

**STANDARDS
OF
PSYCHIATRIC
NURSING
PRACTICE**

PSYCHIATRIC NURSES ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

This publication sets forth Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice as developed by the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Canada. This is a working paper presently being tested for reliability.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Canada in the development of Standards of Practice is to assure that its membership continue to provide therapeutically safe, competent and ethical psychiatric nursing care.

In accordance with a resolution approved in October 1975 by the plenary session at the Annual Meeting of the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Canada, a committee was appointed to develop standards of practice for Psychiatric Nurses in Canada. Concomitantly the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Manitoba, Saskatchewan Psychiatric Nurses Association, Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Alberta, Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of British Columbia and Psychiatric Nurses Association of Nova Scotia appointed provincial committees to develop standards of practice. The "Working Paper" was reviewed by the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Ontario. The Psychiatric Nurses Association of Canada believes that Standards of Practice are essential to give direction for professional psychiatric nursing care and to encourage professional judgment and creativity.

The Psychiatric Nurses Association of Canada Standards of Practice describe minimum expectations for the practice of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse as they apply to his current practice responsibilities.

The following standards were developed with the intention of describing, in general terms behaviours expected of a Registered Psychiatric Nurse. An attempt has been made to utilize standards which sample the independent, dependent and interdependent behaviours of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse will require information and orientation to the requirements of the employing agency and the specific programs operating within that agency.

An adequate orientation is an essential prerequisite for the Registered Psychiatric Nurse as he strives to meet the standards expected of him.

It is fully recognized that the Registered Psychiatric Nurse must assume responsibility for his own continuing education.

The statement of standards describes the knowledge, skill and attitudes expected of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse. A rationale follows to explain the necessity for such a standard. Assessment factors are included to describe broadly the expected performance of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse in meeting the standards.

Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice may be used by the individual Registered Psychiatric Nurse or groups of nurses, schools of nursing, or institutions, to guide teaching and practice. By guiding research these standards may also be used to develop the professional growth of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse.

The Psychiatric Nurses Association of Canada acknowledges that ongoing review is essential in maintaining a contemporary document which is relevant to psychiatric nursing. It is anticipated that there will be regular revision in light of experience and changes in nursing practice. Members will be encouraged to contribute to the revisions as they did in the development of these initial standards.

Definitions explaining terms are provided in Appendix A.

STANDARDS OF PSYCHIATRIC NURSING PRACTICE

STANDARD I

COLLECTS DATA THROUGH PERTINENT CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS BASED ON A KNOWLEDGE OF NURSING AND THE BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES.

Rationale: Organized clinical observation is a prerequisite for realistic assessment of an individual's* needs and for formulation of appropriate nursing intervention.

Knowledge acquired in the study of the nursing, behavioral and physical sciences fosters acuity of perception and alerts the Registered Psychiatric Nurse to physical, psychological, cultural, social, spiritual and other relevant data.

Assessment Factors:

1. Collects data and identifies areas of need.
2. Observes, records, analyzes and presents data based upon principles derived from nursing as well as from the behavioral and physical sciences in so far as these are relevant to psychiatric nursing practice.
3. Analyzes and interprets behavioral and physical patterns of behavior.
4. Uses knowledge gained from the individual and other appropriate sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the individual's experience.
5. Discusses and validates observations with the individual and other appropriate persons.
6. Makes inferences from collected data to formulate psychiatric nursing interventions.

* Individual(s) refers to patient, client, consumer, resident or any person entering the health care system at any point for the purpose of receiving services.

STANDARD II

INVOLVES THE INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND APPROPRIATE OTHERS IN THE ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S NURSING CARE PROGRAM.

Rationale: Since the problem-solving process is a learning experience, the individual should be encouraged to participate as actively as possible in his program. The ability to participate in such a process will vary from person to person and even within the same person. The family unit is one of the most influential groups in society. Therefore, the most effective and individualized program may be developed when the family and other relevant persons are included.

Assessment Factors:

1. Assesses the individual's and family's capabilities for program participation.
2. Respects the individual's right to participate in decisions affecting his care.
3. Identifies priority of needs in collaboration with the individual and other relevant persons.
4. Provides the individual, and his family, with information about the individual's health problem.
5. Discusses with the individual alternatives which may be selected by the individual to deal with his health problem.
6. Determines with the individual the goals and method of achieving, evaluating and revising them.
7. Discusses with the individual his progress in attaining stated goals.

