Marketing Evidence-Based Practice: What a CROC™!

Alice R. Boyington, RN, PhD, Sheila M. Ferrall, RN, MS, AOCN®, and Terry Sylvanus, RN, MSN, ACNS-BC, AOCN®

Nurses should be engaged in evidence-based practice (EBP) to ensure that nursing care is efficient and effective. This article describes one cancer center’s use of the Marketing Mix framework to educate staff nurses with the CROC™: Clinging Rigidly to Outdated Care campaign. As a result of the campaign, five EBP projects have been initiated in the cancer center.

Implementing evidence-based practice (EBP) is imperative to promoting effective nursing care that improves patient outcomes. Accordingly, health-care organizations must establish an environment whereby nurses are knowledgeable about EBP, identify potential practice changes, evaluate practice within an EBP framework, and change care practices. An institutional program of EBP needs participation by leaders, creation of a supportive infrastructure, and ongoing encouragement and education of staff.

This article describes an initiative to educate and engage nurses in EBP at a 206-bed National Cancer Institute–designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. Principles from marketing and education were applied in the design and implementation of a campaign to eliminate outdated practices and to promote an evidence-based approach to nursing care.

### Brand and Program Development

To determine staff nurse interest in learning more about EBP, a team consisting of a clinical nurse specialist, a staff nurse, and a nurse researcher made rounds with a 15-minute EBP presentation and poster to each inpatient unit. Basic EBP information was presented, and ideas for EBP projects were gathered. Observations from the EBP rounds substantiated that nurses were interested in learning more about EBP, and an aura of excitement surrounded the impromptu discussions that occurred during unit visits. The team decided to harness and build on that excitement.

Subsequently, an EBP working group was formed. The EBP working group, one of three working groups within the institution’s nursing research council, was charged with advancing and supporting evidence-based activities and initiatives and fostering a nursing culture of EBP in the cancer center. Staff nurses made up the majority membership of the group.

The EBP rounds team developed direction for the new working group. A literature review identified articles that described creative strategies, such as using a “sacred cow” theme for EBP education and implementation (Fetter, 1993; Rauen, Chulay, Bridges, Vollman, & Arbour, 2008). The team abandoned the sacred cow theme for two reasons. First, the center has a culturally diverse work force and the team wanted to avoid offending anyone because of religious or cultural beliefs. Second, the information technology department was preparing to undertake a new project titled COWS, an acronym for “computers on wheels,” and the team wanted to avoid confusion.

The team brainstormed an analogy to sacred cows that would represent nursing care practiced over long periods of time without evidence of efficacy, which evoked thoughts of ancient animals. Given the cancer center’s geographic location in Florida, the team discussed the fact that many reptiles, including crocodiles, have prehistoric lineage. A lively discussion ensued as the authors searched for additional information about the crocodile that would support the theme. A nonscientific Web search was conducted via Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/crocodile), and the authors learned much about crocodiles.

- Crocodiles have survived essentially unchanged since the time of the dinosaurs.
- Crocodiles have characteristic prehistoric physical appearances.
- Their streamlined bodies enable them to swim quickly and efficiently.
- Crocodiles cannot open their mouths if held closed.
- No reliable method exists to measure the age of a crocodile.
- The larger species can be very dangerous to humans.
The characteristics were a perfect analogy for outdated or untested nursing care. The small group wanted to brand the campaign and, therefore, needed a logo. Through brainstorming, the team built the initiative around the theme of the CROC™: Clinging Rigidly to Outdated Care.

**Methods**

The EBP working group embraced the CROC theme and adopted the four P’s of the Marketing Mix framework (product, place, price, and promotion) to guide campaign rollout (McCarthy, 1964) (see Figure 1). Use of this proven approach gave the team the confidence needed to ensure a successful marketing campaign.

