

Abstract

Problem/Significance: As knowledge workers, Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) are critical to investigating, solving and transforming some of the most challenging current and future health care problems. The lack of standardized CNS transition to practice (TTP) results in variable levels of practice, knowledge, skill attainment, and abilities in attaining interdisciplinary practice competencies.

Purpose: To develop CNS TTP residency program in a mid-western academic tertiary health care setting.

Method: CNS program development was informed by current evidenced-based literature review and discussion input on key transitional needs provided by entry level CNSs, expert CNSs, and nursing directors (DONs). A Residency Program Development Model was created to represent the dynamic, iterative relationships among key stakeholders and evidence sources.

Results: Findings included identification of entry level CNS TTP key components with 15 categories and subcategories, barriers to practice, and key preceptor characteristics.

Challenges identified by CNSs and DONs included stakeholders lack of

knowledge/understanding of CNS roles and scope; enormous TTP expectations of entry level

CNSs; transdisciplinary relationships and collaboration; organizational culture; leadership

culture; collaborative leadership; deliberative practice; and lack of support, resources and basic

needs. **Conclusion:** Critical components for advanced deliberative practice within a CNS TTP

program include an organization culture and subculture that understands and values the CNS,

and tiered sustainable support to the entry level CNS (preceptor, Support CNSs across the

system and mentors). **Implications:** Gaps in applied knowledge and practice competencies for

CNS roles and scope of practice across the spheres of influence have implications for nursing

academia, practice, organization/systems and research.

Keywords: Clinical Nurse Specialist, CNS, transition to practice, orientation, on-boarding, fellowships, residencies, advanced practice nurses, APRN