

Preparation for the CNL Examination



**CLINICAL NURSE LEADER PROJECT
CHRISTINE E. LYNN COLLEGE OF NURSING
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY**

General Approach to Studying



- Review Exam Blueprint
- Know that questions must be supported in literature
- Read the whitepaper and review any terms or concepts that may not be familiar to you.
- Try practice exams linked to AACN Website
- Keep the **CNL role mindset** on when answering the questions
- Review basic terminology from your research course
- If you are not a Med-Surg nurse or recent graduate --- review common medical-surgical diagnoses and treatment (CHF, Diabetes, COPD, Cancer Care)

Mental Preparation



- See the exam as a challenge, even a pleasant one
- Don't panic if you don't know the answer
- Approach with an attitude of confidence, not fear
- Trust your knowledge and preparation
- Make sure you have eaten before taking the exam
- Research is now showing if you spend 10 minutes prior to entering an exam writing down your worst fears about the exam – you actually enter with more confidence as you have confronted your stress.

Taking the Test



- Breathe deeply and collect your energy in the space
- Read stems carefully before distractors
 - Answer the question for yourself before proceeding
 - Consider elements that relate to the question as asked
 - Only then read the distractors

The Test



- **Two Sections – Two hours for each section with Multiple Choice first and then Simulation in a Computer Lab**

Multiple Choice – 105 questions – 15 are trial questions and 90 count. Recall, Application and Analysis

Clinical Simulation – Seven problems – 2 are in testing – 5 simulations will count

Multiple Choice Exam



- Four choices for each question – no points off for wrong answer
- Read stem carefully – think about how you would approach this in the **CNL role not as a staff nurse**
- You will probably be able to easily eliminate 1-2
- Look for the answer that stands out
- When in doubt choose the longest answer
- If nothing falls into place, re-read the question

Simulation Exam



- You are penalized for wrong answers so think carefully and critically
- Each problem has three components
 - The Scenario – read carefully
 - Information Gathering
 - Decision Making

Information Gathering



- Read all responses
- Consider elements of the set-up and use only the data you need to make a decision
- Less is usually more in this case as you are penalized for selecting too much or too little data

Avoiding Diagnostic Error



- Do not use a shotgun approach to data collection
 - **Points deducted** for requesting unnecessary information
 - In real life this approach does not improve accuracy of diagnosis
- Refine your diagnostic hypothesis list
 - “Rule in:” data that confirms a choice
 - “Rule out:” data that shows a possibility is not true
- Each piece of data may change the priority order of your hypotheses
- Don't settle on your choice too soon

Decision Making



- **Consider the highest risk diagnosis**
 - Preserving life
 - Preserving function
- **Consider priorities of your guidelines for CNL practice**
- **Some scenarios will guide you to select only one response and others will be as many as are appropriate.**

Good Advice



- Monitor your energy and emotional state as you proceed
- Take a minibreak periodically
- Your test results are emailed to you immediately after you finish the test.



Trust Yourself!