Currently, there is no formal written statement regarding the Scope of Practice of Registered Psychiatric Nurses in B.C. Since 2008, CRPNBC has been waiting for regulations to be passed by the provincial government clarifying the Scope of Practice. CRPNBC has developed a comprehensive draft Scope of Practice statement, but implementation requires approval by the government after consultation with other stakeholders, a process which CRPNBC has asked government to undertake but is not yet underway. In the meantime, there is confusion amongst Registered Psychiatric Nurses, other health care professionals, and employers regarding what Registered Psychiatric Nurses can and cannot do. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide interim clarity to registrants and all stakeholders to allow Registered Psychiatric Nurses to provide the optimal level of client care and safety.

In January 2009, Craig Knight, the then Assistant Deputy Minister of Health Services, stated:

“...unlike the regulations for RNs, the regulations for LPNs and Registered Psychiatric Nurses have not yet been updated to expressly set out the restricted activities each profession will be authorized to perform when the shared scope of practice/restricted activities model is fully implemented. However, this does not prevent...Registered Psychiatric Nurses from continuing to practice in accordance with their qualifications and the current legislation until that updating is complete.” (emphasis added)

This means that Registered Psychiatric Nurses can practice as they have in the past, in accordance with CRPNBC’s Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, the competencies for Registered Psychiatric Nurses, and agency policies (see [http://www.crpnbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/RPNC_CompetencyProfile.pdf](http://www.crpnbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/RPNC_CompetencyProfile.pdf)).

For greater clarity, Psychiatric Nursing is defined as the health discipline in which a registrant provides or performs the following services:

- Selected health care interventions for the promotion, maintenance and restoration of health for those recipients of care whose primary health challenges are related to mental health, mental handicap or addictions.

- Holistic health assessment and identification of health strengths and challenges; development, implementation, and evaluation of psychiatric nursing interventions.

- Coordination of health services for the prevention, treatment and palliation of mental health, addictions and physiological conditions within Registered Psychiatric Nurse competencies.
This means that Registered Psychiatric Nurses can carry out the following core activities, which are fundamental to the practice of Psychiatric Nursing:

1. Establishing, maintaining, evaluating and terminating goal directed therapeutic relationships;
2. Establishing, maintaining, and evaluating therapeutic environments;
3. Completing a mental status examination for the purpose of gathering information and planning individualized care;
4. Collecting and analyzing data to identify psychiatric nursing diagnoses;
5. Using current evidence from credible sources to interpret observed verbal and non-verbal behaviours to support clinical decisions and interventions;
6. Using critical thinking and problem solving skills;
7. Planning, implementing and evaluating health promotion, prevention, and maintenance strategies with individuals, families, groups and communities;
8. Documenting timely, accurate data;
9. Communicating, collaborating and participating as a member of inter-professional practice teams;
10. Using supportive counseling skills, and applying strategies for health promotion and illness prevention with clients;
11. Assigning, coordinating, making recommendations for care, and working with other members of the health care team in providing care;
12. Managing, administering and allocating resources related to health care services;
13. Facilitating and modeling health promotion and prevention with staff, clients, families, groups and communities;
14. Educating and supervising students and colleagues on psychiatric nursing concepts and practices; and
15. Using and engaging in psychiatric nursing research.

The exception is that in an emergency situation, Registered Psychiatric Nurses are ethically obliged to provide the best care they can, given the circumstances and their individual competence.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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