



Information About The Canadian Registration Examination for Psychiatric Nurses

This information is prepared for psychiatric nurses and new graduates of psychiatric nursing programs who are preparing to write the Psychiatric Nurses Registration Examination. The purpose of this is to ensure that you are provided with information about the format of the exam, so that you can be as well prepared as possible.

You may already have a satisfactory study plan in place and this information can assist you with your plan and provide you with some resources you may not be familiar with.

1. Examination

- The examination consists of 4 booklets. Each booklet contains approximately 103 questions.
- The exams have been prepared to assess a candidate's "safety to practice". In other words, they have been designed to give the CRPNA a degree of assurance that those applying for licensing as a psychiatric nurse in Alberta will have the ability to make knowledgeable, appropriate, safe nursing decisions in a variety of settings.
- The main theme throughout the exam is application. Candidates must have enough knowledge to be able to integrate and apply it to the situations presented.
- Questions cover the competencies expected of a practicing psychiatric nurse and the scenarios address a wide variety of contexts and situations commonly experienced by practicing RPNs. The Canadian Examination uses the "Registered Psychiatric Nurses Competency Profile for the Profession in Canada" as a template for its provincial registration examination. You can view this book on the CRPNA website at www.crpna.ab.ca under "College Publications".
- The exam is comprised of a series of situations, each of which is followed by either single answer or multi-multi answer, which test the candidate's knowledge about the situation / condition presented. The situations are those, which are commonly found in the practice of psychiatric nursing and may deal with any age group and may include appropriate diagnosis, medication, nursing care and best verbal response. There are no essay type questions.

❖ **Single Answer Type:** (example)

The Nurse administers each of the following medications to various clients. The client who should be most carefully assessed for fluid and electrolyte imbalance is the one receiving:

1. Lithium
2. Clozapine
3. Diazepam
4. Amitriptyline

❖ **Multi-Multi Type:** (example)

A patient with depression does not respond to drug therapy. At a team conference, staff members recommend electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). The nurse knows that most people respond emotionally to the thought of an electric current passing through the brain. Therefore, when discussing ECT with the patient, the nurse should:

- I. Use the term "shock"
 - II. Refer to the procedure as a "treatment" instead of "shock therapy"
 - III. Refer to the procedure as ECT in a calm manner
 - IV. Speak in a neutral, calm manner when discussing with the patient
 - V. Encourage the patient to accept ECT as the solution to his depression
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- A. i, iii, v
 - B. i, v, v
 - C. ii, iv
 - D. ii, iv, v
 - E. all of the above

2. Time Limits

- Please be on time for the examination. Latecomers could be refused admission if the exam is in progress.
- You are given 2.5 hours to complete each examination booklet. This is ample time (most candidates finish early) so there is no need to feel rushed.
- You should however, read carefully and work at a steady pace.

3. Number of Attempts / Passing Score

- You have 3 attempts to successfully pass the examination.
- You must achieve 60% overall of 4 booklets to successfully pass the examination.
- Results are mailed directly to the candidate within 2 – 3 weeks. Results **WILL NOT** be released over the phone.
- Should you not pass the examination you will need to contact the CRPNA office to schedule 2 more dates to write your examination. You may also want to seek direction from the Practice Consultant / Assistant Registrar of the CRPNA.
- Should you not pass your examination on your 3rd and final attempt you **MUST** complete a psychiatric nurse re-entry program to be eligible to write the examination at a later date. This information is available on the CRPNA website at www.crpna.ab.ca.

4. What you need to know

- Cell phones are to be turned off. Backpacks, briefcases, books are left at the back of the room during your examination.
- You are allowed to have with you a watch, pencil, eraser and something to drink.
- Do not ask the invigilator(s) questions pertaining to the exam content they are not permitted to provide explanations or information regarding the content or meaning of a question or questions. There will be an “Irregularity Report” available to fill out your comments / questions. When using this form, please indicate booklet and question number and then your comments / questions.
- The examinations, particularly when large groups are writing, are sometimes conducted at a hospital / school. Please remember you are a professional and conduct yourself accordingly.

5. Resources

Preparing for a “comprehensive” examination can be somewhat overwhelming but there are a number of resources available to assist you. You may choose to prepare for the exam by reviewing some or all of the following books:

Psychiatry Texts:

- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed., Text Revision). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- Austin, W., & Boyd, M. A. (2008). *Psychiatric nursing for Canadian practice*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.
- Harmon Hanson, S.M., Gedaly-Duff, V., & Rowe Kaakinen, J. (2005). *Family health care nursing, theory practice & research* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia: F.A. Davis.
- Trigoboff, E. (2005). *Psychiatric drug guide*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Zuckerman, E. (2000). *Clinician's thesaurus: The guidebook for writing psychological reports* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Ralph, I. (2006). *Psychotropic agents* (14th ed.). Grand Forks, BC: IGR Publications.

- Ann Isaacs, RN, MS, APRN-BC (2005). *Lippincott's Review Series, The Ideal Study Aid, Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing* (4th ed) Lippincott Williams & Wilkins A Wolters Kluwer Company.

Med Surg Texts:

- Day, R.A., PAUL, P., WILLIAMS, B., Smeltzer, S.C., & Bare, B. (2007). *Brunner & Suddarth's textbook of medical-surgical nursing* (1st Canadian Edition.). Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Smith-Temple, J., & Johnson, J.Y. (2006). *Nurse's guide to clinical Procedures* (5th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Additional Information:

- American Psychological Association. (2008). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Kail, R. V., Cavanaugh J. C., & Ateah, C. A. (2006). *Human development, a life-span view* (1st Canadian ed.). Canada: Nelson, a Division of Thomson Canada Limited.

College Publications:

- Registered Psychiatric Nurse Competency Profile for the Profession in Canada
- Code of Ethics / Standards of Practice

1. DON'T PANIC!! APPROACH THE JOB SYSTEMATICALLY.

- Read directions.
- Read each situation carefully.
- Review your answers, but don't change them unless you know you re changing a wrong answer to a right one.
- Don't look for tricks or read too much into a question; this is an entry to practice examination. Do not assume anything.

2. THINK YOUR ANSWERS THROUGH LOGICALLY.

Answering multiple-choice questions is not a matter of simply knowing or guessing the answer. You can often think out the right answer from your own knowledge by following these straightforward steps:

A. ELIMINATE INCORRECT ANSWERS

- Impossible Answers
- Specific Determiners.

B. USE CLUES

- Leads From Other Questions
- Your Own Knowledge And Good Sense

C. TIME-USING STRATEGY

- Begin to work as rapidly as possible with reasonable assurance of accuracy.
- Mark omitted items, or items, which could use further consideration.
- Use time remaining after completion of the test to reconsider answers.

D. ERROR-AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

- Pay careful attention to directions — make sure you know what is being asked of you.
- Do not assume anything that is not given.
- Pay careful attention to the item, determining clearly the nature of the question.
- Check all answers.

E. DEDUCTIVE REASONING STRATEGY

- Eliminate options, which are known to be incorrect and choose from among the remaining options.
- Utilize relevant content information in other questions and options
- You must agree with every word in any given statement to declare it correct.