STANDARD III**USES PROBLEM-SOLVING IN DEVELOPING A PSYCHIATRIC NURSING CARE PLAN.**

Rationale: Problem-solving is a systematic, step-by-step approach to the resolution of an identified problem. Based on pertinent theories of human behavior the psychiatric nursing care plan is systematized by the problem-solving method, individualized by the characteristics and capacities of the individual and his environment, and used to maximize program effectiveness.

Assessment Factors:

1. Discusses the psychiatric nursing care plan with other professional and non-professional persons giving care.
2. Incorporates observations and reports of others in developing and modifying the psychiatric nursing care plan.
3. Initiates the psychiatric nursing care plan using established data base.
4. Involves the individual and when appropriate, family and other relevant persons, in developing the psychiatric nursing care plan.
5. Uses the psychiatric nursing care plan to guide nursing intervention.
6. Records and assesses the effects of the psychiatric nursing care plan.
7. Modifies the psychiatric nursing care plan as indicated.

STANDARD IV**PROMOTES THE REALIZATION OF OPTIMAL HEALTH IN INDIVIDUALS THROUGH HEALTH TEACHING.**

Rationale: Health teaching is an essential part of a psychiatric nurse's role. Every interaction can be utilized as a teaching-learning situation. Formal and informal teaching methods can be used in working with individuals. Emphasis is on understanding

mental health problems as well as on developing ways of coping with them, thus promoting optimum health.

Assessment Factors:

1. Identifies the individual's needs for health teaching.
2. Uses appropriate teaching techniques to meet the individual's learning needs.
3. Seeks assistance, when needed, to deal with the individual's learning needs.
4. Provides the individual with opportunities for learning new behaviors.
5. Teaches basic principles of mental and physical health as well as interpersonal and social skills.
6. Records and assesses the individual's attainment of learning objectives.

STANDARD V

USES ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING IN A GOAL-DIRECTED WAY WHEN INTERACTING WITH INDIVIDUALS.

Rationale: Activities of daily living include the individual's personal and social living patterns. An individual's development and intellectual level, emotional state and physical status are reflected in and influenced by these activities. Therefore, the Registered Psychiatric Nurse is in a unique position to assess and intervene in these processes in order to encourage constructive changes in the individual's behavior so that each may realize his full potential.

Assessment Factors:

1. Assesses the individual's capability in activities of daily living based on needs, strengths, and levels of functioning.
2. Demonstrates a consistent approach when assisting the individual with his activities of daily living.
3. Uses appropriate skills to encourage the individual toward independence and self-direction.
4. Records and assesses the effects of this goal-directed approach.

STANDARD VI

USES KNOWLEDGE OF SOMATIC THERAPIES AND RELATED CLINICAL SKILLS WHILE WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS.

Rationale: Various treatment methods may be needed by individuals. Clinical observations and judgments are made concerning the effects of all treatments used in the therapeutic program.

Assessment Factors:

1. Observes and interprets pertinent reactions to somatic therapies in terms of underlying principles of each therapy.
2. Provides information to the individual about therapies before, during and after treatment.
3. Performs safely, nursing skills related to somatic therapies.
4. Provides emotional support to the individual receiving somatic therapies.
5. Provides emotional support to the family of the individual receiving somatic therapies.
6. Encourages the individual and family to discuss, question and explore their feelings and concerns about past, current or projected use of somatic therapies.
7. Records and assesses the effects of somatic therapies and, when appropriate, recommends changes in the treatment plan.

STANDARD VII**MODIFIES THE ENVIRONMENT TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A THERAPEUTIC MILIEU.**

Rationale: Any environment is composed of both human and non-human resources which may work for or against the individual's well-being. The Registered Psychiatric Nurse works with people in a variety of settings. The milieu is structured and/or altered so that it serves the individual's best interests as an inherent part of the overall therapeutic plan.

Assessment Factors:

1. Identifies environmental factors affecting the individual's health and well-being.
2. Identifies the effect of the individual's behavior on the environment.
3. Incorporates behavioral, cultural, economic and physiological concepts in developing and maintaining a therapeutic milieu.
4. Establishes and maintains, within the environment, communications which are congruent with identified goals.
5. Uses resources in the environment to meet identified goals.
6. Evaluates nursing participation and its effectiveness in establishing and maintaining a therapeutic milieu.

