



Code of Ethics

- February 2007

The *Code of Ethics* articulates ethical principles, beliefs, values and standards to guide all members of the psychiatric nursing profession. The *Code* defines accepted behaviors and establishes a framework for professional responsibility and accountability. The *Code* promotes high standards of practice and provides a benchmark for psychiatric nurses to use for self evaluation. The *Code of Ethics* identifies the obligations of the profession and the obligations of individual psychiatric nurses to society as a whole.

Safe, competent and ethical practice to ensure the protection of the public

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

- 1) Know the difference between professional and personal relationships and must be committed to building therapeutic relationships as a foundation of meaningful communication.
- 2) Recognize vulnerability of persons and must not exploit those vulnerabilities for the psychiatric nurses own interest or in any way that might compromise the therapeutic relationship or violate the sanctity of professional boundaries.
- 3) Practice within own level of competence and seek out additional information, knowledge or supervision when required.
- 4) Strive to ensure evidence based practice and ensure continuing competence in own area of practice throughout their professional career.
- 5) Maintain a personal level of health and well being.
- 6) Practice competent safe nursing care.
- 7) Protect the confidentiality of all information gathered in the context of the professional relationship, and practice within relevant laws that govern privacy, access, use and disclosure of personal information.
- 8) Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects honesty, integrity, reliability, impartiality and diligence.
- 9) Recognize the expertise and limitations of professional colleagues and use

- professional judgment when accepting and assigning responsibilities.
- 10) Report, in good faith, any incompetent or unethical behavior/practices.
 - 11) Accept responsibility for their actions and take all necessary steps to prevent or minimize harm arising from adverse events.
 - 12) Conduct themselves in a manner that promotes the development and awareness of the psychiatric nursing profession at local, community, provincial and national levels.
 - 13) Practice according to the provincial and federal statutes/acts/regulations/bylaws and the *Standards of Practice*.
 - 15) Promote and uphold the ethical values of the profession.

Respect for the inherent worth, right of choice and dignity of persons

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

- 1) Respect and promote the autonomy and right of choice of persons and recognize them as full partners in decision making.
- 2) Ensure that a person's choices are understood, expressed and advocated.
- 3) Respect the unique and inherent worth and dignity of all persons and uphold their rights.
- 4) Respect diversity among persons and their rights to unique beliefs consistent with the rights of others.
- 5) Respect a person's method of decision making, recognizing that different cultures place different weight on individualism and the role of the family and community in decision making.
- 6) Respect the competent person's legal and moral right to refuse treatment.
- 7) Apply and uphold the principles of informed consent.

Health, mental health and well-being

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

- 1) Are sensitive to the rights, needs and values of persons within the physiological, psychological, developmental, sociocultural and spiritual realms of health.
- 2) Understand that health and mental health are interconnected and are a dynamic process that fluctuates across the lifespan.

- 3) Understand that perception, lifestyle and expectations influence health and mental health.
- 4) Ensure that approaches to health and mental health are collaborative, holistic, and dynamic and includes the full spectrum of mental health promotion, prevention, intervention and rehabilitation.
- 5) Improve and support health/mental health access and care by utilizing and contributing to research activities that foster the ongoing development of psychiatric nursing knowledge and evidence based psychiatric nursing practice.
- 6) Respect and value the knowledge and contributions of other health providers and engage in processes of active collaboration to maximize the health benefits for the public.

Quality Practice Environments

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

- 1) Recognize that the environment has the potential to determine and influence health and mental health and that community, socio-economic and political systems contribute to defining environment.
- 2) Contribute to quality practice settings by promoting positive, healthy and ethical working environments.
- 3) Contribute to and maintain safe practice environments.
- 4) Advocate and prioritize human and material resources to provide safe and competent psychiatric nursing practice.
- 5) Advocate for fair and equitable access to services, benefits, equal treatment and protection of all persons.



Standards of Practice

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The *Standards of Practice* articulates the legal and professional expectations of the Registered Psychiatric Nurse. The standards apply to all practice settings, domains of practice, and roles regardless of educational preparation or professional experience.

The *Standards of Practice*:

- 1) Registered Psychiatric Nurses establish professional interpersonal therapeutic relationships with individuals, groups, families and communities.
- 2) Registered Psychiatric Nurses apply and integrate theory-based knowledge relevant to professional practice derived from psychiatric nursing education and continued life-long learning.
- 3) Registered Psychiatric Nurses are accountable to the public for safe, competent and effective psychiatric nursing practice.
- 4) Registered Psychiatric Nurses understand, promote and uphold the ethical values of the profession.

