

# Chapter 16 Delegation in Nursing

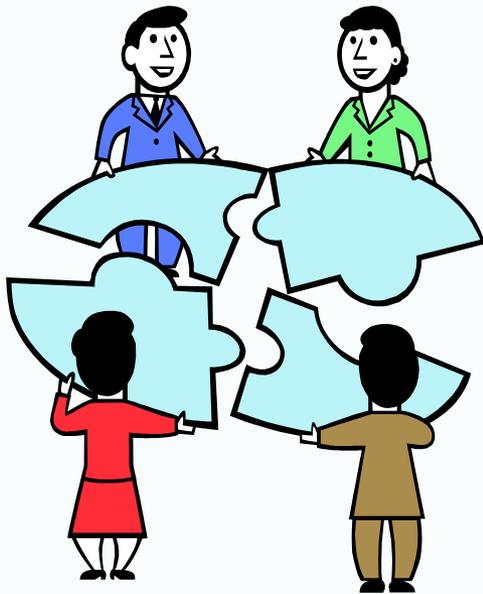
Joseph T. Catalano

# Delegation

- An essential component of client care
- An essential component of the management of nursing units



# Delegation (cont'd)



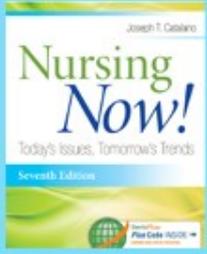
- Allows health-care managers to maximize the use of caregivers who are educated at multiple levels
- Allows nurses to meet the requirements of quality care for all clients
- A basic skill that registered nurses (RNs) must learn



# Delegation (cont'd)

- The goal of delegation is to meet the cost restraints of limited health-care budgets by using less expensive personnel that maximize the use of time by RNs and promote teamwork.

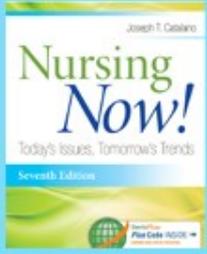




# Delegation Versus Supervision

- **Delegation** is the designation of a competent individual to the responsibility of carrying out a specific group of nursing tasks in the provision of care for certain clients.
- **Supervision** is the initial direction and periodic evaluation of a person performing an assigned task to ensure that he or she is meeting the standards of care.

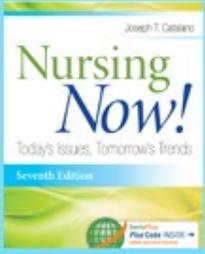




# Delegation Versus Assignment

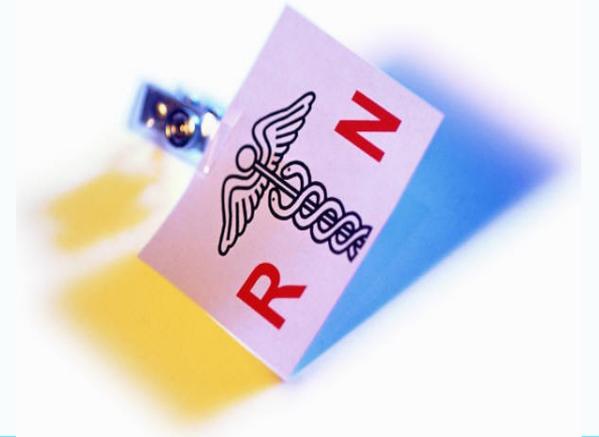
- **Delegation** is the designation of a competent individual to the responsibility of carrying out a specific group of nursing tasks in the provision of care for certain clients.
- **Assignment** is designating tasks for ancillary personnel that fall under their *own level of practice* according to facility policies, position descriptions and, if applicable, state practice act (licensed practical nurse [LPN] and licensed vocational nurse [LVN]).

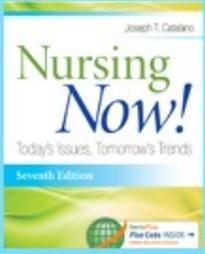




# Legality of Delegation

- When nurses delegate nursing tasks to non-nurses, the RNs are always **legally responsible** for supervising that person to ensure that the care given meets the standards of care.
- Legally, the power to delegate is restricted to **professionals who are licensed** and governed by a statutory practice act.



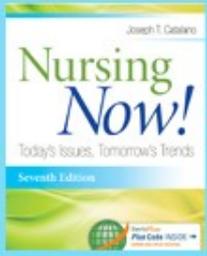


# Nursing Responsibilities When Delegating



- Assess the client.
- Know staff availability.
- Know the legalities in the nurse practice act.
- Know the job description.
- Educate the staff member.

