

OPHLA Core Competencies

Core Competencies of Public Health Librarianship



Professional Core Competencies - Public Health Librarian / Information Professional

Develops & Manages Information Resources

- 1.1 Has expert knowledge of evidenced based public health practice, including the knowledge to critically evaluate and filter the information.
Practical examples: Evaluates print, CD-ROM and online versions of databases. Knows the best textbooks, journals and electronic resources in specific areas of public health. Collects, assesses, and maintains repositories of grey literature. Identifies emerging trends in information science and technology. Applies knowledge of research methodology to everyday practice. Facilitates access to electronic resources. Understands principles and practices of public health and governance at federal, provincial and municipal levels.
 - 1.1.1 Assesses and interprets the multidisciplinary needs of the public health workforce and local communities they serve to develop information collections and electronic services to meet those needs.
 - 1.1.2 Understands the diversity of bibliographic and non-bibliographic databases and provides expertise in searching key bibliographic databases.
 - 1.1.3 Uses critical thinking when selecting and analyzing the best information available for any given situation.
 - 1.1.4 Uses accepted standards in the subject control of information and applies classification and indexing principles to organize and describe public health information so that it can be identified and retrieved in the future.
 - 1.1.5 Creates and designs databases for effective information retrieval and access.

- 1.1.6 Creates and designs websites for information sharing, awareness and promotion.
- 1.1.7 Determines criteria for identification, selection and organization of public health information and educational materials, whether they are print, online versions of databases, or CD-ROM products.
- 1.1.8 Facilitates access to provincial, national and international government information in relation to public health issues, roles and responsibilities, and delivers grey literature to clients.

Develops & Manages Information Services

- 2.1 Develops and manages accessible and cost-effective information services that meet the strategic directions of the organization.

Practical examples: Develops a strategic plan linked to the business goals of the health unit and organization. Sets up effective management, supervision, and budget processes. Develops strategic partnerships with other libraries, i.e. Ontario Public Health Libraries Association, to ensure cost effective purchases, resource and information sharing. Actively seeks to participate and facilitate knowledge transfer internally, provincially and within public health libraries.

- 2.1.1 Develops a strategic plan linked to the business goals of the organization and a work plan that guides objectives and lists activities and timelines to meet the goals of the organization.
- 2.1.2 Creates a strong in-house library collection.
- 2.1.3 Effectively manages in-house library collection.
- 2.1.4 Utilizes the resources in print and electronic format to facilitate desktop/point-of-need access to information resources.
- 2.1.5 Implements effective and comprehensive current awareness services in order to promote knowledge transfer and information uptake in the host organization.
- 2.1.6 Develops networks with other individuals, organizations and agencies to facilitate resource sharing and to provide access to broader and more cost effective sources.
- 2.1.7 Develops policies and procedures for the efficient and effective operation of the library.
- 2.1.8 Designs and manages information services that meet the strategic information needs of the individual or group being served.
- 2.1.9 Fosters reliability while putting knowledge to work and linking the information user with the right information at the right time.

Develops & Manages Educational Resources & Services

- 3.1 Develops and provides educational instruction and support for library and information service clients.

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Practical examples: Creates tutorials on use of library resources. Promotes use of public health tools available through the Public Health Information Portal, i.e. The Collaboration Tool. Provides training to staff in the organization. Creates pathfinders i.e. evidence based public health resources available on the OPHLA website. Provides consultation on copyright issues. Supports staff initiatives in publishing i.e. submitting an article to a journal, obtaining an ISBN, and citation formatting.

- 3.1.1 Instructs staff on effective searching of quality public health and health policy information, including the assessment of valid and reliable information.
- 3.1.2 Promotes awareness of emerging public health information resources.
- 3.1.3 Supports continuing education by providing relevant resources and developing new education tools to meet emerging needs.
- 3.1.4 Provides instruction and support so that end users can make optimal use of the information resources available to them and works in the interconnected world of print and electronic media to provide the best mix of information resources appropriate for the environment.
- 3.1.5 Provides leadership and guidance in designing and implementing customized database management systems for resources developed by and/or housed by the organization ensuring adequate records are created, captured and accessible.

