

**ACADEMY OF FORENSIC NURSING
POSITION STATEMENT**

Evidence-Based Forensic Nursing Education

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POSITION STATEMENT FOR MEMBER REVIEW



TITLE:

Evidence-Based Forensic Nursing Education

DESCRIPTION:

The rapidly changing body of evidence provides the foundation of competency (knowledge, skills, attitudes) based education and training for forensic nursing. Since the founding of forensic nursing, the evolution of forensic nursing role development outpaced education and training gaps that needed evidence-based science and practice guidance to solidify and grow the sustainable and credible specialty in accordance with the Institute of Medicine's Future of Nursing report of 2011 (Kent-Wilkinson, 2011; Institute of Medicine, 2011). The AFN Evidence-Based Forensic Nursing Education Position Statement provides a path toward addressing existing gaps with specific recommendations ensuring evidence and competency-based forensic nursing education.

BACKGROUND:

The foundational sources of nursing education impacts practice competence and quality, and ultimately patient outcomes (Melnik, Gallagher-Ford, Long, & Fineout-Overholt, 2014). The conscientious use of current research as best evidence in making decisions about patient care is known as "evidenced-based care." Evidence-based care has repeatedly been shown to improve patient outcomes, quality and safety in practice. (Sackett, Straus, Richardson, Rosenberg, & Haynes, 2000).



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Evidence-based education (EBE) uses the best current evidence in curriculum development (Davies, 1999). Educational curriculum for nurses entering new areas of practice, e.g., forensic nursing, regardless of the educational level, should be developed with consideration of cognitive learning theories such as Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956) and other practice documents to guide the integration of essential domains integral to professional and advanced nursing practices (Ferguson & Day, 2005).

Competency-based education (CBE) builds upon EBE by creating for the student the opportunity to actively employ Benner's model of Novice to Expert learning theory (Benner, 1984), creating immediate opportunities for nurses to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes in practice, thereby establishing appropriate and best practice at the formative stage (Wascavage-Gravina, 2017; Starkweather et al., 2017).

Forensic nursing is a specialty with numerous areas of sub-specialization, (including but not limited to sexual assault, death investigation, elder abuse, human trafficking, domestic violence, child maltreatment, legal nurse consulting, and trauma), where the full scope of educational preparedness must be offered and attained in order to appropriately prepare nurses to provide services to all persons affected by violence, and to ensure appropriate staffing to meet those population needs (American Nurses Association, 2017).

In accordance with the field of forensics, as with other areas of healthcare, inter-professional collaboration is an essential aspect of education and training (Reeves, Pelone, Harrison, Goldman, & Zwarenstein, 2017). Forensic nurses must be prepared to engage and interface with many professions and disciplines in performing nursing roles and responsibilities within the scope of forensic nursing practice.

AFN POSITION:

The Academy of Forensic Nursing (AFN) position is to identify and use current evidence and competencies in the education of the full scope forensic nurse, recognizing that the evidence base grows as current understanding of forensic nursing practice expands over time. Inherent is use of nursing and education theories and frameworks to guide practices in person-centered care, while using ethical principles in guiding promotion of health in populations.

The Academy's position supports evidence-based education aligned with the AFN's mission "to link research to practice through dissemination of scholarship, education and service to those affected by and responding to trauma" (AFN, 2018). This position supports research, evidence dissemination, development of evidence-based practice guidelines and competency-based education through accredited curricula and aligned competency-based training and validation.



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AUTHORS:

- Rosalyn Walker, MSN, RN, AFN-BC, SANE-A, SANE-P, CPN
- Barbra Bachmeier, JD, MSN, APRN, NP-C, DF-AFN, FAEN

CONTRIBUTORS:

- Dr. Patricia Speck, DNSc, CRNP, FNP-BC, DF-IAFN, FAAFS, DF-AFN, FAAN
- Dr. Kathleen Thimsen, DNP, CWS-ET, FNS, DF-AFN,
- Valerie Sievers, MSN, RN, CNS, SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN

REVIEWERS:

APPROVAL DATE: