteNodeID=241&BL_ExpandID=
- Styles M.M. (1982). *On Nursing: Toward a New Endowment*. St Louis: Mosby
- Underwood J., (2009). *Canadian Community Health Nursing Study: Toward an effective and sustainable workforce*. CHNET-Works Presentation April 3, 2009. CHNET-Works http://www.chnet-works.ca/images/stories/chnetworks/firesidechat/2009/apr_3_09v3.pdf