

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

FOR MENTAL HEALTH – PSYCHIATRIC
NURSES



MAY 2022

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NURSING COUNCIL OF KENYA- VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES



Our Vision

A world-class regulatory body in nursing and midwifery education, and practice



Our Mission

Develop standards, enforce regulations in nursing and midwifery education, and practice



Our Values

Our core values express that everything we do comes from deeply-held commitments and shared understanding of our values, what we stand for, how we treat each other and those we serve; that inform every policy and steer every action summarized as:

I – Integrity: We are committed to acting in an honest, accountable and transparent manner in all our undertakings

N – Nurture: We value and nurture the strength of character it takes to work together as a team, to be an individual, to respect differences of opinions, and have the ability to empathize with others.

S – Social responsibility: Caring for the patient, family, community and the environment

P – Professionalism: We are dedicated to the highest levels of achievement obtainable through competencies and critical skills.

I – Innovation: We thrive on creativity and ingenuity. We seek the innovations that are evidence-based and data-driven to bring a positive change to the Council.

R – Responsiveness: We act with a sense of urgency, make qualified decisions in time and provide fiscally responsible solutions.

E – Excellence: We pledge the highest levels of effectiveness and efficiency

FOREWORD

The Nursing Council of Kenya (NCK) is a regulatory body established by an Act of parliament, (Nurses and Midwives Act Cap 257). In accordance to the Nurses Act, the council is mandated to make provision for nursing education and practice to include specialized courses for nurses including mental health- psychiatric nursing. The goal of the nursing council in regulating mental health & psychiatric nursing education and practice is to ensure safe practitioners and quality health care services as reflected in the Kenya mental health policy 2015 to 2030 and other relevant guidelines. Similarly, the mission of the Council is to ensure the provision of quality nurses training and maintenance of professional nursing practice through research and appropriate regulations. In order to fulfil the mission and vision and, to realize its core mandate the Council is guided by regulatory tools like the scope of practice.

This scope of practice defines the limits of care and legal boundaries of the mental health- psychiatric nursing specialty. The development of this document has been necessitated by advancement in training in the area of mental health- psychiatric nursing. While working in a multidisciplinary team, the mental health- psychiatric nurse has limits and freedom to practice within the stipulated guidelines as contained in this document. Accordingly, the document echoes the legal and ethical boundaries within which the mental health & psychiatric nurse must practice in recognition of right based approach to health care.

The document elaborates on the scopes for all levels of mental health- psychiatric nurses in the country that are regulated by the Nursing Council of Kenya and can be applied in all health settings. It is believed that this document will be of great benefit to all the users in all practice settings within the national and devolved systems of governance in Kenya.

Prof. Eunice Ndirangu- Mugo

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABGs	Arterial Blood Gases
CBC	Complete Blood Count
CUE	Commission for University Education
DSE	Discipline Standards And Ethics
DSM	Diagnostic Statistical Manual
ECT	Electroconvulsive Therapy
EEG	Electroencephalogram
FBS	Fasting Blood Sugar
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICD	International Classification Of Diseases
KMTC	Kenya Medical Training College
KSA	Knowledge, Skills And Attitudes
LFTS	Liver Function Tests
MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
NCK	Nursing Council Of Kenya
RBS	Random Blood Sugar
U/E/C	Urea/Electrolyte/Creatinine
VDRL	Venereal Disease Research Laboratory Test

1.0 SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Mental health and psychiatric nursing is a specialty, which enables the trained nurse provider to promote mental health and provide specialized nursing care to individuals, families and communities with mental health and psychiatric issues. Mental health is a determinant of overall health and social economic development, and has influence on outcomes such as healthier lifestyle, higher education attainment and overall productivity. Kenya has a high burden of mental disorders resulting to ill health, psychosocial disability and premature mortality. This results from huge gaps in access to care as well as having majority of Kenyans associating mental health and mental disorders with negative narratives leading to low focus on the importance and benefits of mental health and wellbeing. The mental health & psychiatric nurse has a role to play in reversing the trends and changing this narrative.

In Kenya, and psychiatric nurse is trained at post basic level in mental health and psychiatric nursing through a program approved by the Nursing Council of Kenya (NCK) and Commission for University Education (CUE) to practice as per the scope of practice. In addition to the competencies in basic nursing, the mental health and psychiatric nurse should be able to provide mental health and psychiatric nursing services as stipulated in this scope.

Nurses in Kenya are prepared at different levels comprising of certificate, diploma, higher diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree and Doctorate. These levels have different specific scopes of practice, which define the limits of care and ethical-legal boundaries of practice under which the nurse can be held accountable.

