

Conflict of Interest (COI) Decision Tree

Conflict of Interest occurs when a person who has the ability to control content of a continuing nursing education activity has a financial relationship with a commercial interest organization*, and the products or services of which are related to the topic of the educational activity. Conflict of interest applies to the individual involved with the activity AND his/her spouse or significant other. A relationship is considered to be relevant if it is current or has existed within the past 12 months.

The nurse planner is accountable to assess for conflict of interest, and, if present, resolve the conflict as noted below. The nurse planner is also accountable for disclosing to learners that:

1. There is no conflict of interest for any person with the ability to control content of the educational activity OR
2. If anyone does have a conflict of interest, the disclosure must include the name of the person, the nature of the relationship, and the name of the commercial interest (Sharon Martin is on the speakers' bureau for XYZ Pharmaceutical Company).

NOTE: Employees of commercial interest organizations are NOT permitted to serve as planners, presenters, authors, content reviewers, or in any other role in an educational activity if the content of the activity is related to the products or services of the commercial interest organization.

The first step in the process is for the nurse planner to determine whether the person has the ability to control content. Then, assess if the person with the ability to control content has a financial relationship with a commercial interest organization. Next, determine if the products or goods of the commercial interest organization are part of the educational activity. If the answer to any one of these three questions is no then there is no COI. If the answer to any one of these is yes, then further investigation is needed by the Nurse Planner. Please note the Nurse Planner must be evaluated for his/her potential COI by another person familiar with ANCC criteria.

If there is a possibility that someone may have a COI, the nurse planner must work to resolve the COI.

Resolutions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Removing individual with conflict of interest from participating in all parts of the educational activity
- Revising the role of the individual with conflict of interest so the financial relationship is no longer relevant
- Not awarding contact hours for a portion or all of the educational activity
- Content of the educational activity evaluated by the nurse planner and/or planning committee for bias, balance in the presentation, and use of evidence-based content, and activity monitored to evaluate for commercial bias
- Content of educational activity evaluated by the nurse planner and/or planning committee for bias, balance in the presentation, and use of evidence-based content, and participant feedback reviewed for commercial bias
- Content of educational activity evaluated by an independent content reviewer for bias, balance in the presentation, and use of evidence-based content, and activity monitored to evaluate for commercial bias.

- * Commercial interest organization: any entity producing, marketing, reselling, or distributing healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients or an entity that is owned or controlled by an entity that produces, markets, resells, or distributes healthcare goods or services consumed by or used on patients. (ANCC, 2015)

