

Happy Nursing Professional Development Week!

By: Naomi Fox DNP, RN, NPD-BC, NEA-BC, CCRN

September 13th through September 19th, 2026 is Nursing Professional Development Week! Nursing professional development (NPD) is a specialty of nursing practice defined by standards, based on research, and critical to quality patient and organizational outcomes. An NPD practitioner is a registered nurse with NPD practice judgment and expertise who promotes role competence and growth of health care learners. The NPD practitioner roles are learning facilitator, change agent, mentor, leader, champion for scientific inquiry, advocate for NPD specialty, and partner for practice transitions. The big six NPD responsibilities are onboarding/orientation, competency management, education, role development, collaborative partnerships, and inquiry (Harper & Maloney, 2022). NPD practitioners are guided by the NPD Practice Model. This systems model demonstrates the fluid nature of the NPD practitioner's scope of practice, which has been approved by the American Nurses Association (ANA). The model starts with inputs. Inputs are how NPDs engage in environmental scanning to identify practice gaps in the interprofessional practice and learning environment. It then moves to throughputs, also known as the big

six responsibilities. The responsibilities are executed in alignment with one's organization's mission and vision. Lastly, the NPD practitioner contributes to outcomes due to the learning, change, role development, and growth of learners/staff. These outputs provide for optimal care of patients and improved population health.

Professional Development Associates (PDA) are individuals who contribute to the overall functioning of a continuing education/professional development department. PDAs are pivotal to the team and are guided by the National Learning Competencies[®] developed by the Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions. The eight competency areas are use of adult and organizational learning principles, designing educational interventions, measuring performance of activities and programs, collaborating and partnering with stakeholders, manage and administer the program, lead the program, engage in self-assessment and lifelong learning, and engaging in systems thinking (ACEhp, 2014).

Do you serve in these roles? Are you responsible for continuing education of nursing and allied staff from new hires to competency management? Reflecting on your role and the nursing profession, where would we be without NPD teams and departments? Whether centralized or de-centralized, the professional development of practice-based nurses and allied healthcare teams is crucial to the evolution of healthcare throughout the decades. The future is impossible to foresee without the individual and collective work of the NPD specialty.

NPD Week is an opportunity to recognize the exceptional work cultivated by NPD team members. For anyone serving in these roles, I wish you a Happy NPD Week. For anyone not serving in these roles but working with an NPD practitioner or PDA, please wish them a happy week. ■

Naomi serves as the Director of Education for the Association of Nursing Professional Development and is a Region 1 Board Member.

References

- Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions. (2014). National learning competencies. https://www.acehp.org/Portals/0/ACEhp_NLC_Mar2014%20%282%29.pdf
- Harper & Maloney. (2022). Nursing professional development: Scope & standards of practice (4th ed.). Association for Nursing Professional Development.

Pursue Your Career in Psychiatric Mental Health (PMH) Nursing.

Earn Your Preceptor Certificate at NO COST.

The Nurse Preceptor Certificate Program at Thomas Edison State University (TESU) is ideal for post-BSN nurses interested in becoming certified nurse preceptors in as little as six (6) months.

- Three (3) course, online program
- Two courses can be applied to TESU's MSN Nurse Educator degree (tesu.edu/msn)

With highly interactive, asynchronous online group discussions, you can log on and participate when it's convenient for you. You will become part of a community of learners where experiences are valued and shared, and learning is enhanced.

The **Expanding Mental Health Nursing in New Jersey Tuition Program** is for current RNs interested in psychiatric mental health nursing in New Jersey. If you are accepted into this program, your tuition for TESU courses will be covered.



TO GET STARTED

Apply to the Expanding Mental Health Nursing in New Jersey Tuition program. Once submitted, your application will be reviewed for grant eligibility.

[TESU.edu/mentalhealthnursing](https://tesu.edu/mentalhealthnursing)



THE LEADER IN NURSING EDUCATION

This program is supported by the US Department of Labor's Nursing Expansion Grant Program as part of an award totaling 3,313,525 with 20% financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by US DOL, or the U.S. Government.

BUILDING CAREERS | ADVANCING PROFESSIONS | EMPOWERING LIVES

©TESU Oct. 2024