This Scope of Practice document describes the range of interests, capabilities and professional activities of mental health- psychiatric nurses in Kenya. It considers the mental health- psychiatric nurse a core member in the multidisciplinary team (MDT). It is not intended to exclude the participation in other nursing activities as stipulated in the scope of practice for nurses and midwives in Kenya-entry level. The overriding principle is that the mental health & psychiatric nurse will provide only those services for which they are adequately prepared and competent to perform through their academic and clinical training and experience. Their

practice should be consistent with the Code of Ethics and Conduct for Nurses in Kenya and other relevant guidelines.

This document is therefore intended to guide the mental health- psychiatric nurse practice in promoting high-quality patient care. It recognizes that the practice of mental health nursing is bound to change over time with new developments and evidence-basis of practice. Therefore, this document will be reviewed periodically as need arises.

1.1 Purpose of the Scope of Practice

The purpose of this document is to stipulate the scope within which the various levels of mental health- psychiatric nurse should operate. It outlines those activities that are within the expertise of mental health- psychiatric nurses. It is expected to guide the practice of the mental health nurse in Kenya. It serves as a reference for issues of service delivery, healthcare consumers, education, nursing regulatory activities and inter-professional relations among others.

1.2 Levels of Mental Health - Psychiatric Nurse Preparation in Kenya

1.2.1 Higher diploma in Mental Health - Psychiatric Nursing

In this category the nurse has a higher diploma in Mental Health- Psychiatric nursing. In addition to the relevant scope of practice for nurses and midwives in Kenya-entry level, these nurses have other competencies which are in line with their field of specialization.

1.2.2 Post-graduate diploma in Mental Health- Psychiatric Nursing

In this category the nurse has a post-graduate diploma in Mental health- psychiatric nursing. In addition to the scope of practice for entry level nurses and midwives in Kenya and higher diploma nurses, the nurse with a post graduate diploma in Mental health- psychiatric nursing has more competencies which are in line with their field of specialization.

1.2.3 Master of Science in Mental Health - Psychiatric Nursing

In this category the nurse has a master's of science in Mental health- psychiatric nursing. In addition to the scope of practice for entry level nurses and midwives in Kenya, higher diploma

and post graduate diploma nurses, the nurse with a master's of science in Mental health-psychiatric nursing has more competences to be clinical nurse specialist (CNS).

2.0 SECTION TWO: SPECIFIC SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR VARIOUS LEVELS

2.1 Higher Diploma in Mental health- psychiatric nursing

A mental health- psychiatric nurse at this level has undergone training at higher diploma in mental health- psychiatric nursing after diploma studies in nursing. In addition, to the scope of the registered nurse with a diploma, the mental health- psychiatric nursing higher diploma holder will: -

1. Conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric evaluation/assessment to individuals, families and communities.
2. Order, perform, interpret and utilize laboratory and radiological results to make clinical decisions regarding patient care as per appendix 2.
3. Utilize the recommended diagnostic and classification systems (DSM and ICD) in the diagnosis of mental disorders.
4. Coordinate and conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric care to individuals, families and communities.
5. Prescribe, administer and dispense psychotropic and related medications to the persons with mental disorders as per appendix 1.
6. Provide psychiatric emergency care to persons with mental disorders patients in line with stipulated guidelines.
7. Provide pre, intra- and post-procedure care to patients undergoing Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).
8. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in offering forensic mental health care.
9. Prescribe and provide psychosocial care to individuals, families and communities.
10. Provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental health disorders.
11. Provide mental health and psychiatric nursing services to persons with substance use disorders.

12. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admission, transfer, referral, discharge and follow up of patients from psychiatric/mental health settings.
13. Contribute in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.
14. Implement strategies to reduce stigma.
15. Implement strategies to enhance community participation in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health disorders.
16. Provide community mental health and psychiatric nursing services.
17. Monitor and follow up on care provided to patients with mental health conditions
18. Initiate and conduct school mental health and psychiatric nursing programs.
19. Manage mental health and psychiatric services at hospital wards/units' level.
20. Participate in mental health advocacy activities in various mental & psychiatric settings.
21. Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning through acquisition of relevant Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) that enhances practice.
22. Participate and utilize research findings to promote quality of mental health and psychiatric care.

2.2 Post-Graduate Diploma in Mental health- psychiatric nursing

A mental health- psychiatric nurse at this level has undergone specialty training at post graduate level in mental health- psychiatric nursing after undergraduate studies in nursing. In addition, to the scope of the registered nurse with a bachelor's degree, the mental health- psychiatric nursing post graduate holder will: -

1. Direct, coordinate and conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric evaluation/assessment for individuals, families and communities.
2. Order, perform, interpret and utilize laboratory and radiological results to make clinical decisions regarding patient care as per appendix 2.
3. Utilize the recommended diagnostic and classification systems (DSM and ICD) in the diagnosis of mental disorders.