STANDARD VIII

PARTICIPATES WITH MEMBERS OF THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM IN ASSESSING, PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING SELECTED PROGRAMS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL.

Rationale: Services to the individual are provided by a variety of professional personnel in addition to the Registered Psychiatric Nurse. It is essential, therefore, that all contributions become part of an integrated total program.

Assessment Factor:

1. Identifies specific psychiatric nursing knowledge, skills and activities and articulates information so that it may be co-ordinated with the contribution of others working with an individual or program.
2. Recognizes and respects the contributions of other team members.
3. Seeks consultation with other team members.
4. Provides psychiatric nursing consultation to other team members.
5. Participates in the formulation of overall team goals and plans.
6. Uses the small group decision-making process to facilitate team activities.

STANDARD IX

USES PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS TO ASSIST THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACHIEVING OPTIMAL HEALTH.

Rationale: In order to help the individual achieve better adaptation and improved health, the Registered Psychiatric Nurse assists the individual to explore and identify his mode of living and relating, and to accept possible alternatives.

Assessment Factors:

1. Establishes and maintains psychotherapeutic relationships with individuals.
2. Applies knowledge of behavioral sciences in planning and implementing programs of care.
3. Assists the individual to identify, test out and evaluate constructive patterns of living.
4. Reinforces positive behavioral patterns in the individual's interactions with others.
5. Employs principles of communication, problem solving, interviewing and crisis intervention in carrying through psychotherapeutic intervention.
6. Sets limits on behavior with the ultimate goal of assisting the individual to develop internal controls and constructive ways of dealing with feelings.
7. Uses input from the individual, family and other team members in evaluating the individual's behavioral changes.
8. Modifies nursing interventions based on the individual's needs.

STANDARD X
PRACTICES AS AN ACCOUNTABLE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL IN PROVIDING
PSYCHIATRIC NURSING CARE.

Rationale: The Registered Psychiatric Nurse in accepting responsibility for his professional behavior enters into agreement with the individual. This agreement defines the expectations of the individual and the Registered Psychiatric Nurse.

Assessment Factors:

1. Evaluates his ability to function therapeutically.
2. Accepts accountability for his psychiatric nursing practice.
3. States clearly the expectations between the individual and the Registered Psychiatric Nurse.
4. Seeks supervision and consultation whenever necessary.
5. Seeks learning opportunities to further develop skills and knowledge.
6. Assesses routinely the effectiveness of his psychiatric nursing care.
7. Assesses routinely the effectiveness of care planned by other team members.
8. Seeks peer review of care plan effectiveness.

STANDARD XI
PARTICIPATES WITH MEMBERS OF THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM IN
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PLANNING.

Rationale: There is a need for the Registered Psychiatric Nurse to participate in programs that strengthen the existing health potential of all members of society. Concepts such as prevention, early intervention, continuity of care and health promotion are essential in planning to meet the community's mental health needs. The Registered Psychiatric Nurse uses his psychiatric nursing expertise as well as his organizational, educational and consultative skills and works in co-operation and collaboration with other community agencies to facilitate the development and implementation of mental health services.

Assessment Factors:

1. Identifies the basic structure and function of the local community in which the Registered Psychiatric Nurse practices.
2. Identifies basic ethnic, racial and socio-economic factors and their effect on mental health problems.
3. Recognizes current social issues that influence the nature of mental health problems.
4. Assists in identifying high-risk population groups.

5. Participates with other members of the mental health team in assessing community mental health needs and identifying gaps in community services.
6. Participates with other members of the mental health team and members of the community in planning, implementing and evaluating selected programs to meet the community's mental health needs.
7. Participates in assessing the strengths and capabilities of individuals, families and selected groups in the community and uses these assessments to promote and increase their health potential.
8. Evaluates the contribution of psychiatric nursing in meeting community mental health needs.
9. Refers individuals, families and selected groups in need to appropriate community resources.
10. Describes the mental health services of the agency to others in the community.
11. Participates with agencies and other appropriate sources to ensure continuity of mental health service for individuals, families and selected groups.

STANDARD XII

CONTRIBUTES TO THE LEADERSHIP OF PERSONNEL IN THE PROVISION OF PSYCHIATRIC NURSING CARE.

Rationale: As a member of the nursing team, the Registered Psychiatric Nurse shares the responsibility for a leadership role including the supervision and teaching of ancillary and other personnel in meeting the psychiatric nursing care needs of the individual. The focus is on the continued development of each member of the team.

