

"INDEPENDENT NURSE PRACTITIONER IN MENTAL HEALTH NURSING"

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PSYCHIATRIC-MENTAL HEALTH NURSING ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

According to the statement on Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical Nursing Practice (ANA, 1994a) as primary mental health care provider, the psychiatric mental health Nurse works with clients at the primary, secondary and tertiary level of prevention.

The turbulent environment and rapid advances in today's psychiatric health care are prompting psychiatric Nurses to reassess their practices and re-evaluate their options. A renewed focus on case management, integration of physical and mental health concepts, and the prevention of illness and promotion of health, offer exciting opportunities for Nurses in the specialty. The introduction of trends of managing care, fresh approaches and new models for psychotherapy intervention, and the expansion of roles and functions for advanced practices, Nurses will most certainly influence significant shifts in the practice of psychiatric mental health Nursing.

PRIMARY MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Primary mental health care is that care which is provided to those at risk, or already in need for mental health services. It begins prior to or at the first point of contact with the mental health care delivery system. It involves all of the continuous and comprehensive services necessary for the promotion of optimal health, prevention of mental illness, and health maintenance, and includes the management of and / or referral for mental and general health problems and rehabilitation. Because of its scope, it is comprehensive, holistic health care, which considers the needs and strengths of the whole person.



Nursing always has responded to changes in the society's health care needs. Nurses have been engaging in expanded roles in clinical practice for many years. Virginia Handerson suggests that Nursing is the physician to those who do not have access. In acute care settings, Nurses have been doing advanced practice on evening, nights and week-ends for decades. Thus, emergence of clinical specialism in Nursing has had a far greater impact on Nursing practice in the West than any other movement till date, but in India it is still in infancy.

NEED FOR INDEPENDENT NURSE PRACTITIONER

The rapid transformation in the health care delivery system has caused the need for Nurses whose education prepares them for an advanced role in the clinical arena, as the turmoil of health care reform continues to capture the attention, revolutionary changes are under way in the health care system. The integration of health care agencies require Nursing practice to cross multiple settings, increasing the autonomy of the professional Nurse. Apart from being highly autonomous, they are able to function as independent, cost-effective practitioner, and they improve coverage to the under served population in many countries.

ROLE OF INDEPENDENT NURSE PRACTITIONER

The Nurse practitioner is an independent care giver, provides expert care, gives Nursing consultation, is autonomous in decision making. She performs variety of roles that of educator, leader,

manager, researcher, collaborator and an advocate. The Nurse practitioner has more broader and more holistic perspective on the health care and also strengthens quality of care. Because advanced practice Nurse remains in direct practice, they make substantial contributions to the quality care in primary, secondary and tertiary settings. Independent Nurse practitioner is centered on the client and their significant others, and emphasizes health promotion and illness prevention. Critical reflective thinking, self-directed learning and leadership skills are mandatory expectations of health care providers of the 21st century.

MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Essential Prerequisites are:

- Licensed as a registered Nurse.
- Masters degree in psychiatric mental health Nursing.
- Specified number of hours of direct advanced clinical practice of psychiatric mental health Nursing during and/or after the master's programme of study.

WHAT MAKES PSYCHIATRIC NURSING UNIQUE?

Perhaps the most significant difference between psychiatric Nursing and other mental health care disciplines is the consistent emphasis on holism, psychiatric Nursing's philosophical stance is to take into account the biological, psychological, sociological, spiritual and cultural dimensions of humans in interaction with their physical and social environment. This commitment to the whole person in psychiatric Nursing is drawn directly from the holistic perspective, which is a hall-mark concept for the Nursing professional in general.

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EXPANDED FUNCTIONS FOR ADVANCED PRACTICES

With expanded practice privileges such as prescriptive authority and hospital admitting privileges, will increasingly function as substitutes for higher cost providers.

The major role of the independent Nurse Practitioner is standards of milieu management, process roles and collaboration with other disciplines.

STANDARDS OF MILIEU MANAGEMENT

Specific standards have been developed related to environment management. Overall the Nurse practitioner is expected to provide, structure, and maintain a therapeutic environment in collaboration with clients and other health care providers.

PROCESS ROLES

In addition to the milieu management Nurses enact specific roles that have a powerful impact on clients within the treatment environment. The roles of a nurturer, coordinator, socializing agent, counsellor, educator, technician, advocate and collaborator.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES

The Nurse Practitioner should be clinically competent, proficient in assessing complicated Nursing care situations, insightful and knowledgeable about transference and counter-trans-

ference. This hallmark of psychiatric consultation is liaison Nursing. The major role of the liaison Nurses are enhancement of delivery of psychological Nursing care and the effective management. She also serves as a catalyst in negotiations with staff and clients, promotes a professionally, supportive, non-evaluative, collaborative relationship with the consultee.

ROLE OF THE NURSE PRACTITIONER IN COMMUNITY

The clinical role for Nurse practitioner in the community are many and varied. The Nurse in the community may work in a clinic, a half-way house, an apartment complex, or under a bridge. The Nurse practitioner is responsible for thorough assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of Nursing intervention.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I quote Linda, H. Alken —“one of the most obvious differences between U.S. and India in terms of health manpower is the use of Nurses. In U.S. Nurses are most versatile and cost-effective health care providers. Researches in U.S. and Canada revealed that trained Nurse can provide care comparable to quality to that provided by physicians for upto 85 per cent of encounters in general medical practice. Nurses are particularly well suited to the care of the seriously mentally ill

because they bring to this role a long tradition in psychosocial support, orientation to family relationships, expertise in primary medical care and knowledge of pharmacological issues and psychotropic drug management” Therefore, the independent Nurse practitioner is the need of the hour.

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