

Every Patient, Every Time

NURSING & MIDWIFERY ESSENTIALS OF BEST CARE

Supporting Western Health's nurses
and midwives to deliver Best Care



Western Health

NURSING+
MIDWIFERY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY INTRODUCTION



The *Nursing & Midwifery Essentials of Best Care Framework* articulates Western Health's commitment to our nurses and midwives delivering safe, high-quality, person-centred care for every patient, every time. It provides a clear, consistent foundation for nursing and midwifery practice, translating organisational values, professional standards and consumer expectations into observable behaviours and everyday clinical practice.

Nurses and midwives are at the forefront of healthcare delivery and play a critical role in shaping patient experiences and outcomes across the entire care journey. This framework recognises their central role by clearly defining what Best Care looks like in practice, supporting clinicians to consistently deliver care that is person-centred, coordinated, right and safe, even in complex and high-pressure environments.

Aligned with the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards and underpinned by our Professional Practice Framework, the Essentials of Best Care describes how nurses and midwives think, engage, assess, plan and deliver care. It integrates clinical expertise, evidence-based practice, education, research and leadership into a unified approach that supports clinical decision-making, accountability and continuous improvement.

Importantly, the framework reflects the voices of patients, families and carers, ensuring that what matters most to consumers remains central to care delivery. By embedding shared decision-making, effective communication, teamwork and kindness into everyday practice, the Essentials of Best Care supports a culture where patients feel seen, heard, informed and safe.

This guide outlines the everyday behaviours and practices expected of nurses and midwives at Western Health. It is designed to:

- Support safe, person-centred care on every shift
- Provide a shared language for feedback, supervision and escalation
- Guide orientation, professional development and performance conversations
- Align daily practice with Best Care and the NSQHS Standards

In combination with our Professional Practice Framework, this document is a practical user guide for clinicians, leaders and educators, and provides a governance framework for managers and executives. It sets clear expectations for our nurses and midwives, strengthens professional practice, supports workforce development and reinforces Western Health's vision of delivering Best Care for every patient, every time.

Together, the Professional Practice Framework and the Essentials of Best Care provide a unified approach to professional development and care delivery. The Framework outlines *how* nurses and midwives grow, lead, learn and apply expertise, while the Essentials of Best Care clarifies *how* care is *experienced* by patients and consumers. This alignment strengthens clinical decision-making, supports accountability, promotes kindness and teamwork, and reinforces a culture of safety, quality and continuous improvement.

BEST CARE



Best Care is provided by front-line staff (including volunteers) who are engaged in and committed to providing

Best Care for each patient, every day, every time.

They are at the heart of Best Care, with their practices and behaviours having a direct impact on patient experience and/or patient outcomes.

Staff focused on Best Care are compassionate and respectful, as well as skilled, competent and professional. Providing Best Care when front-line staff are busy and under significant pressure can be challenging, but also very rewarding when they make a positive difference to a patient and their family.

To deliver Best Care every day means that I:

- demonstrate person-centred care by communicating with patients and their families and being sensitive to their needs and preferences
- demonstrate co-ordinated care by being an active team player and looking for ways to do things better
- demonstrate right care by being competent in what I do and committed to doing my best
- demonstrate safe care by keeping patients from harm

To provide Best Care for patients, we must constantly put them first, listen to them and their families and in partnership, continually review, enhance and improve the care we deliver. What is important to patients and their families about receiving Best Care is therefore the foundation of our Best Care Vision.

The following patient statements on what person-centred, co-ordinated, right and safe care means to them were written in partnership with our consumers, and guide how our front-line staff provide Best Care, how our managers & senior clinicians lead Best Care, and how the executive and board govern Best Care.

To receive best care, it is important to my family and I that:

- I am seen, heard and treated as a person
- I receive help, treatment and information when I need it and in a co-ordinated way
- I receive care that makes me feel better
- I feel safe





To ensure that we can provide the best care, we translate these statements into day-to-day behaviours and actions to strengthen clinical practice and systems supporting person-centred, co-ordinated, right and safe care for every patient, every time, everywhere

Best Care is provided by staff (including volunteers) who are engaged in and committed to providing Best Care for each patient, every day, every time. They are at the heart of Best Care, with their practices and behaviours having a direct impact on patient experience and/or patient outcomes.

Staff focused on Best Care are compassionate and respectful, as well as skilled, competent and professional.

Providing Best Care when staff are busy and under significant pressure can be challenging, but also very rewarding when they make a positive difference to a patient and their family.

NURSING & MIDWIFERY

THE ART AND SCIENCE



A nurse is a professional who is educated in the scientific knowledge, skills and philosophy of nursing, and regulated to practice nursing based on established standards of practice and ethical codes.