Assessment Factors:

1. Accepts basic* leadership roles and responsibilities. (* See Glossary)
2. Builds on areas of strength to actively compensate for weaknesses in his own performance and that of others.
3. Uses judgment in accepting and delegating responsibilities.
4. Encourages continuing self-development of team members.
5. Actively co-operates with the individual and team members in determining and implementing priorities for psychiatric nursing care.
6. Participates in teaching of ancillary and other personnel to meet the nursing needs of individuals.
7. Participates in predicting and evaluating outcomes of own and nursing team members' actions.
8. Acts as role model when participating in direct nursing care.
9. Participates in evaluation of own performance and that other nursing team members.

STANDARD XIII

ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF OTHERS.

Rationale: In order to function effectively and to enhance professional competence in a world of rapid cultural, social and technological changes, the Registered Psychiatric Nurse must assume responsibility of his own continuing development. Multi-disciplinary team functioning necessitates that the Registered Psychiatric Nurse support others in their development.

Assessment Factors:

1. Identifies and plans ways to meet personal and professional educational needs.
2. Shares in identifying the educational needs of other members of the nursing team.
3. Shows evidence of participation in professionally and/or academically oriented educational activities.
4. Shows evidence of participation in professional meetings and activities, e.g. attendance at conventions, seminars, workshops.
5. Applies and shares knowledge and skills, acquired through continuing education endeavours, to improve psychiatric nursing practice.
6. Uses knowledge of developments in nursing and relevant fields to improve psychiatric nursing care.
7. Reads nursing and other relevant professional journals and shares appropriate clinical content from those readings with team members to improve individual care.
8. Demonstrates willingness to modify role in relation to changes within the health care delivery system.

STANDARD XIV

CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHIATRIC NURSING.

Rationale: Psychiatric nursing uses a pragmatic and eclectic approach to the resolution of nursing problems. The Registered Psychiatric Nurse has responsibility for the continuing development and refinement of knowledge in the psychiatric nursing field.

Assessment Factors:

1. Approaches nursing with an inquiring and open mind.
2. Co-operates actively with other health disciplines by participating in and supporting research projects/studies.
3. Demonstrates awareness of innovations pertinent to psychiatric nursing practice.

4. Seeks appropriate consultation and/or supervision as required to implement and evaluate nursing innovations.
5. Shares innovations in psychiatric nursing practice with others.
6. Documents findings about psychiatric nursing practice.

STANDARD XV

UNDERSTANDS THE PROVINCIALY AND FEDERALLY SPONSORED LEGAL LIMITATIONS, STATUTES AND ACTS COVERING HIS ACTIONS AS A REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSE FUNCTIONING IN CURRENT HEALTH SYSTEMS IN CANADA.

Rationale: The Registered Psychiatric Nurse must be thoroughly aware of the legal ramifications affecting self and others in order to make sound, independent judgments concerning the individual's needs and rights.

Assessment Factors:

1. Maintains an understanding of current legal implications in relation to the Registered Psychiatric Nurse's functioning in the health care delivery system.
2. Maintains membership in good standing in the professional organization.
3. Recognizes his own professional limitations and refers the individual to appropriate resources whenever necessary.
4. Uses professional judgment in carrying out prescribed orders.
5. Uses information about relevant federal and provincial statutes to regulate psychiatric nursing activities.
6. Anticipates the legal implications of his own actions and those of other team members.

GLOSSARY

ASSESSMENT FACTORS: Behavioral statements which describe how standards are appraised and achieved.

BASIC: Constituting or serving as the basic or starting point. (Webster's)

BEHAVIOR: Any observable activity displayed by an individual.

BEHAVIORAL: Subjects such as psychology and sociology which focus upon an individual's behavior.

COMMUNITY: People with common interests living in a particular area. (Webster's)

COMPETENCE: Being functionally adequate as well as having sufficient knowledge and skill to meet the specified standards of psychiatric nursing.

CONSULTATION: The act of seeking information or advice from a person.

DEPENDENT BEHAVIORS: These are activities carried out by the Registered Psychiatric Nurse in response to medical direction. The Registered Psychiatric Nurse is responsible for understanding and when necessary, questioning all directions he receives regarding the provision of health care.

