**Nutrition Care Process (NCP) and Nutrition Care Process Terminology (NCPT)**

The Nutrition Care Process is a systematic approach to providing high quality nutrition care. The NCP consists of four distinct, interrelated steps:

* **Nutrition Assessment**: The RDN collects and documents information such as food or nutrition-related history; biochemical data, medical tests and procedures; anthropometric measurements, nutrition-focused physical findings and client history.
* **Diagnosis**: Data collected during the nutrition assessment guides the RDN in selection of the appropriate nutrition diagnosis (i.e., naming the specific problem).
* **Intervention**: The RDN then selects the nutrition intervention that will be directed to the root cause (or etiology) of the nutrition problem and aimed at alleviating the signs and symptoms of the diagnosis.
* **Monitoring/Evaluation**: The final step of the process is monitoring and evaluation, which the RDN uses to determine if the patient/client has achieved, or is making progress toward, the planned goals.

Using the NCP does not mean that all patients get the same care. Use of a care process provides a framework for the RDN to individualize care, taking into account the patient’s needs and values and using the best evidence available to make decisions. Other disciplines in healthcare, including nursing, physical therapy and occupational therapy have adopted care processes specific to their discipline. In 2003, the Academy's House of Delegates adopted the NCP to provide RDNs with a framework for critical thinking and decision-making — leading to more efficient and effective care and greater recognition of the role of RDNs in all care settings.

At first the Nutrition Care Process may seem like a linear approach; however, during the course of an interaction/appointment with a patient or client, the RDN will often complete the assessment and diagnosis steps, and may begin a Nutrition Intervention when a patient reveals another piece of new assessment data/information that will cause the RDN to re-assess, and re-diagnose and perhaps modify the plan that he/she had started discussing with the client. Therefore, the Nutrition Care Process is represented as a circle in the Nutrition Care Model.

The Nutrition Care Model is a graphic visualization that illustrates the steps of the Nutrition Care Process as well as internal and external factors that impact application of the NCP. The central component of the Model is the relationship of the target patient, client, or group and the RDN. One of two outer rings represents the skills and abilities of the RDN along with application of evidence-based practice, application of the Code of Ethics, and knowledge of the RDN. The second of two outer rings represents environmental factors such as healthcare systems, socioeconomics and practice settings that impact the ability of the target group or client to benefit from RDN services. Screening and referral and outcomes management are also components of the model.

The Academy’s Nutrition Care Process and Terminology (NCPT) Committee has developed terminology for the RDN’s use in documenting patient care. Terminology was developed for each step of the nutrition care process and is provided a subscription format at <http://ncpt.webauthor.com>. The home page provides access to a variety of free information including the NCP tutorials that can be accessed under the resources tab. The yellow button on the home page links to a description of each subscription type and is where all subscriptions can be purchased using a credit card.