Nurses enhance health literacy, promote health, prevent illness, protect patient safety, alleviate suffering, facilitate recovery and adaptation, and uphold dignity throughout life and at end of life. They work autonomously and collaboratively across settings to improve health, through advocacy, evidence informed decision-making, and culturally safe, therapeutic relationships.

Nurses provide people-centred, compassionate clinical and social care, manage services, enhance health systems, advance public and population health, and foster safe and sustainable environments. Nurses lead, educate, research, advocate, innovate and shape policy to improve health outcomes.

(International Congress of Nursing 2025)

A midwife is a person who has successfully completed a midwifery education program based on the ICM Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice and the framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education, recognised in the country where it is located; who has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practice midwifery and use the title 'midwife,' and who demonstrates competency in the scope of practice of the midwife.

(International Confederation of Midwives 2024)



Every Patient, Every Time

ESSENTIALS OF BEST CARE

1. How We Think and Engage

Focuses on behaviours and teamwork, sets the tone for safe, person-centred care, to reflect culture, communication, and partnership with patients.



Communicating
with Kindness



Shared
Decision
Making



Person-centred
Handover



Team
Care

2. How We Assess and Plan

Promotes clinical thinking, risk assessment, and planning aligned to the NSQHS approach.



Assessment



Care planning
& Evaluation



Safety &
Quality



Medication
& Blood
safety

3. How We Deliver Care

Covers the specific actions and tasks that put plans into practice. These represent the practical, task-based elements of care delivery.



Monitoring &
Observation



Proactive
Rounding



Infection
Prevention



Documentation



Communicating with Kindness

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We respect our patients and each other
- We advocate for patients and each other
- We respect all views and opinions
- We ensure communication and diet/risk boards are up to date
- We show the WH CARES values in all we do
- We keep patients and families updated with plans and well informed



Shared Decision Making

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We include patients, families and carers in goal setting and care planning
- We respect advance care directives and goals of care decisions
- We include the whole team in leadership decisions about our service/unit
- We embrace multidisciplinary collaboration
- We show professional respect
- We advocate on behalf of patients and families



Person-centred Handover

COORDINATED CARE

- We include the patient, family and carers in handover
- We update the communication board and Goals of Care
- We communicate with the multidisciplinary team
- We keep patients, families and carers updated
- We create trust and safety for patients to tell us what is important to them



Team Care

COORDINATED CARE

- We work together, we are better together
- We trust each other
- We share responsibility for patient care and outcomes
- We role model for our early career staff
- We teach, nurture and guide
- We create a safe environment for all staff to speak up
- We share our fears, experience, wisdom and learning in a positive and safe way

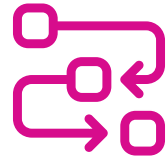




Assessment

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We complete and record a full patient head to toe systems assessment
- We complete and document all relevant risk assessment
- We don't wait to escalate
- We initiate referrals for specialist and multidisciplinary care



Care planning & Evaluation

RIGHT CARE

- Patients, families and carers are involved in care planning
- Care is evaluated and modified
- We follow the nursing/ midwifery process – Assess/ Plan/Implement/Evaluate
- We ensure patients have hygiene care, pressure area care, mobility and positioning care needs met



Safety & Quality

SAFE CARE

- We prioritise keeping our patients safe
- We report incidents, adverse events, near misses and learn from the outcomes
- We celebrate success
- We monitor data, performance and feedback to know how we are doing
- We complete mandatory training
- We are a highly trained, skilled, professional workforce
- We actively contribute to safety portfolios



Medication & Blood safety

SAFE CARE

- We administer medication and blood products safely
- We report and monitor incidents and data
- We reflect and learn from mistakes and near misses
- We seek specialist support and help from others





Monitoring & Observation

SAFE CARE

- We engage with patients, families and carers
- We complete regular patient checks and pre-empt care needs
- We complete and record observations, vital signs and measure clinical data
- We don't wait to escalate
- We utilise additional care resources, delegation and allocation to ensure safe care



Proactive Rounding

PERSON CENTERED CARE

- We complete regular patient rounding and safety checks
- We complete leader rounding
- We see our leaders and managers regularly
- We complete and document regular and frequent interactions with our patients



Infection Prevention

SAFE CARE

- We perform Hand Hygiene
- We adhere to PPE requirements
- We keep us and patients safe
- We seek and follow expert advice
- We Scrub the Hub
- We adhere to aseptic technique safely
- We collaborate with patients and families to share infection prevention responsibilities



Documentation

COORDINATED CARE

- We maintain contemporaneous medical records
- We don't copy and paste
- We only use approved abbreviations and terminology
- We complete progress notes and shift reports
- We document risk assessments and care plans
- We read records and share important information
- We document any missed or refused care



8 NSQHS STANDARDS



Clinical Governance

Safety systems, leadership, accountability.



Partnering with Consumers

Patient involvement and communication.



Preventing and Controlling Infections

Infection prevention and control.



