Continuing professional development (CPD) articles

These guidelines are designed to help you submit suitable CPD articles to the evidence & practice section of the RCNi journals. Please note that your manuscript must be submitted to one journal ONLY, whether it is published by RCNi or any other company. Submission to more than one journal will not increase your chances of publication. Editors will not consider articles that have been published elsewhere.

Structure and content
Editorial content will usually be agreed with you in advance of your submission by the commissioning editor. In writing the article, you should keep in mind the level of nurse you expect to read the content and, where appropriate, the specialty in which they work.

You should start the article by stating clearly:
1. The overall aim.
2. The learning outcomes – four or five are usually sufficient.
3. Relevance to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Code – identify four or five ways in which the content of the article relates to the four themes of The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives, published by the NMC (2015). These themes are: prioritise people, practise effectively, preserve safety, and promote professionalism and trust. Examples include:
   - An important component of mindfulness is reflection, which the Code states is important in improving nurses’ practice and performance.
   - The Code states that nurses must ensure people’s physical, social and psychological needs are recognised, assessed and responded to. The article equips nurses to discuss the importance of weight loss and necessary lifestyle adjustments in the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes.
   - The information provided about healthy lifestyle behaviours can be used to inform practice. The Code requires that nurses keep their knowledge and skills up to date.
4. The article should end with a conclusion summarising the main points covered in the article.

Style and tone
A CPD article requires a tone that is consistent and user friendly. The style should be professional, but does not need to be overly ‘academic’ to impart information of a sufficiently high level and quality. Aim to make it concise, clear, directive, factual and evidence based; you should seek to teach readers, rather than suggest a particular course of action.

Think about the best way to present detailed information. It may be more clearly understood as a graph, table or pie chart, or as a list of bullet points. It is important to ensure that the information you provide is available, accessible, accurate and unambiguous.

Time out activities
Between five and ten time out activities should be included in the module. The purpose of these is to make readers stop and reflect on what they are reading and relate it to their practice or experience.

Each activity should have a clear purpose; for example, it may test whether readers have achieved one of the stated learning outcomes, or you could introduce a new idea by asking readers to think about, and then write down, what they understand by a particular term or concept.

You might suggest that readers discuss a particular aspect of nursing practice with colleagues, or ask someone from another professional group, such as a physiotherapist, to interpret a particular patient’s health need.

Another angle you may take is to ask readers to compare two views that have been presented. In another section, you may ask them to access national figures, such as those focusing on the incidence of a health problem in their local area.

It is appropriate learning practice to include commentary, debriefing or feedback for each activity. This does not necessarily mean providing the right answer; often, there are no right answers.

Rather, you should give readers an indication of whether they are on the right track or comment on any difficulty they may have had. You might also suggest where they could find further information or help as necessary.

We suggest that you write the time out first and follow it with the relevant text that relates to it.

Here are two examples to consider:

**Time out 1**
‘Identify three actions you intend to take to explore mindfulness and self-compassion further. These could include, for example, purchasing one of the books in the reference list of this article or finding out about mindfulness training offered at work. Write down these actions and put them somewhere you are likely to see them regularly until you have completed them.’

**Time out 2**
‘Read the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2014) guidance on the identification, assessment and management of obesity. Are you implementing this guidance in your practice? List three improvements that could be made to your practice as a result of reading the guidance and think about how you could disseminate this information to your colleagues.’

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Acknowledgements
If you wish to acknowledge a person(s) or organisation(s), please contact the relevant person(s) or organisation(s) and ensure that they are happy to be named in your article and confirm this in writing.

Conflict of interest
Authors should declare any conflict of interest, financial or otherwise. If this applies to you, please provide a statement acknowledging this at the end of the article.

References
All written material should be referenced using current literature and primary sources. Please adhere to the Harvard style for writing references (see below) and ensure that all the information required is included.

It is the author's responsibility to ensure that references are accurate. Overuse of online internet references is not advisable because these may be unreliable; links can break easily and information may be withdrawn at any time.

References in the text
Please ensure that you use the Harvard (name and year) system for references in the text. For example, ‘It has been suggested that nurses should examine their relationship with patients (Brown 2015)’. For three or more authors, print the first author’s name followed by ‘et al’, for example ‘White et al (2016) argued.’ Note that White et al is acceptable for White, Red and Blue but not for White and Red, which should be written as ‘White and Red (2016)’.

