Psychiatric Nurse

Overview

Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN) provide assessments, nursing diagnosis, and evidenced based nursing care to patients and clients with mental health disorders. A strong focus is on person centered care that involves the development of complex therapeutic relationships.

Specialty areas within psychiatry include:
- child mental health
- adult mental health
- learning disabilities
- emotional disturbances
- substance abuse
- geriatrics.

Registered psychiatric nurses work with registered nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors, social workers, mental health and addiction counsellors, and other allied health care professionals in a collaborative and team approach. The RPN uses a holistic approach to work with clients, families, groups and communities.

Registered psychiatric nurses are trained as critical thinkers, problem solvers, and decision makers to provide safe and competent care to patients. They are strong advocates for their patients, in a shared partnership to ensure they get the best care to improve their health.

Registered psychiatric nurses are the largest group of health care professionals within the psychiatric domain in providing care to patients. They play a significant key role as the front line health care providers as well as a key leadership role in sharing their expertise, intuition, and knowledge to help improve patient care and in the promotion of health.

Main Roles and Responsibilities

Registered psychiatric nurses observe, assess, monitor, and document patient symptoms, reactions, and progress. They administer medications, and perform medical procedures. They also educate and inform about mental health illnesses, nutrition, self-care, medication management, disease prevention and promotion of health to patients/clients, families and caregivers. Both registered nurses and registered psychiatric trained nurses can work as a registered psychiatric nurse in BC

Who is suited for this type of occupation?

Registered Psychiatric Nurses are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:
- strong interest in education and counselling
- interest and knowledge in the biological, psycho-social, and nursing sciences
- strong problem-solving and communication skills
- good listening skills, emotional stability, self-reliance, and analytical skills
- good critical thinking skills and sound judgement
- the ability to be empathic and culturally competent
- compassionate, dependable, ethical, trustworthy, and mature
- ability to remain patient and helpful with people who unwell and/or upset
- ability to be precise and accurate
- strong social skills and leadership ability
- ability to manage high levels of stress associated with life threatening situations and medical conditions.
- ability to understand self-including, but not limited to, personal biases and the impact of self in therapeutic relationships
- self-discipline and self-directed
- the ability to multi-task in a complex and fast-paced environment
- physically fit to perform the duties of the job
- a clean record, no prior criminal background.

They should enjoy:
- solving theoretical problems as well as practical "real life" problems
- working in a health care environment
- a genuine interest in caring for people
- working one on one with people who are have mental health challenges to support and guide them in their recovery
- working collaboratively with others in a team environment
- using standard and specialized equipment to gather assessments to provide proper care, and the performance of components, assemblies, and systems
- analyzing and diagnosing problems.

Who employs this professional?

Registered Psychiatric Nurses are employed in a variety of settings, such as
- hospitals
- primary care clinics
- community health centers
- extended care facilities
- rehabilitation centers
- clinics
- doctor's offices
- community agencies
- penitentiaries/correction services
- companies and private homes
- or they can be self-employed.

Registered Psychiatric nurses work shift hours, which include weekend rotations. They may also be required to be on call for emergencies. Working in emergency situations can be stressful.

Registered Psychiatric Nurses are employed by:
- health authorities/employers of BC
- mental health and addition programs
- forensic services department
- school
- group home and clubhouse
- not-for-profit organization
- nursing education programs
- health care research and development facilities
- private doctor's office
- insurance companies
- own and operate their own private nursing business.

Salary

General duty psychiatric nurses salary in BC starts with Step 1 up to Step 9. Each step requires one year of nursing work experience.

Currently Step 1 hourly wage is $30.79; Step 9 hourly wage is 40.42

Nurses, who work evening, nights and/or weekends, also get additional pay called "shift differential"
- Shift differential (night) $3.50 per hour
- Weekend Premium $2.00 per hour
- Over time is 2x regular hourly rate

When a RN has a Bachelor, Master's Degree, and/or taken Specialty Certification, he/she also gets additional pay called "Qualification Differential":
- Master's Degree $125.00 per month
- Baccalaureate Degree $100.00 per month
- Specialty Certification $ 50.00 per month

Required Training and Education to Become a Registered Psychiatric Nurse

The three-year, full-time **Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing Program** is designed to provide graduates with specialized knowledge and skills to provide safe, comprehensive, holistic care to individuals within the context of families, groups and communities in a variety of mental health care settings. Each semester builds on foundational concepts and skills to prepare graduates to respond to the ever-changing mental health care needs of our society.
The four-year on-site, full-time generic **Bachelor of Science in Psychiatric Nursing** Program (BSPN) is designed to provide the graduate with an increased breadth and depth of specialized knowledge and skill.