Medication Safety

Safe use of medicines.



Comprehensive Care

Holistic and coordinated care.



Communicating for Safety

Clear information sharing and documentation.



Blood Management

Safe and appropriate use of blood products.



Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration

Early detection and response to patient deterioration.



PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

Nurses and midwives are at the front-line of healthcare delivery; providing essential care to the community throughout their entire healthcare journey. Every day our nurses and midwives focus on the care and wellbeing of their patients and consumers providing comprehensive and integrated care across Western Health, serving a community of nearly 1 million people.

We practice within the five domains of professional practice as articulated in our Professional Practice Framework;

- Clinical Care
- Education
- Research
- Evidence Based Practice
- Leadership

Our nurses and midwives work in a range of settings and services from tertiary to subacute services, mental health and wellbeing, ambulatory care, community care, aged care and correctional care. In all of these settings our nurses and midwives have an important role in promoting health and delivering high quality care across all areas of the health care journey.



SKILL ACQUISITION

	NOVICE	ADVANCED BEGINNER	COMPETENT	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
Knowledge	Some disconnect between knowledge and practice	Working knowledge of key aspects of practice	Good working & background knowledge of area of practice	Depth of understanding of discipline & area of practice	Authoritative knowledge of discipline & deep tacit understanding across area of practice
Work standard	Satisfactory completion with close supervision	Straight forward tasks completed to an acceptable standard without close supervision	Achieving required standard but may require further development or refinement	Fully acceptable standard achieved routinely	Excellence achieved with relative ease
Autonomy	Needs close supervision or instruction	Able to achieve using own judgement, but supervision needed for overall performance	Able to achieve using own judgement	Able to take full responsibility for own work (& that of others where applicable)	Able to take responsibility for going beyond existing standards & creating own interpretations
Coping with complexity	Minimal ability to identify and manage high complexity requirements	Appreciates complex situations and can achieve partial management and resolution	Ability to manage complex situations through deliberate analysis & planning	Deals with complex situations holistically, decision-making more confident	Holistic grasp of complex situations, moves between intuitive & analytical approaches
Perception of context	Tends to see actions in isolation	Sees actions as a series of steps	Sees actions with growing consideration for longer-term goals	Sees overall 'picture' & appreciates the impact of individual actions	Sees overall 'picture' & alternative approaches; has vision of what may be possible



Team Care

Person-centred Handover

Communication with Kindness

Shared Decision Making



Safety & Quality

Infection Prevention

Medication & Blood



Assessment

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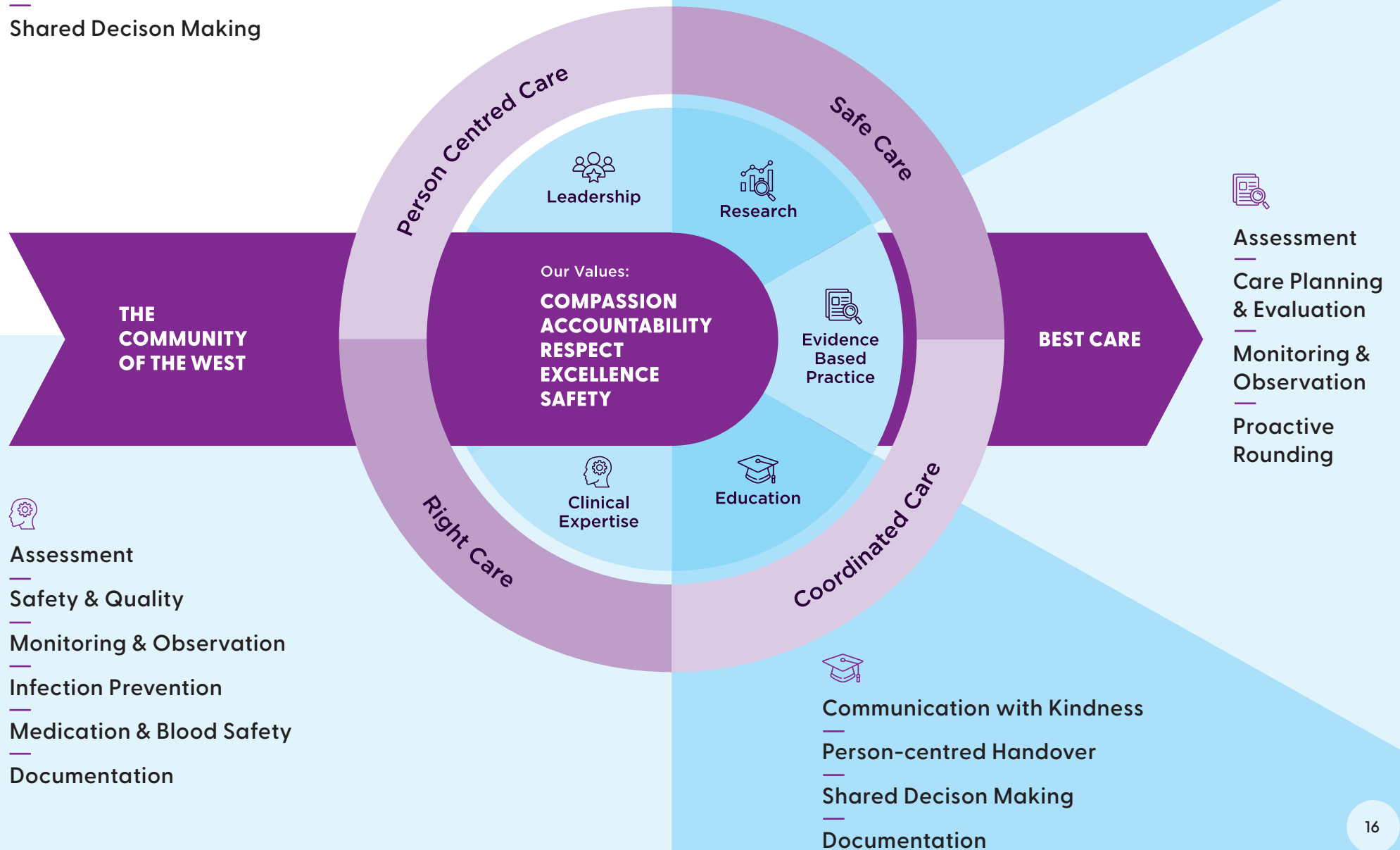


