

DESCRIPTION: Under limited supervision of a Behavioral Health Nursing Director/Associate or Behavioral Health Nurse Supervisor, provides professional nursing care for the patients of a State run hospital, provides clinical direction and guidance to other nursing and direct care staff, provides direct patient nursing care and treatments within the scope of licensure with a focus on mental and behavioral health, management of crisis situations which may require restraint or seclusion interventions and/or other crisis management strategies. Performs related work as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: (A position may be assigned to this class based on the scope and level of work performed as outlined below.)

The Behavioral Health Registered Nurse is differentiated from the Registered Nurse (RN) class based on its focus on the behavioral health of patients in a State run hospital who have been placed in the hospital by order of the judicial system or a mental health board.

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (A position may not be assigned all the duties listed, nor do the listed examples include all the duties that may be assigned.)

Directs, coordinates, monitors, and/or provides patient care activities and the delivery of nursing care for complex and legally involved behavioral health patients by nursing and direct care staff. Trains nursing or direct care staff in appropriate behavioral health nursing care standards and techniques to maintain standards of quality and safe patient care. Assists in the orientation of newly hired nurses and acts as an expert resource for Registered Nurses, Security Specialists and other staff providing care for patients with behavioral health issues.

Closely monitors the condition of behavioral health patients; assesses health status and implements appropriate nursing interventions for both physical and behavioral health conditions. Administers medications and/or treatments or supervises the administration of medications by licensed or certified staff members. Evaluates and reports patient symptoms, progress, and reactions to medications. Follows and implements forced medication procedures as designated by the courts or mental health boards.

Monitors patient behavior and oversee the therapeutic milieu of patient care, making decisions regarding patients' day-to-day behavioral health symptoms and well-being and ensure that appropriate treatment actions or interventions are identified and implemented according to legal and mental health board orders, policies and procedures and acts in the best interest of the patient.

Provides leadership and acts as an expert in the identification of potential behaviors and triggers which can lead to crisis situations and create safety concerns for staff and other patients and work or direct staff and the treatment team to deescalate potential crisis situations.

Assesses and evaluates the need for additional safety measures including changing the physical and therapeutic environment, seclusion and restraints and ensuring the utilization of the least restrictive treatment interventions required by the situation. Directs and supervises seclusion and restraint usage to ensure interventions are used, applied, monitored, and documented appropriately. May obtain medical orders, as required, for seclusions and restraints from a physician and perform physical health checks at regular intervals during interventions as required to ensure patient well-being.

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Consults with physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other treatment staff members to communicate necessary information to assure quality patient care and compliance with legal and mental health board orders.

Writes a variety of reports on patient progress, medication use, initiates and completes patient focused actions necessary to accomplish the goals defined in the plan of care that may be used in legal and mental health board proceedings. Ensures patient records are kept current, transcribes physician's orders and records medications.

Assists in the evaluation of patient progress as part of the interdisciplinary team; participates as a member of an interdisciplinary team; develops, implements, evaluates, and revises nursing care plans and communicates any changes.

May serve as a Behavioral Health Nurse Supervisor or Behavioral Health Nursing Director/Associate in their absence.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED: (These are needed to perform the work assigned.)

Knowledge of: psychiatric disorders, trauma informed care, co-occurring and complex needs of individuals with behavioral health challenges, behavioral health legal and judicial system, suicide prevention, crisis de-escalation, nursing theory and practice; accepted standards of care; policies and procedures governing nursing care; sanitation and infection control standards, policies, and procedures; techniques of providing quality nursing care; standards for charting medical records; current medications, their uses and reactions; Nebraska regulations pertaining to nursing scope of practice.

Skill in: coordinating and providing nursing care.

Ability to: manage the therapeutic milieu of complex patients, exercise a high degree of flexibility and adaptability to respond to patient psychiatric symptomology, observe changes in the behavioral and medical condition of patients and effectively communicate these changes to other nursing staff members and physicians; consult with clinical specialists; instruct others in patient care; identify and de-escalate potential crisis situations before physical intervention is necessary; maintain accurate medical records and write periodic reports as required by courts and mental health boards; communicate effectively with medical professionals, direct care staff members, and other facility staff members; follow oral and written instructions in exact detail, maintain a helpful and empathetic attitude toward patients; participate on an interdisciplinary team; utilize sound and effective professional nursing judgment.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: (Applicants will be screened for possession of these qualifications. Applicants who need assistance in the selection process should request this in advance.)

A current license to practice as a Registered Nurse in Nebraska or authority based on the Nurse Licensure Compact to practice as a registered nurse in Nebraska.

SPECIAL NOTE[S]:

Specific positions in this class may require certification as a Psychiatric Mental Health Registered Nurse from the ANCC Board of Certification or for an employee to become certified once eligible.

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State agencies are responsible to evaluate each of their positions to determine their individual overtime eligibility status as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Continuing Education is a requirement to maintain licensure as a Licensed Registered Nurse.

Incumbents classified to this class must demonstrate clinical competency on an annual basis.