Graduates will demonstrate additional knowledge in the following areas:
- family theory and assessment
- knowledge of statistical methods in research
- ability to critically analyze, interpret, evaluate, and integrate nursing research literature to guide psychiatric nursing practice
- ability to participate in psychiatric nursing research projects

Graduates of the BSPN degree program become prepared for a future career and educational advancements in the psychiatric nursing profession. Graduates are also prepared for entry into graduate studies.

Those who are trained in the Registered Nurses Program can also work as a psychiatric nurse.

Both diploma and degree-prepared graduates are highly employable, and work in many areas of health care, which may include:

- long-term psychiatric facilities
- acute care hospitals
- children and adolescent programs
- corrections/forensics
- addiction services
- community mental health settings

Learning opportunities in community health include: clinical practice in primary care, outreach nursing, homecare and other community health agencies.

The clinical practice rotations can be during the day, evening or night shift, including weekends and holidays.

Most universities have highly competitive requirements and choose only those applicants deemed to have the best opportunity for success. Please review the entrance requirements of the educational institution you are interested in attending in advance in order to plan your courses in high school to meet their criteria.

Source: http://www.douglas.bc.ca/calendar/programs/ppnd.html

To become a fully Registered Psychiatric Nurse in BC

After completing a registered psychiatric nursing undergrad program, from one of the recognized colleges or university in Canada, you can apply to the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of BC to write the licensure exam. If you successfully pass the exam, you can then apply for full licensure.

The same goes for those who have completed a registered nursing undergrad program from a college or university in Canada. You can then work as a psychiatric nurse once you have written and passed the licensure exam. If you successfully pass the exam, you can apply for full licensure.

Career Advancement

Nursing offers full of opportunities to learn, grow, advance and change your career direction.

Experienced registered psychiatric nurses may advance to supervisory or clinical leadership positions. Some go on to do their Master's Degree in Nursing, Public Administration, or leadership programs so that they can become clinical educators, managers, directors, and take on other leadership roles. Additional education and certification are required to go into specialty nursing areas. Some of these areas might be substance abuse, forensic psychiatry, paediatric and adolescent psychiatry, geriatric population, community health, correction/penitentiary population, other clinical areas.

Whatever your interest – working with children, science and technology, teaching, promoting healthy practices or developing your leadership skills – nursing has endless opportunities for you.

Resources:

Education Programs

Douglas College
http://www.douglas.bc.ca/home.html
Admission Information
http://www.douglas.bc.ca/calendar/programs/ppnd.html#diplomaInPsychiatricNursingRequirements

Kwantlen University
http://www.kwantlen.ca/home.html
Admission Information
http://www.kwantlen.ca/calendar/2011-12/health/psychiatricnursing-deg.html

Steinberg College
http://www.stenbergcollege.com/
Admission Information
http://www.stenbergcollege.com/section.asp?pageid=5371

Grant MacEwan University
http://www.macewan.ca/wcm/SchoolsFaculties/HCS/Programs/PsychiatricNursing/index.htm?utm_source=psychnursing&utm_medium=redirect

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts & Technology (SIAST)
http://www.siast.sk.ca/programs_courses_descriptions/PNDIP.shtml

Brandon University
http://www.brandonu.ca/health-studies/programs/bscpn/

Financial assistance and bursaries:

For information about student bursaries from the Registered Nurses Foundation, please visit: http://www.rnfbc.ca/bursary-info-and-application/ Application deadline is mid-September.

Bursary winners will be notified by mid-December.
http://www.crpnbc.ca/education/scholarships-and-bursaries/

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml

Association

College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of British Columbia
http://www.crpnbc.ca/