

## Fact Sheet: Reassignment to an Unfamiliar Practice Setting

Temporary reassignment to an unfamiliar practice setting to meet care needs can be standard employer practice. Staffing assignment decisions are to be based on the information at hand and the availability of resources. The following principles should underly every staffing decision (NANB & NBNU, 2019):

- The client is the central focus of nursing practice.
- RNs and NPs provide the best possible care in a safe, competent, compassionate and ethical manner, regardless of the work situation.
- RNs and NPs do not abandon the client.
- Employers support their employees in meeting their [NANB Standards of Practice](#) and their [Code of Ethics](#), while striving to maintain safe and timely care to all clients.

Employers and Nurse Leaders have an obligation to:

- provide staffing and resources, ensuring that RNs and NPs are supported to work within their role and scope of practice.
- assist RNs and NPs in understanding their expectations when providing care in an unfamiliar practice setting.
- consider the competencies and qualifications of all nursing care providers when making client assignments.

RNs and NPs are accountable for:

- practising safely and compassionately, while using evidence-informed knowledge, skill and judgement.
- assessing own competence and identifying learning needs.
- requesting assistance of a colleague as needed.
- working collaboratively to deliver safe nursing care services.
- using effective communication strategies and interpersonal skills to appropriately establish, maintain and terminate the nurse-client relationship.

The following actions can assist an RN or NP when they are assigned to an unfamiliar setting:

- ensure that the employer/nurse leader making the staffing decision is aware of the workload;
- ensure that you have identified the appropriate person to contact if you have any problems or questions;
- discuss your competency and expected responsibilities with your supervisor and the person in-charge at the setting where you are assigned;



- ask for a brief orientation to the practice setting (i.e. equipment, supplies and so forth);
- perform activities you are competent to do and look for ways to address identified learning needs;
- collaborate with the health care team, to uphold safe client care that is timely as possible;
- recognize that your assignment may be to assist regular staff as they care for clients rather than caring for clients independently;
- if you are assuming a client assignment, ensure appropriate handover of care at the beginning and at the end of your work shift; and
- in case of an inappropriate and unsafe assignment, discuss your concerns with the person in-charge and negotiate an appropriate assignment based on your experience or limitations.

## Additional Resources

More information on the following topics can be found in the links below.

[Abandonment of a client](#)

[Role of formal nurse leaders](#)

[Care planning](#)

[Assigning, delegating, and teaching](#)

[Handover of care](#)

## References

New Brunswick Nurses Union & Nurses Association of New Brunswick. (2019). *Practising with Limited Resources: A Guide for RNs and NPs*. Author.

<http://www.nanb.nb.ca/media/resource/NANB-NBNU-PractisingLimitedResources-Mar19-E.pdf>

### **Acknowledgement:**

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