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Introduction

This review and study guide is designed to prepare you, the candidate, for the NCLEX-PN so that you can pass the examination and receive your license as a practical nurse. It has been written by nursing educators with many years of experience in the classroom as well as in the clinical area. Careful consideration has been given to every topic in the book to bring you greater understanding of nursing content, provide a brief yet comprehensive review, and enable you to prepare for this all-important examination both quickly and efficiently.

Each nursing area that you will be tested on is introduced by way of a brief Overview. Following the Overview, a series of questions are asked in a Practice Test. At the end of the Practice Test, rationales and explanations as to the correct response and why the other options are incorrect will further help you to prepare for the NCLEX-PN.

Reviewing nursing content in preparation for the NCLEX can be time-consuming, difficult, and sometimes overwhelming. This study guide has been created for the express purpose of providing graduates with a quick and efficient way to assure their success on the NCLEX-PN. It will be invaluable in furnishing the knowledge and the confidence needed, by preparing candidates in three fundamental ways.

First, this book increases the graduate’s knowledge of the subject matter with carefully written practice tests that include answers and rationales for every question, plus a 100-question practice test on CD, also with answers and rationales. All questions conform to the latest NCLEX test plan and format. The answers and rationales at the end of each practice test are designed to teach the graduate why the correct answer is right and why the three distractors are incorrect. All phases of Client Need are identified for every question: Health Promotion and Maintenance, Physiological Integrity, Psychosocial Integrity, and Safe, Effective Care Environment. Graduates can easily determine their competence in all of these areas.

Second, this book gives each graduate an opportunity to practice and learn test-taking skills and strategies that are vital for success on the NCLEX-CAT (Computerized Adaptive Testing). Becoming familiar with the CAT format and practicing how to select answers using the critical thinking process will improve test scores. Graduates who possess good test-taking skills and are able to apply knowledge correctly are more likely to experience success on the NCLEX the first time they take it.

Third, this book decreases test-taking anxiety. Many graduates tell us they study for tests but are too anxious to remember the subject matter being tested. By preparing for the NCLEX using this approach, graduates can feel confident because they have prepared appropriately. The authors have provided you with an efficient strategy for study, and we wish you well.

About the Examination for Nursing Licensure

Entry into the practice of nursing is regulated by your state board of nursing for the purpose of protecting the public from persons who are unable to practice safely and effectively. The NCLEX asks candidates to provide evidence of their ability to give competent nursing care. Candidates apply directly to their board of nursing to take the NCLEX-PN. For your convenience, a list of all the boards of nursing with their addresses and phone numbers is provided at the end of the introduction. The board of nursing will send you a candidate bulletin containing a registration form and information about the examination.

Basics of NCLEX-PN (CAT)

The licensure examination uses Computerized Adaptive Testing, or CAT, to measure a graduate’s knowledge. Questions will appear on the computer screen in several different forms. Most will continue to be the familiar multiple-choice question with four answer options. However, the testing agency has added several innovative formats that take advantage of up-to-date computer technology. You will answer some fill in the blank questions and some select all that apply questions, where there is more than one appropriate answer. Some items may ask you to identify an area (a “hot spot”) on a picture or drawing. Charts, tables, and diagrams may also be presented on the computer screen. The following examples show four ways that questions may appear on the NCLEX-PN.
1. Traditional multiple choice

Which type of chemical compound would you use to prevent the growth of bacteria?
1. bactericidal
2. bacteriolytic
3. bacteremia
4. bacteriostatic

Answer: 4

2. Fill in the blank

Lipids are a group of organic compounds that are insoluble in water and are commonly referred to as:

Answer: ______________________________

Answer: Fats
3. More than one answer (select all that apply)

When assessing your client’s neck, you will check for:

Select all that apply:

- 1. Range of motion (ROM)
- 2. Lymph nodes
- 3. Venous distention
- 4. Thyroid size and consistency

Answer: All the above

4. “Hot spot” (graphic image)

Your are taking your client’s apical pulse.
At which location will you place your stethoscope?

Answer: Click on #3
Before taking the NCLEX, candidates should read the booklet provided by their institution to nursing graduates. This booklet gives detailed explanations of licensure requirements and how to apply for and obtain a license to practice nursing.