



HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY	
TITLE: Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Nursing and Midwifery Practice – Position Statement	
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 2005	REVIEW DATE: April 2007
NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW: April 2009	
BOARD: Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory	

1. Introduction

Nursing practice has always included a range of therapeutic approaches and interventions. Complementary therapies and Alternative Medicine are widely used throughout Australian society. This should continue to be recognised and valued where it does not do harm.

2. Definition

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) refers to a broad set of health care practices that are not part of a country's own tradition and not integrated into the dominant health care system. Other terms sometimes used to describe these health care practices include 'natural medicine', non-conventional medicine' and 'holistic medicine'. (WHO)

The term "complementary therapies" encompasses interventions which may complement the care more traditionally provided by nurses/midwives and may include but is not limited to therapeutic touch, massage, relaxation, meditation, visualisation, aromatherapy, reflexology, iridology, yoga, and kinesiology.

3. Principles:

- Individuals receiving treatment must provide informed consent.
- CAM therapies may be practised within a specific cultural context. Nurses and Midwives must be mindful and respectful of cultural beliefs.
- Individuals have the right, wherever possible, to the health care of their choice.
- Some CAM therapies alone or in combination with conventional medicine have the potential to have risks or side effects.
- Regardless if orthodox or complementary, an accredited nurse/midwife must observe the ANMC '*Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia 2003*', '*Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia 2002*' and '*Competency Standards*'

4. Guidelines

4.1 Clients using or potentially wanting to use CAM should have:

- A health assessment to determine if the use of complementary therapy is appropriate:
 - Culturally and spiritually for the client;
 - For the client's medical/nursing diagnosis; and
 - For the clinical setting in which the client is being treated
- An explanation of the difference between the options available including risks side effects benefits and cost, including when a client is making a choice between a conventional medicine or CAM.
- Notification of the CAM to the treating physician/medical team.
- Where applicable, a CAM practitioner with recognition from the appropriate professional body, giving the practitioner the right to practise a particular therapy.

4.2 Nurses and Midwives who incorporate CAM into their practice should:

- Have post registration educational qualifications in specialised techniques and modalities of the recognised CAM. These should be recognised by the appropriate professional body as giving the practitioner the right to practise a particular therapy.
- Be supported by an evidence base and ensure that their patients are told the degree to which tests, treatments or remedies have been evaluated, and the degree of certainty and predicability that exists about their efficacy and safety.
- Be supported by written policies and protocols endorsed by the employing facility.

Guidelines should include:

- Who can practise complementary therapies, including the qualifications, experience, competencies, training and credentialing necessary;
 - Type of clients, conditions, assessment and referral;
 - Type of therapies that may be practised and any limitations on the practise of those therapies;
 - Where the therapies can be performed;
 - Documentation and reporting requirements;
 - Type of client consent required; and
 - Information/education for clients regarding the use of therapies - Consumer Guidelines.
- Provide adequate documentation.
 - Initiate and participate in outcome-based research.

References

The Board of Western Australia's Policies for Complementary Therapy 2003.
<http://www.nbwa.org.au/2/23/50/Guidelines.pm>

Australian Nursing Federation complementary therapies in nursing practice.
Endorsed June 1998 reviewed and re-endorsed February 2005.
http://www.anf.org.au/publications/pubs_policy.html

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council, Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia 2003 <http://www.anmc.org.au/>

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council, Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia 2002 <http://www.anmc.org.au/>

Nurses and Midwives Board of New South Wales Complementary Therapies in Nursing Practice 1998 <http://www.nmb.nsw.gov.au>

Medical Council of New Zealand Statement on complementary and alternative medicine 2005 <http://www.mcnz.org.nz>

World health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines for developing consumer information on proper use of traditional, complementary and alternative medicine (2004). <http://www.who.int/medicines/library/trm/Consumer.pdf>