THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR PSYCHIATRIC NURSING

The Professional Standards for Psychiatric Nursing describes, in broad terms, the expected level of performance of all Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN). These were developed for national use by the Registered Psychiatric Nurse Regulators Canada and adopted by CRPNBC in March 2010. Professional Standards, along with the Code of Ethics, address the overarching professional requirements for all Registered Psychiatric Nurses practicing in B.C. Under each standard there are a number of indicators that help determine how to meet the professional standard. The indicators are representative but not comprehensive for each standard.

STANDARD 1: THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

1. Acts as role model for positive professional, interpersonal, and therapeutic relationships.
2. Uses professional judgment and practices with personal integrity to initiate, maintain, and terminate professional, interpersonal, and therapeutic relationships.
4. Collaborates and advocates with individuals, families, groups, and communities.
6. Creates partnerships in professional, interpersonal, and therapeutic relationships.
7. Recognizes and addresses power imbalances in professional, interpersonal, and 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.

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

1. Uses theory-based knowledge in psychiatric nursing practice.
2. Synthesizes and applies recognized theories or frameworks to engage in innovative problem solving.
3. Provides theoretical and/or evidence-based rationale for psychiatric nursing practice.
4. Applies theory to psychiatric nursing decisions and interventions.
5. Applies theory-based knowledge, skill, and judgment to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate the practice of psychiatric nursing.
6. Applies critical thinking in the problem solving process.
7. Applies communication theory to ensure effective verbal and written communication.
8. Applies documentation principles to ensure effective written communication.
9. Remains current in knowledge relevant to the professional practice setting.

STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

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

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

2. Assumes responsibility and accountability for own practice.
3. Recognizes personal and professional limitations and consults and refers appropriately.
4. Creates and maintains professional boundaries.
5. Integrates cultural safety into psychiatric nursing practice.
6. Recognizes and reports unprofessional and/or unethical conduct.
7. Assumes responsibility and accountability for continuing competence.

STANDARD 4: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

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

A Registered Psychiatric Nurse:

1. Practices and conducts one’s self in a manner that reflects positively on the profession.
2. Promotes and adheres to the professional Code of Ethics.
3. Uses ethical principles to guide psychiatric nursing practice.
4. Applies the elements of confidentiality and consent in psychiatric nursing practice.
5. Recognizes the power imbalance in the therapeutic relationship and mitigates the risks of exploiting that power.
6. Supports the rights of clients to make informed decisions.
7. Maintains boundaries between professional and personal relationships.

GLOSSARY

Boundaries

Boundaries are limits that protect the space between the professional's power and the client's vulnerability. Boundaries define and separate professional roles from other roles. Boundaries are the limits that allow a safe connection between a professional and a client and are always based on the client's needs (Peterson, M. 1992).

Continuing competence

Continuing competence is the ongoing ability of an RPN to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, judgment, and interpersonal attributes required to practice safely and ethically in a designated role and setting.

Cultural safety

Cultural safety addresses the diverse mental health needs of people living in Canada by communicating and practicing in a way that respects and takes into account the cultural, social, and political, linguistic, and spiritual realities of the people with whom one is working (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2009).