Communication with Kindness

Person-centred Handover

Shared Decision Making

Documentation



Our Professional Practice Framework underpins the Foundations of Best Care across the Domains of Practice for nurses and midwives;



Clinical Expertise

Nurses and midwives are accountable and responsible for the care they deliver and prescribe or delegate.

Critical thinking and decision making underpins safe, evidence-based care.

Nurses and midwives participate and lead;

- clinical decision making
- formation of the clinical plan
- committees and decision-making processes
- Internal and external policy, standard and practice development.



Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-based practice is an approach to care which takes into account:

- the combination of high-quality research and evidence,
- clinical expertise, and
- consumer values.

The successful application can:

- improve consumer outcomes,
- optimise systems
- support effective advocacy
- ensure safe, high-quality care

Nurses and midwives **SHOULD** challenge practice assumptions, ask questions and be curious about ways to improve practice





Education

Professional Development and Life-long learning are integral to nursing and midwifery, including:

- Supporting undergraduate student learning
- Early-career programs and transition to practice
- Continuing professional development (CPD)
- Mandatory CPD to support working safely in the workplace
- Opportunities to discover, explore and try out new clinical areas and specialities
- Specialty skills, knowledge, Post-graduate and Advanced Practice programs

Nurses and midwives educate themselves, patients, families and carers and other professionals.



Research

Research is an essential element of what underpins our professional practice. It drives clinical decision-making and advances in nursing and midwifery practices.

Nurses and midwives:

- generate knowledge through leading research
- collaborate in research
- participate in research
- read and learn from research to inform practice.



Leadership

Clinical leadership includes:

- a clinician with management or leadership roles who can use their positional power to change behaviour, practice or performance
- any nurse or midwife that can use their influence to change behaviour, practice or performance.

You do not need to be in a formal management role to be a leader



	Essentials of Best Care elements that aligns	Link to PDP	Evidence examples
Leadership Domain	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife demonstrates leadership behaviours by creating psychologically safe teamwork, role modelling kindness, and supporting shared decision-making with patients and families.	Leading a huddle, escalating concerns, supporting junior staff, role-modelling positive handover techniques, promoting teamwork on shifts.
Research Domain	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife used evidence to change practice. Reading research, using evidence to guide practice, contributing to safety initiatives.	Embed new infection-prevention strategies, safe blood practices. Participation in audits, quality projects, or falls/pressure injury data review.
Evidence-Based Practice Domain	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife embeds and uses information meaningfully (not as a tick-box).	How they identify risks, use patient goals in assessment and planning, escalate deterioration, evaluate care effectiveness
Education Domain	Communicating with Kindness Person-centred Handover Shared Decision Making Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife uses communication, teaching and learning. Documentation practices and insight.	How they provide patient education How they support junior staff, students, or carers. How they use EMR documentation as an educational and care-coordination tool.
Clinical Expertise Domain	Assessment Safety & Quality Monitoring & Observation Infection Prevention Medication & Blood Safety Documentation	Demonstrates how the nurse/midwife understands clinical expertise is about critical thinking, decision-making, contribution to standards, using risk information to guide care.	How they used clinical judgement in deterioration, complex care, or risk assessment decisions. Contribution to unit governance, champion programs or policy work. Participation in safety huddles or escalation pathways.

