4.3: Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Apply the nursing process to mental health care
- Describe nursing assessments when providing mental health care
- Incorporate respectful and equitable practice
- Consider developmental levels when providing care
- Identify common nursing diagnoses/problems related to mental health conditions
- Promote a therapeutic environment
- Apply the subcategories of the Implementation standard of care to mental health care
- Create effective nursing care plans for clients with various mental health disorders
- Compare NCLEX Next Generation terminology to the nursing process

Psychiatric-mental health nursing is, “The nursing practice specialty committed to promoting mental health through the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of behavioral problems, mental disorders, and comorbid conditions across the life span. Psychiatric-mental health nursing intervention is an art and a science, employing a purposeful use of self and a wide range of nursing, psychosocial, and neurobiological evidence to produce effective outcomes.”[1]

In 2014 the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) and the International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses (ISPN) published the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice resource in alignment with the second edition of the ANA’s Nursing: Scope and Standard of Practice Nursing. The Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice resource guides psychiatric-mental health nurses in the application of their professional skills and responsibilities and should be reviewed in conjunction with state Board of Nursing policies and
practices that govern the practice of nursing. The Standards of Practice for Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing mirror the ANA Standards of Professional Nursing Practice of Assessment, Diagnosis, Outcome Identification, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation, but also have additional competencies for Psychiatric-Mental Health Registered Nurse Specialists (PMH-RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Specialists (PMH-APRNs) and additional components for the Implementation standard of care.

This chapter will review how nurse generalists apply the nursing process and the ANA Standards of Professional Nursing Practice to clients experiencing a mental health condition. Assessments, nursing diagnoses, expected outcomes, and interventions pertaining to mental health will be reviewed while incorporating life span and cultural considerations. For specific assessments, nursing diagnoses, expected outcomes, and interventions related to specific mental health conditions, see each corresponding “disorder” chapter.
