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Working better.**



MENTAL HEALTH NURSES

FACT SHEET

Mental health nursing is a specialised branch of nursing with a focus on the care of people living with mental health problems, such as:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Addictions
- Eating disorders
- Psychosis
- Crisis responses (eg. those who have experienced a natural disaster)

What Qualifications Does a Mental Health Nurse Have?

Mental health nurses have an undergraduate degree in nursing which is usually combined with a Graduate Diploma or Masters qualification in mental health. Some mental health nurses may also have undertaken additional post-graduate training in specific therapies such as couple and family therapy.

What Do Mental Health Nurses Do?

Mental health nurses work with mental health consumers and carers utilising a multidisciplinary client-centred approach. They liaise closely with GPs, psychiatrists, psychologists and other professionals to provide holistic care – helping the person manage the mental health problem within the context of their daily life. Mental health nurses encourage and assist consumers to maintain a recovery focus, to set and achieve life goals, and to engage effectively with treatment, including helping them to manage their medication.

Guided by evidence, mental health nurses offer a range of clinical interventions aimed at promoting the individual's wellbeing, aiding them in their recovery from illness and enhancing their capacity to participate in community life. Interventions commonly undertaken include mental health assessments, risk assessment, case management, ongoing monitoring of the client's mental state, wellbeing and treatment needs; delivery of treatment including individual, group and family therapy (including focused psychological strategies in some instances), advocacy, family/carer support, psychoeducation, rehabilitation and support services in collaboration with other service providers.

MENTAL HEALTH NURSES

FACT SHEET (cont.)

Mental health nurses:

- work closely with people from all cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.
- work collaboratively with a range of other health professionals including general practitioners and psychologists.
- work in a variety of settings such as community health, consultation-liaison (in emergency departments and maternity services), private practice, primary care (with GPs), hospitals, forensic services and universities.
- are involved in mental health promotion and screening, prevention, teaching, specialist counselling and psychotherapy, medication management and direct nursing care.

Where Do Mental Health Nurses Work?

Mental health nurses work in specialist mental health and generalist settings across the age and illness spectrum – from perinatal mental health, child and adolescent mental health, adult and older adult mental health and across health promotion, early intervention and primary practice, community-based (acute, medium and longer-term), generalist inpatient (e.g. emergency departments) and acute, sub-acute and forensic inpatient settings. Specialised programs may focus on particular illness groups.

What is a Credentialed Mental Health Nurse?

The Credential for Practice Program is an initiative of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) and has established the only nationally consistent recognition for specialist Mental Health Nurses.

The MHN Credential recognises the skills, expertise and experience of nurses who are practising as specialist Mental Health Nurses. It demonstrates to employers, professional colleagues, patients and carers that an individual nurse has achieved the professional standard for practice in mental health nursing. Credentialing is a core component of clinical/professional governance or self regulation where members of a profession set standards for practice and establish a minimum requirement for entry, continuing professional development, endorsement and recognition.

How Can I find a Mental Health Nurse?

- The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses can provide you with information on Credentialed mental health nurses in your area.
- There is also information on the Mental Health Nurses Incentive Program (MHNIP) and how this can be of benefit to you and your patients or clients.

For more information contact the **Australian College of Mental Health Nurses** on:



Phone: 1300 667 079

Website: www.acmhn.org

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