HEALTH CARE TEAM: A group of health professionals and allied health workers such as the Registered Psychiatric Nurse, Registered Nurse, Psychiatrists, Social Worker, Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Nursing Aide, Orderly and volunteers educated at various levels and often at different institutions, working together with the individual to provide health care. (For the purpose of this publication, the terms health care team, psychiatric team and mental health team are used interchangeably.)

HEALTH PROBLEMS: A health problem is:

- (i) any physical and/or psychological condition that is less than optimal for the person concerned
- (ii) any environmental condition that will result in the physical and/or psychological condition of those in the environment being reduced below the optimal level
- (iii) any personal course of action that will result in a less than optimal physical and/or psychological condition for the person pursuing that course of action

INDEPENDENT BEHAVIORS: These are activities the Registered Psychiatric Nurse carries out in exercising his nursing judgments in assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating professional psychiatric nursing care. These functions develop from the psychiatric nurse's

education, training and experience in health promotion and maintenance. The central focus of these independent functions is in development of health promoting interpersonal relationships.

INTERDEPENDENT BEHAVIORS: These are actions taken by the Registered Psychiatric Nurse as he works collaboratively with allied members of the health care team in the provision of health services to the consumer. The efficiency of any health care program is based largely upon the collaborative and integrative efforts of all personnel contributing to it.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM: Consists of at least one member of each of two or more differing professions working together in the provision of health services.

NURSING: The unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary will or knowledge. This should be done in such a way as to help him gain independence as rapidly as possible. (Harmon & Henderson)

NURSING TEAM: A group of nursing professionals and allied health workers such as the Registered Psychiatric Nurse, Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Nursing Aide and Orderly, working together to provide nursing care. (For the purpose of this publication, the term Licensed Practical Nurse is synonymous with Certified Nursing Assistant and with Registered Nursing Assistant.)

OPTIMAL HEALTH: The highest possible achievement of physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

PSYCHIATRIC NURSING: Psychiatric Nursing is primarily the process of developing interpersonal relationships to assist those with psychological and developmental difficulties to develop to their maximum potential.

The process is directed to the well-being of the whole individual, providing assistance with those functions necessary for the maintenance of optimal health and planned modification of the individual's environment as necessary.

PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC: Treatments designed or served to bring about social adjustment.

SOMATIC THERAPY: Therapeutic treatment relating to or affecting the body. (Webster's)

STANDARD: A measure to which others conform or by which the accuracy of others is judged; a degree of excellence aspired to for a particular purpose. (Fowler & Fowler)

THERAPEUTIC MILIEU: An environment in which positive resources within the individual and his surroundings are mobilized to effect positive behavioral change.

1. Thomas Allen & Sons Limited, Toronto, Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, 1965.
2. Harmer, Bertha & Henderson, Virginia - Textbook of the **Principles & Practice of Nursing**, 5th Edition.
3. Fowler, H.W., and Fowler, F.G. (eds.) **The Concise Oxford Dictionary** Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964, p. 1252.

**PSYCHIATRIC NURSES ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
CODE OF ETHICS**

Ethical Concepts Applied to Nursing

The fundamental responsibility of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse is to promote mental health by prevention, rehabilitation and treatment.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse, when acting in a professional capacity, maintains standards of personal conduct which reflect credit upon the profession.

Registered Psychiatric Nurse and the Individual

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse respects and accepts an individual's uniqueness and integrity regardless of colour; race; creed; sex; age; personal beliefs or social status.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse holds in confidence all personal information; and uses professional judgment in sharing information.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse has concern for the individual entrusted to his care. He always maintains concern within the bounds of his professional responsibilities.

Registered Psychiatric Nurse and Practice

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse uses professional judgment to avoid misunderstandings or inaccuracies in the performance of his duties and accepts full responsibility for his psychiatric nursing actions and decisions.

Registered Psychiatric Nurse and Society

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse understands and adheres to those laws which affect the practice of psychiatric nursing.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse participates and shows responsibility with other citizens and allied professionals in promoting efforts to meet the mental health needs of the public.

Registered Psychiatric Nurse and Co-Workers

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse promotes confidence in all members of the health team; incompetency and unethical conduct of associates in the health profession will be exposed to the proper authorities.

Registered Psychiatric Nurse and the Profession

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse is responsible for his own professional growth and development through continuing education.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse is prepared to practice and maintain professional competency to the highest standard of psychiatric nursing care within the reality of a specific situation.

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse does not permit his name to be used in connection with testimonials or in the advertisement of products.

Approved by Psychiatric Nurses Association of Canada - 1979