



College of
REGISTERED
PSYCHIATRIC NURSES
of Alberta

REQUISITE SKILLS AND ABILITIES FOR BECOMING A REGISTERED
PSYCHIATRIC NURSE IN ALBERTA

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Requisite Skills And Abilities Needed To Become A Registered Psychiatric Nurse In Alberta

The College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA) is the legislated regulatory body in which all Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN) in the province are regulated. The Health Professions Act (HPA 2000) and the Registered Psychiatric Nurses regulation (2005) set out the responsibilities of both the College (CRPNA) and the RPNs. This legislation sets out that CRPNA is responsible for governing RPNs in a manner that protects the public and serves the public interest. Meeting this expectation requires that registered psychiatric nurses be educated so that they are able to provide safe, competent and ethical psychiatric nursing care.

This document is designed to inform potential psychiatric nursing students, admission officers, nursing faculty, disability service providers and equity officers, and the public of the general demands and performance expectations of registered psychiatric nurses upon initial entry to practice in Alberta. Psychiatric nursing education prepares them with the foundational base necessary to be competent within the health care team and health care system. At the completion of the psychiatric nursing program all student psychiatric nurses must demonstrate the capacity to meet CRPNAs entry level competencies and be able to practice within the context of the CRPNA Standards of Psychiatric Nursing and Code of Ethics.

There are certain basic skills and abilities that are required to attain the entry to practice competences and these are called requisite skills and abilities for psychiatric nursing (RSAPN). Psychiatric nursing students gain the requisite skills and abilities through the progression of their nursing education program that prepares them for entry level competent practice. Graduation from an approved psychiatric nursing program does not automatically guarantee that you will meet the requirements to register as a psychiatric nurse.

REQUISITE SKILLS AND ABILITIES

The following eight categories set out the requisite basic skills and abilities required by psychiatric nursing students as they progress through the educational program and into entry level practice. These eight categories are considered fundamental in the provision of safe, competent and ethical psychiatric nursing practice.

1. Cognitive
2. Communication
3. Interpersonal
4. Behavioural
5. Physical
6. Sensory perceptual
7. Environmental
8. Ethical and Legal



The following examples of the eight essential requisite skills and abilities are just a snapshot of the typical entry level registered psychiatric nursing practice. The examples are intended to mean “including, but not limited to” the particular example provided.

COGNITIVE

Cognitive abilities and mental processes are the brain-based skills needed to carry out any task from the simplest to the most complex. They have more to do with the mechanisms of how we learn, remember, problem-solve, and pay attention rather than with any actual knowledge. Any task can be broken down into the different cognitive skills.

In psychiatric nursing practice:

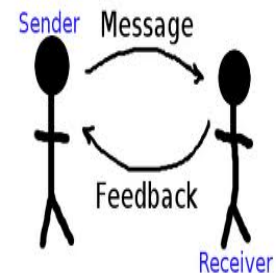
- Remember and recall information over a brief period of time
*short term memory
- Remember and recall information over an extended period of time *long term memory
- Problem-solve to develop professional judgement
- Reason to develop professional judgment
- Exercise critical inquiry skills to develop professional judgment
- Demonstrate complex computation skills in order to add, subtract, multiply and divide, calculate ratios, percentages and apply algebraic equations
- Make complex decisions in order to prioritize and administer care



Examples: Recalls clinical skills or signs and symptoms and diagnosis from previous clients, uses past experiences to inform current decisions, perceives when situations require further inquire; recalls written, oral or taped information provided by others, and calculates and verifies medication dosages, critically analyzes patient assessment data, chooses from potential interventions and recognizes untoward effects and intervenes as necessary.

COMMUNICATION

1. Use effective communication skills in complex situations
2. Deliver complex information effectively
3. Identify and address actual and potential constraints to communication
4. Evaluate effectiveness of communication in complicated situations
5. Use information technology
6. Lead and facilitate group discussions
7. Give and receive feedback for performance improvement
8. Use the principles and processes of open disclosure effectively
9. Use and understand medical terminology



Understand the factors which influence the communicate process:

- Age, culture, ethnicity, education level, environment, gender, language, lifestyle, physical, psychological, religion/spirituality, social, socioeconomic status, special needs, timing, etc.

Read, write, speak and understand English well enough to avoid mixing up words and meanings.



Examples: Able to elicit and attend to information from a client during an assessment (both verbal and nonverbal) and communicate findings both verbally and in writing to other health-care providers. Able to provide a therapeutic environment in all interactions with clients through a caring, sensitive, confident and reassuring manner. Able to identify and apply communication strategies and techniques appropriate to a range of varying complicated situations.

INTERPERSONAL

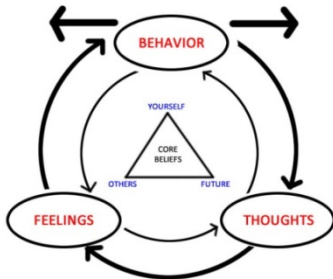


1. Develop professional therapeutic relationships and rapport with individuals and groups
2. Recognizes the needs of clients and colleagues
3. Maintain interpersonal boundaries
4. Understands personal and professional boundaries and limitations and
5. Address factors that inhibit therapeutic or working relationships



Examples: identifies that others have needs and perspectives that might be different from theirs; maintains professional boundaries with clients; educates and supports clients to make appropriate choices; recognizes and validates client perspectives and feelings.

