

AFSC 46P4, Staff
AFSC 46P3, Qualified
AFSC 46P1, Entry

★MENTAL HEALTH NURSE
(Changed 31 Oct 23)

1. Specialty Summary. Provides professional nursing care within scope of practice, established standards of care and federal and state laws. Provides mental health (MH) services to promote and maintain optimal MH, prevent mental illness, manage mental and physical disorders, and to diagnose and treat human responses to actual or potential MH problems. Coordinates with and makes recommendations to staff agencies concerning applicable policies, plans and programs. Participates in cross-functional collaboration to improve patient care delivery. Supports research activities. Related DoD Occupational Group: 260507.

2. Duties and Responsibilities:

2.1. Provides MH nursing care. Assesses individuals, families, groups and communities for MH needs. Develops diagnoses and plans, implements and evaluates nursing care within scope of practice. Designs and implements programs that foster MH, assess dysfunction, assist individuals to regain or improve coping abilities, and prevent further disability. Monitors patients undergoing detoxification from alcohol and drugs. Assists in planning, providing, and evaluating comprehensive MH services. Identifies community resources and guides individuals and families in their use. Supports, conducts, and uses nursing research to improve health care delivery.

2.2. Provides leadership and clinical assistance to other nursing personnel. Manages inpatient care unit and clinic activities. Coordinates staff assignments. Encourages staff participation in community programs promoting population MH. Assists MH care team members in identifying teaching and learning needs related to clinical care, role, and professional development.

3. ★Specialty Qualifications:

3.1. Knowledge. Knowledge of MH nursing process, individual/family dynamics in health and during illness; individual/group therapy, theories of personality development, human behavior, psychopathology, diagnoses, chemotherapy, psychotherapies; and physiological response to alcohol and drug abuse withdrawal is mandatory.

3.2. Education. For entry into this specialty, meet the entry level education requirements for appointment to the Nurse Corps for Active Duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. Must be a graduate a baccalaureate degree program in nursing (BSN) accredited by a national nursing accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education. Registered nurses who are graduate of an associate's degree in nursing (ADN) and do not have a BSN are not eligible for accession unless they also have a post-baccalaureate (masters or doctorate) degree in nursing that is also nationally accredited and recognized by the US Department of Education <https://www.ed.gov/accreditation>.

3.3. Training. For award of AFSC 46P1, completion of an AF/SG1N approved formal training program is required.

3.4. Experience. For award of 46P3, a minimum of 6 months in MH nursing including individual and group therapy. The 6 months experience in the specialty may be included in the total 12 months of experience required for the award of the 46N3 AFSC. Civilian MH nursing experience is creditable. For the AFR, 46P must be currently working in the clinical civilian setting of the suffix the AFR has assessed them into.

3.5. Other. For entry, award and retention of these AFSCs, the following are mandatory.

3.5.1. ★Unrestricted practice (excludes temporary restrictions) IAW DHA-PM 6025.13 Vol 4 and/or AFI 44-119, *Medical Quality Operations*.
 3.5.2. Approval by the Chief Nurse.