The *Standards of Practice* describe the expected level of performance of all Registered Psychiatric Nurses in all domains of practice. These *Indicators* illustrate how the *Standards* are met; they are not intended to be an all inclusive or exhaustive list of criteria for each standard.

Standard 1: Therapeutic Interpersonal Relationships

Registered Psychiatric Nurses establish professional interpersonal therapeutic relationships with individuals, groups, families and communities.

Indicators:

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

- Uses professional judgment and practices with personal integrity to develop, maintain and terminate professional interpersonal therapeutic relationships.
- Consistently applies deliberate consciousness/self-awareness within professional practice.
- Collaborates and advocates with individuals, families, groups and communities.
- Creates therapeutic environments in diverse practice settings.
- Role models positive professional interpersonal therapeutic relationships.
- Recognizes and addresses power imbalances in professional interpersonal therapeutic relationships.

Standard 2: Application and Integration of Theory-Based Knowledge

Registered Psychiatric Nurses apply and integrate theory-based knowledge relevant to professional practice derived from psychiatric nursing education and continued life-long learning.

Indicators:

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

- Has theory-based knowledge in psychiatric nursing practice.
- Provides theoretical and/or evidence based rationale for psychiatric nursing practice.
- Applies theory to psychiatric nursing decisions and interventions.
- Applies theory-based knowledge, skill and judgment to assess, plan, implement and evaluate their practice of psychiatric nursing.
- Applies critical thinking and engages in innovative problem solving.
- Creates, implements and evaluates plans of care.
- Documents psychiatric nursing actions and decisions.
- Identifies and intervenes appropriately with unexpected and/or atypical client responses.
- Remains current in knowledge relevant to the professional practice setting.
- Engages in life long learning.

Standard 3: Professional Responsibility

Registered Psychiatric Nurses are accountable to the public for safe, competent and effective psychiatric nursing practice.

Indicators:

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

- Practices in accordance with the *Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice, Code of Ethics* and relevant legislation.
- Assumes responsibility and accountability for professional practice.
- Recognizes personal and professional limitations, seeks consultation and refers appropriately.
- Creates and maintains professional boundaries in psychiatric nursing practice.
- Integrates individual and cultural awareness into psychiatric nursing practice.
- Recognizes and reports unprofessional and/or unethical conduct.
- Assumes responsibility and accountability for continuing competence.

Standard 4: Professional Ethics

Registered Psychiatric Nurses understand, promote and uphold the ethical values of the profession.

Indicators:

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

- Practices in a manner that reflects positively on the profession.
- Adheres to the professional *Code of Ethics*.
- Uses ethical principles to guide psychiatric nursing practice.
- Applies the principles of confidentiality and consent in psychiatric nursing practice.
- Recognizes and mitigates the risks of exploiting power imbalances in psychiatric nursing practice.
- Supports the client's right to make informed decisions.
- Maintains boundaries between professional and personal relationships.
- Acts as an advocate for psychiatric nursing practice.
- Recognizes and reports unprofessional and unethical conduct.

Glossary

Accountability	answerable for one's own actions.
Boundaries	the limits or margins that support and maintain therapeutic relationships.
Client/person (s)	anyone to whom a Registered Psychiatric Nurse provides service. An individual, family, group or community that participates with Registered Psychiatric Nurses through promotion, prevention or rehabilitation.
Collaboration	the process of co-operation or joint effort that embraces respect and shared responsibility. The focus is on problem solving.
Community	a body of people united by common needs and interests.
Competent	the provision of psychiatric nursing that requires theory, knowledge and skill.
Continuing competence	competence maintenance throughout one's career.
Deliberate consciousness	an intentional and continual process which involves the critical self examination at the personal and professional levels.
Evaluation	the planned systematic comparison with the stated outcomes, objectives or standards.
Family	a group of people united by ancestry or choice
Group (s)	a number of people who share common characteristics
Health	is defined in the World Health Organizations' Constitution as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
Individual (s)	a singular, distinct and unique person.
Mental health	a state which supports affective, cognitive and relational capacity to experience the triple standard of employment, leisure and relationships.

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