BEHAVIOURAL



1. Manage own behaviour well enough to provide safe, competent and ethical psychiatric nursing care
2. Engage with self and others to create a safe environment
3. Engage in self-reflection to understand their own response to situations
4. Accept individual differences
5. Take and provide direction
6. Respond appropriately in situations that are stressful or that involve conflict
7. Practice in a manner consistent with established patient safety policies and procedures
8. React appropriately to giving and receiving physical touch and working in close proximity with a full range of clients.
9. Provide care in an unpredictable environment
10. Fulfill responsibility as part of a team
11. Manage time appropriately



Example: Set priorities in the face of multiple demands. Maintains a calm presence with clients regardless of the clients' behaviour. Behaviour demonstrates understanding of professional boundaries. Uses interpersonal and negotiation skills to settle disputes and responds appropriately to conflict.

PHYSICAL

The ability to perform the following well enough to provide client care and participate in educational activities:



1. Stand and maintain balance
2. Manual dexterity
3. Move within limited spaces
4. Push and pull
5. Perform repetitive movements
6. Perform complex sequences of hand-eye coordination
7. Bend
8. Reach
9. Lift
10. Walk
11. Climb
12. Carry Objects



Examples: Change a sterile dressing, climb stairs to do a home visit, help a person in and out of bed, help lift, turn or transfer clients, prepare and administer injections, able to move in small spaces between a patient's bed and equipment or in a patient's bathroom.

SENSORY PERCEPTUAL

Able to perceive with each of the following senses well enough to provide care and participate in educational activities:

1. Sight
2. Hearing
3. Touch
4. Smell



Examples: accurately assess blood pressure and feel a client's pulse; assess heart and breath sounds accurately, read the small print on medication packages and bottles; able to read numbers and lines of demarcation on a syringe; hears alarm bells, and verbal communication or sounds of other clients when they are not visible or in the immediate area where the care is being provided; assesses clients colour and skin temperature; able to recognize abnormal odors.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The ability to function in the presence of each of the following commonly encountered and unavoidable environmental factors:



1. Noxious smells
2. Disease agents
3. Distractions
4. Noise
5. Chemicals
6. Unpredictable behaviour of others



Examples: recognizes dangers in the client environment; potential exposure to infectious diseases, chemicals and allergens; tolerate disposing of body waste (urine, feces, vomit); and tolerate unpleasant and foul odors; deal with unpredictable behaviours in others.

ETHICAL AND LEGAL

Ethical and legal refers to the ability to operate within the frameworks of federal and provincial laws, and the ethical framework outlined by the College. Students in the psychiatric nursing program and RPNs in practice are required to:

1. Demonstrate honesty, truthfulness, integrity and good character
2. Understand clients' rights and the importance of:
 - Beneficence
 - Non-maleficence
 - Fidelity
 - Integrity
 - Respect for Autonomy
 - Justice
 - Informed Consent
 - Equity
 - Apology
 - Equality
3. Uphold client confidentiality and the right to personal information
4. Uphold the laws, codes and principles that guide the profession of psychiatric nursing and
5. Conduct behaviour in a manner consistent with provincial and federal laws.



Example: recognize unethical treatment of clients and report same to appropriate personal. Maintain client confidentiality and advocate for client rights.

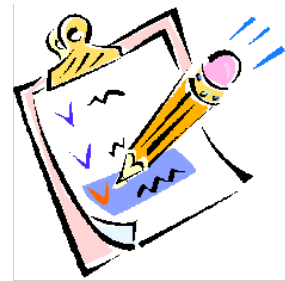


If you feel you lack the skills and abilities required for admission to, or progression through, the psychiatric nursing education program contact the program. You may be able to negotiate reasonable accommodations with your educational institution that help you complete the program. *However, meeting the requirements of your program with or without accommodations, does not automatically guarantee that you will meet the CRPNA's requirements to register and practice as an RPN.*

REGISTRATON REQUIREMENTS

Individuals who decide to pursue a career as a registered psychiatric nurse need to meet certain formal requirements for registration, including:

1. Successful completion of a recognized (approved) psychiatric nursing program
2. Passing the Registered Psychiatric Nurse of Canadian (RPNC) Examination
3. Demonstrating that they possess the good character expected of a registered psychiatric nurse
4. Fitness to engage in the practice of psychiatric nursing
5. Consent to a criminal record check
6. Participation in a continuing competence program
7. English language proficiency



Further registration requirements can be found on the CRPNA website: www.crpna.ab.ca under applicants.

CONCLUSION

The requisite skills and abilities for psychiatric nurses outlined in this document represent those that are required for an individual to meet the entry to practice competencies of a registered psychiatric nurse. For more information go to www.crpna.ab.ca or contact the CRPNA at 1.877.234.7666 or 1.780.434.7666.

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