Practical examples: Searchable databases of newspaper clippings, pamphlets and other materials produced by health unit.

- 3.1.6 Provides expertise in bibliographic control to staff products so that appropriate and necessary data is attained, accurate and compliant with the law.

Practical examples: Assures copyright requirements are met; assures fact finding and reference accuracy; and obtains ISBNs for staff developed products.

- 3.1.7 Assists health unit publishing of web-based resources using optimum levels of library and metadata descriptions for quick content retrieval of information resources.
- 3.1.8 Acknowledges the rights of libraries and library end users that pertain to current copyright law and promotes awareness of intellectual property.

Develops & Manages Information Technology

- 4.1 Uses information technology to promote, acquire, organize and disseminate information.

Practical examples: Sets up automatic journal table of contents delivery for clients. Creates Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI's). Sets up and organizes shared drive file structures.

- 4.1.1 Creates an on-line catalogue of the library's collection.
- 4.1.2 Works with the information technology team to select software and hardware for desktop access to the library catalogue and other databases.
- 4.1.3 Consults on the organization and access of information on electronic tools available to all public health staff.
- 4.1.4 Understands and utilizes the concepts of information architecture and technology as they apply to Web site design, creation and evaluation.
- 4.1.5 Designs and locally produces materials in a variety of formats and compiles health information resources and/or pathways that are accessible via the internet and other national information networks.
- 4.1.6 Keeps current with new electronic information products and different ways to provide information delivery.
- 4.1.7 Uses information access, resources, and technology as a basis for providing library and information services.

Develops & Evaluates Library Services

5.1 Develops and evaluates library services.

Practical examples: Evaluates use of resources and makes decisions about inclusion and exclusion of Journal titles in collection. Frequently consults with staff on their information needs related to current project. Actively seeks collaboration with health unit staff. Builds the library collection around the mandatory program guidelines. Continuously markets the library to increase the use of its services via staff presentations, newsletters etc.

- 5.1.1 Gathers data related to the frequency of use of services and customer satisfaction.
- 5.1.2 Actively seeks opportunities to improve on key services such as reference and resource sharing, current awareness, etc.
- 5.1.3 Continually improves information services in response to the changing needs of the end user and organization.
- 5.1.4 Participates in benchmarking initiatives of various library organizations and utilizes the data to improve quality and scope of services.

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Personal Competencies - page 5...

Personal Core Competencies - Public Health Librarian/Information Professional

6.1 Attitudes

- 6.11 Flexible and positive in an ever-changing environment.
- 6.12 Focuses on continuing learning throughout career. Practical example: Seeks out performance feedback and uses it for continuous improvement.
- 6.13 Innovative. Practical example: takes risks in developing new information resources and services.
- 6.14 Utilizes communication skills to deliver highest quality information products and services.
- 6.15 Belongs to organizations and actively participates in activities which promote libraries and librarianship.

6.2 Skills

- 6.2.1 Demonstrates the value of their contributions; good communicators.
- 6.2.2 Sees the big picture. Practical example: Recognizes that information seeking and use is part of the creative process for individuals and for organizations.
- 6.2.3 Uses library-based knowledge and skills to solve a variety of information problems in a wide range of settings.
- 6.2.4 Fosters reliability while putting knowledge to work and linking the information user with the right information at the right time.
- 6.2.5 Continuously updates own professional skills by participation in a variety of educational events and courses.

6.3 Values

- 6.3.1 Takes on new roles in the organization that require an information leader.
- 6.3.2 Conducts work in an ethical manner that respects the confidentiality of patron inquiries and abides by professional standards in the field.
- 6.3.3 Values the contribution of all members of a team.
- 6.3.4 Uses research as a foundation for professional practice, and supports the conduct of research through professional associations.

Professional and Personal Competencies jointly anchor the Public Health Librarian/Information Professional's Core Competencies in Public Health librarianship.
