

Community Mental Health Nurse Job Description

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Administer medications, document response, maintain accurate medication lists, and document and report medication errors
- Utilize a motivational approach to engage individuals in treatment consistent with their stage of change and develop therapeutic relationships with individuals that respect boundaries
- Assess the individual's medical and nursing needs and make recommendations for an individual-centered service plan
- Provide education regarding mental illness, physical health concerns, chronic disease management, wellness, relapse prevention and medications to patients, families, care givers and team members
- Advocate for individuals to assure implementation of appropriate interventions; assure protection of rights and privacy, and assure that individuals understand the complaint and grievance procedures
- Refer and connect individuals with medical, psychiatric, and other healthcare providers relevant to managing their case
- Coordinate with pharmacies to ensure timely delivery of appropriate medications
- Evaluate the effectiveness of all medical and psychiatric services and provide additional coordination, advocacy, or intervention when necessary
- Talk to patients about their problems and discuss the best strategy to deliver their care
- Develop rapport with patients to build trust, while listening to and interpreting their needs and concerns correctly
- Empathize with distressed patients and attempt to understand the source of their discomfort
- Help patients manage their emotions through the application of de-escalation techniques

- Provide evidence-based individualized therapy, such as cognitive behavior therapy for depression and anxiety
- Liaise with mental health agencies, social workers, and primary care practitioners as needed
- Organize social events aimed at developing patients' social skills and help reduce their feelings of isolation
- Ensure that the legal requirements appropriate to a particular setting or group of patients are observed and adhered to
- Maintain medication inventory, review patient care plans, and monitor progress
- Help patients and their families in combating stigma associated with mental illness
- Render advice and arrange support for patients, relatives, and care givers
- Assess treatment success at case conferences and meetings
- Prepare and update patient records
- Encourage patients to take part in therapeutic activities, including art and role play
- Assess and plan nursing care requirements
- Visit patients in their home to monitor progress and perform risk assessments with regards to their safety and welfare, and identify when patients are at risk of harming themselves or others.

Community Mental Health Nurse Requirements – Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- Education: They require a minimum of 30 college credits in these areas: nursing, health care administration, public administration in a health care area, public health, community mental health, community mental health counseling, psychology, sociology, biology, social work or human services, plus an Associate's degree in nursing or the completion of a three-year nursing program or Bachelor's or higher degree in the areas stated above
- Experience: Both educational backgrounds above require professional 2-3 years clinical nursing experience, including at least 1 year experience in

providing direct services to individuals diagnosed with developmental disabilities, mental illness, mental retardation, substance or alcohol abuse in a community setting. However, a Master's degree in community mental health may be substituted for this experience.

- License: They must be licensed and currently registered to practice nursing in the United States
- Certification: a Case Management Certificate and/or Mental Health related training will be considered an asset. They must also possess a valid Standard First Aid/CPR Certificate
- Observational skills: They require excellent observational skills to assess patients and look out for signs of tension, anxiety, depression, and any other self destructive tendencies
- Physical dexterity: They require strength, stamina, and physical fitness particularly if working in a hospital or secure residential unit. It is essential when faced with the challenge of calming a violent patient
- Communication skills: They are required to educate, motivate, and advocate for their patients, as well as document a progress report on them; hence they need a clear and concise writing skill and excellent verbal communication skills to be successful on the job
- Emotional resilience: This is required for them to manage stress and stay on top of challenging circumstances in a calm and professional manner
- Decision making skills: Community mental health nurses work with a multi-disciplinary team to deliver a coordinated patient care. Having sound decision making skill is important for them to be able to make sound judgment when referring their patients to other services or to connect with other health care professionals
- Advocacy Skill: Their job requirement makes them to act as a voice for helpless people. They require this skill to help others overcome social stigma related to mental health
- Coaching and motivational skills: They require this skill to access their patients and bring hope to them. It is also essential for them to encourage the family and care-givers of their patients
- Collaborative skills: Their job requires them to work with other healthcare practitioners; therefore, they must be able to work well within a multi-disciplinary team environment to provide well coordinated patient care.