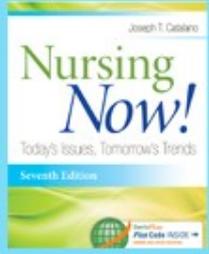




# Delegation on the NCLEX

- For delegation questions, match the activity with the person.
  - Know the person's skill level and education.
  - Know the job description.
  - Evaluate the client's status.
    - Acute (no) vs. chronic (yes)
    - Unstable (no) vs. stable (yes)

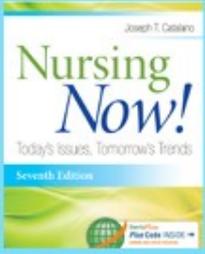




# Delegation on the NCLEX RN to LPN

- LPNs can do most skills, but for the NCLEX they
  - **Cannot** do admission assessments
  - **Cannot** give IV push medications
  - **Cannot** write nursing diagnoses
  - **Cannot** do most teaching
  - **Cannot** do complex skills
  - **Cannot** take care of clients with acute conditions
  - **Cannot** take care of unstable clients





# Delegation on the NCLEX RN to UAP

- **Unlicensed assistive personnel (UAPs), Certified nursing assistants (CNAs), and Aides**
  - Look for the lowest level of skill required for the task.
  - Look for the most uncomplicated task.
  - Look for the most stable client.
  - Look for the client with the chronic illness.



# Key Skills for Delegation

## ■ Clear communication

- Make eye contact with the other person.
- Be pleasant.
- Ask for suggestions.
- Avoid allowing the person to whom the tasks are being delegated to control the exchange by intimidation or resistance.



# Key Skills for Delegation (cont'd)

- **Careful monitoring**
  - Are they doing what they should be doing?
  - Do they understand the responsibilities involved in the client's care?
  - Help them!
  - Say "Thank you—good job!" when they are done.



# Key Skills for Delegation (cont'd)

- **Assessing the client**
  - Before delegating any task, RNs should give careful consideration to the condition of the client and the client's health-care needs.
  - Assessing clients is a designated **responsibility** of RNs.

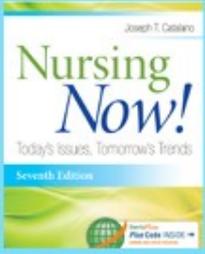


# Key Skills for Delegation (cont'd)



- **Assessing the client (cont'd)**
  - Without a thorough assessment, it is likely that critical needs will remain unidentified by less-trained personnel, leading to potential errors in care.





# Key Skills for Delegation (cont'd)

## ■ **Knowing staff availability and skills**



- Know the availability of staff.
- Know their education and competency levels.
- Match staff with the level of care required by the client.
- Determine how often the delegatee has performed the required tasks or cared for this type of client.
- Know what units the delegatee has worked on and feels comfortable in.

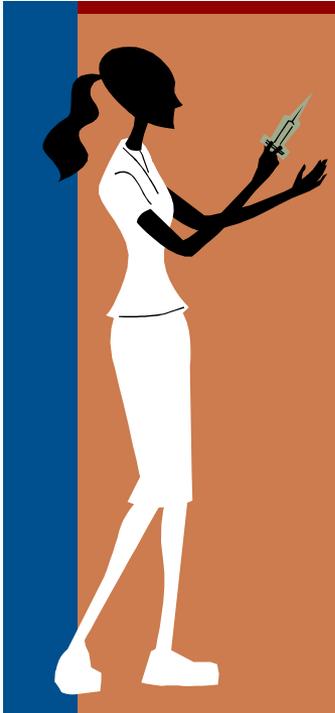


# Key Skills for Delegation (cont'd)

- **Knowing the job description**
  - Know the institution's official position description for the UAP, LPN/LVN, and others.



# Key Skills for Delegation (cont'd)



- **Educating the staff member**
  - If the person is unfamiliar with the task, the RN is required to demonstrate how the task or procedure is performed.
  - Document the training.
  - Tell the person what is expected in the completion of the task.
  - Explain what complications to watch for and report to the RN.



# Direct Versus Indirect Delegation

- **Direct delegation**

- A specific decision made by the RN about who can perform what tasks.

- **Indirect delegation**

- A list produced by the health-care facility of tasks that certain health-care personnel can perform.



# Problems With Indirect Delegation

## ■ Indirect delegation

- A form of covert institutional licensure.
- It takes away much of the authority of the RN to assign personnel tasks.
- The RN remains accountable for the safe completion of the tasks under the doctrines of **respondent superior** and **vicarious liability**.

