

IHP's and the Nursing Process

In this document, the term Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP) is used to document the nursing process that school nurses use to plan and provide care for students with health care needs. In the scientific and professional literature, there are a variety of terms and associated acronyms for this same document: nursing care plan, individual health plan, case management program, etc.

An IHP is composed of the following nursing-process components. ^{1, 2, 3, 4}

1. Assessment (begins with a history and physical exam)
2. Nursing Diagnosis
3. Identify Goals of Care
4. Planning and Implementation (Nursing Intervention Classifications)
5. Document Student Outcomes (Nursing Outcome Classifications)
6. Evaluation of Student Response and Nursing Care

Individualized Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are developed for students with health conditions that require ongoing nursing and health related services during the school day. Students that may necessitate the creation of an IHP include:

1. Students that have been granted permission to self-medicate or self-monitor their condition.
2. Students that require medications, treatments, or procedures performed by school personnel.
3. Students that have frequent contacts with the school nurse or unlicensed assistive personnel during the school day.⁵

By creating an IHP, the school nurse documents the nursing process.⁶ In Texas, only a registered nurse may develop the IHP, however, the parents, teachers and other school personnel can contribute information in formulating the IHP. A comprehensive nursing assessment is the first step in the development of the IHP. During the nursing assessment the school nurse collects objective and subjective data pertinent to the student's current health status as well as conducts a physical exam.

The school nurse analyzes the collected data and determines the appropriate nursing diagnoses based on the nursing assessment. For clarification, the nursing diagnosis is a clinical judgement made by the school nurse about the student's response to actual or potential health problems or life processes.⁷



The nursing diagnosis will guide the school nurse in selecting the interventions necessary to help the student maintain good health, with the primary goal of enhancing student learning. The interventions will detail the action that the nurse or unlicensed assistive personnel will take during the school day to adequately provide care for the student.

As part of the nursing process, the school nurse identifies the outcomes that should be expected for the student. The outcomes are based on the nursing interventions that will be provided and the student's role in their own health maintenance. Expected outcomes can be both short and long term, and both mental and physical in nature. For example, a goal for a student may be to have greater knowledge and self-awareness of their condition.

An IHP may contain additional components to address the student's school experience. Other areas that may be considered in IHPs include modifications that relate to specific limitations for physical activities or field trips, food restrictions, allergies, school based transportation, and maintenance of medical equipment and supplies.⁸

If the student has a condition that could potentially result in a medical emergency, then an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) should also be drafted.⁸ The ECP is to help school personnel understand what actions should be taken in the event of a medical emergency.

Once an IHP is drafted, it should be reviewed by all relevant parties, including school staff that will be assisting the student. The school nurse may want to review the IHP with the parents or guardians of the student, the student's primary care physician, specialist, other relevant school personnel, or the student. The IHP should be revised when the student's physical condition or care needs change based on a follow up nursing assessment. The IHP should be reviewed and updated periodically to determine if the expected outcomes are occurring as planned. Results of follow-up nursing assessments should be recorded in the student's health record and considered when revising a student's subsequent IHP.

At a minimum, IHPs should be reviewed and updated annually.

References

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