When several references are cited simultaneously, the order should be chronological, from earliest to most recent. If there are two or more references to the same author, the order should also be chronological, for example ‘(NICE 2016, 2017)’.

References in the reference list
Each journal reference should include (in this order):
1. The author’s surname and initial(s); write the surname and initial(s) of all authors for references with three authors or fewer. For four or more authors, write the first three and add ‘et al’.
2. The year of publication in brackets.
3. The title of the article in full.
4. The name of the journal in full.
5. The volume, issue number and first and last page numbers, separated by a hyphen.
6. Use alphabetical order for references. If there are two or more references to the same author, use chronological order.

Each book reference should include (in this order):
1. The author’s surname and initial(s). Please indicate if the people cited are editors.
2. The year of publication in brackets.
3. The title of the book in full.
4. The edition (if not the first).
5. The publisher.

6. The city of publication (and the state if in the US, province or territory in Canada, and territory in Australia).
7. If you are citing a chapter in a book, supply the author’s name, chapter title and page numbers.
8. Use alphabetical order for references. If there are two or more references to the same author, use chronological order.

Examples


Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the unreferenced use of others’ published work or unpublished ideas or opinions that are represented as your own work: for example, copying or paraphrasing text, a sentence, paragraph, table or figure from another’s work and not referencing it. Plagiarism also applies to work that you have published previously.

The article must be your own work and should be written in your own words. All mention of others’ work must be attributed to the originating author(s) and referenced in full. Any direct quotations must be included in single quotation marks. If substantial sections of text or illustrative material are used in the article, you must obtain written permission from the copyright holder before submitting the article for publication.

All articles submitted to RCNi are checked for plagiarism using an automated software package.

Deadlines
Editorial deadlines are set to allow time for the articles to be peer reviewed and edited. Articles are subject to peer review. It is imperative that authors keep to the deadlines agreed with the commissioning editor so production schedules can be maintained and the high-quality of the articles ensured. You will be sent PDF proofs for checking in advance of printing. If for any reason you are unable to meet the agreed deadline, please inform the commissioning editor so production schedules can be maintained.

Length
The articles should be between 4,000 and 5,000 words in length; excluding the references. Please be aware that articles exceeding this word limit may be sent back to the author to be cut before being sent for external peer review.

Diagrams and illustrations
Any diagrams, figures or tables required to illustrate the text should be supplied at the same time as the article. They may be redrawn in-house to ensure a consistent style and design but should be clear and easy to read and understand. Please supply an appropriate title and annotations with each diagram.
Illustrations from books and other journals can be used but, because of copyright restrictions, permission must be sought by the author in advance from the publishers and acknowledgement given in the text. Please allow sufficient time to gain permission since this can take up to 12 weeks.

Diagrams should be clearly numbered and referenced in the text. Suggestions on other pictures or illustrations are always welcome. Please also remember that articles will appear online, so consider podcasts and video clips to enhance your work.

**Submitting your CPD manuscripts**

Manuscripts should be submitted through the online submission system, Editorial Manager. To access this system, please go to your chosen journal in the ‘Explore our journals’ section, at rcni.com/write-us/explore-our-journals

A tutorial to help authors use the system is available through the ‘Instructions for authors’ link on that page. The registration and submission process will ask for your contact details and the following information for all other authors of your article: full name, job title, institution, email address and country.

**What happens next?**

When we receive your article, it will be sent simultaneously to two external expert referees for peer review. You will be contacted by the commissioning editor with feedback and any suggested amendments.

On acceptance, you will be asked to sign and return a form releasing copyright to RCNi.

Your article may be repurposed for our e-learning platform. If this is planned, you will be offered the opportunity to update the text and/or the references as necessary.

**Fee**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this CPD initiative by writing an article. An honorarium of £250 is payable following its publication.

**Contacts**

If you experience any difficulties, please contact the relevant editor at any time to discuss your manuscript.

**Complaints**

RCNi is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which will investigate complaints that members have not followed the COPE code of conduct for journal editors. www.publicationethics.org.uk

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