**Product**

The EBP working group developed the CROC educational product line, which includes a set of items designed to educate nurses on EBP and to assist them in skill development. A four-hour workshop was offered to staff and manager dyads three different times in January and February 2009, during which each step of the EBP process was reviewed. Forty nurses participated in the program. Workshop content included an introduction to the CROC theme and discussions about CROCs in oncology nursing practice. Members of the EBP working group also designed and developed the CROC toolkit, an electronic EBP resource (see Figure 2). The toolkit became available via the institution’s intranet in March 2009; to date, 80 nurses representing 17 different areas have completed the online EBP video course.

**Place**

The CROC campaign was delivered in several locations, including classrooms and virtual settings. Follow-up meetings to further develop CROC projects proposed by manager-staff dyads at the end of each workshop were held in clinical areas. Likewise, consultation with the workshop instructors continued via e-mail and in face-to-face interactions. Nurses throughout the inpatient units and outpatient clinics have electronic access to the intranet; therefore, the CROC toolkit is available at all times.

**Price**

The price was considered in terms of participant and teacher time and effort in various aspects of the campaign. Workshops were streamlined so that the content could be delivered in four hours. Busy clinicians and their managers found that streamlined workshops facilitated their participation but did not detract from their learning. Consideration of time and effort of staff nurse presenters also guided the development of the EBP video. The 60-minute video is divided into six topical areas that can be accessed individually on the institution’s intranet and completed in short periods of time. The video recordings continue to minimize the time and effort associated with continuously offering EBP content to nurses throughout the center. Other toolkit items can be accessed separately with minimal effort.

**Promotion**

Promotion of the CROC campaign included a branding strategy and varied modes of communication. Branding was accomplished through the use of the CROC acronym and design of an accompanying logo. The logo was designed to deliver the program’s message to nurses and motivate them to eliminate CROC practice (see Figure 3). Logo buttons were created to promote recognition of CROCs. The authors communicated with staff via print and electronic means. The list of the top 10 things every nurse should know about EBP was printed on small cards that affixed to employee identification badge holders. Doing so provided all staff with basic EBP information at a glance. The electronic toolkit was demonstrated at a number of nursing council and committee meetings, and the CROC campaign was described in the institution’s Magnet® newsletter. The institution also added a CROC overview to nursing orientation for newly hired nurses. The team continuously searches for new modes of communication for the CROC campaign.

**Outcomes**

To date, five CROC projects are under way that use the toolkit’s EBP project idea form and follow the processes outlined in the Moffitt Model for Evidence Based-Practice in Nursing. Project topics were determined by nurses interested in pursuing evidence about clinical issues or questions arising from their practice. The CROC projects are delirium interventions, electronic resources, examples of evidence-based practice (EBP) initiatives, glossary, project idea form, references, tips to help evaluate a research study, tools to appraise the evidence, top 10 things every nurse should know about EBP, tracking tool, video course (approved for 1 contact hour), video course reference guide, worksheet and table of evidence.

![Figure 1. Marketing Mix Applied to CROC™](image1)


![Figure 2. CROC™ Toolkit Contents](image2)
interventions to reduce falls in patients with hematologic conditions, timing of education in patients undergoing prostatectomy, efficacy of restrictions to decrease the likelihood of lymphedema after lymph node dissection, and postoperative prevention strategies for deep-vein thrombosis. The lymphedema project was accepted for presentation at a statewide Magnet Conference®.

**Discussion**

The team learned that branding is useful for communicating a message in a creative, engaging way, and involving staff nurses in all phases of the initiative translated to greater nurse buy-in. The CROC logo was an appealing means to deliver the program’s message and connect with staff. Application of marketing principles was valuable in guiding decisions that resulted in a campaign that appealed to the cancer center’s nurses and provided them with easy access to the product line. Other organizations might consider similar approaches to discourage staff from clinging rigidly to outdated care and ensure that patients receive nursing care based on the best evidence.

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**Author Contact:** Alice R. Boyington, RN, PhD, can be reached at deedee.boyington@moffitt.org, with copy to editor at CJONEditor@ons.org.

**References**


**Do You Have an Interesting Topic to Share?**

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