4. Prescribe and provide psychiatric emergency care to persons with mental disorders patients in line with stipulated guidelines.
5. Direct, coordinate and conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric care to individuals, families and communities.
6. Prescribe, administer and dispense psychotropic and related medications to the persons with mental disorders as per appendix 1.
7. Prescribe, perform, coordinate ECT as well as provide pre-, intra- and post-ECT care.
8. Provide mental health and psychiatric nursing services to persons with substance use disorders.
9. Prescribe and provide psychosocial care to individuals, families and communities
10. Provide forensic mental health care.
11. Prescribe and provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental health disorders.
12. Contribute in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.
13. Implement curriculum related to mental health- psychiatric nursing for diploma and higher diploma level.
14. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admission, transfer, referral, discharge and follow up of patients from psychiatric/mental health settings.
15. Initiate development/review of assessment tools for diagnosis/screening of mental disorders.
16. Design and Implement strategies to reduce stigma.
17. Monitor and follow up on care provided to patients with mental health conditions
18. Manage mental health and psychiatric services and facilities as well as training institutions.
19. Initiate and undertake mental health advocacy activities in various mental & psychiatric settings.
20. Initiate and provide community mental health and psychiatric services.
21. Initiate and conduct school mental health- psychiatric nursing programs.
22. Initiate and implement strategies to enhance community participation in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health disorders.

23. Initiate development of policies and guidelines that promote access to mental health and psychiatric care services.
24. Conduct and utilize research findings to promote quality mental health and psychiatric care.
25. Coordinate and provide clinical mentorship, training and supervision to multidisciplinary team members.
26. Coordinate and facilitate learning in Mental health- psychiatric nursing related training programs
27. Manage mental health and psychiatric services and facilities as well as training institutions.
28. Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning through acquisition of relevant Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) that enhances practice.

2.3 Master's Degree in Mental health- psychiatric nursing

This scope shall be applicable to mental health- psychiatric nurses who have been trained at the master's level. In addition, to the scope of the registered nurse with a bachelor's degree, the mental health- psychiatric nursing master's degree holder will: -

1. Direct, coordinate and conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric evaluation/assessment for individuals, families and communities.
2. Order, perform, interpret and utilize laboratory and radiological results to make clinical decisions regarding patient care as per appendix 2.
3. Prescribe and provide psychiatric emergency care to persons with mental disorders patients in line with stipulated guidelines.
4. Prescribe, administer and dispense psychotropic and related medications to the persons with mental disorders as per appendix 1.
5. Prescribe, perform, coordinate ECT as well as provide pre-, intra- and post-ECT care.
6. Provide mental health- psychiatric nursing services to persons with substance use disorders.
7. Prescribe and provide psychosocial care to individuals, families and communities

8. Provide forensic mental health care.
9. Prescribe and provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental health disorders.
10. Contribute in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.
11. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admission, transfer, referral, discharge and follow up of patients from psychiatric/mental health settings.
12. Design and Implement strategies to reduce stigma.
13. Initiate, direct and undertake mental health advocacy activities.
14. Design, Initiate and provide community mental health services and psycho-education to communities as appropriate.
15. Design, initiate and implement strategies to enhance community participation in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health disorders.
16. Design, implement and evaluate school mental health- psychiatric nursing programs.
17. Monitor and follow up on care provided to patients with mental health conditions
18. Initiate and direct development of policies and guidelines that promote access to mental health and psychiatric care services.
19. Initiate and direct development/review of assessment tools for diagnosis/screening of mental disorders.
20. Initiate, conduct, utilize and disseminate research findings to improve care in mental health and psychiatric settings.
21. Supervise research projects and thesis/dissertations.
22. Design, implement and evaluate curriculum related to mental health- psychiatric nursing for graduate and post graduate level.
23. Manage mental health and psychiatric services at all levels of health care provision as well training institutions.
24. Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning through acquisition of relevant Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) that enhances practice.
25. Provide consultancy in mental health & psychiatric care.

1.3 APPENDICES

Appendix I: Drug List Scheduling Considerations

The mental health nurse shall be guided by the following:

1. Work to the extent of training and certification.
2. Context of practice; as per the institution policy and country's Essential Medicines List
3. Individual qualification, experience and competence and in line with pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics principles.

Medications that can be prescribed by the mental health- psychiatric nurse for management of mental health and psychiatric conditions according to the level of education and competence and in accordance to the Kenya Essential Drugs List protocols include:

DRUG	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTERS
a. Anxiolytics			
b. Sedative hypnotics	C		
c. Psychostimulants	C		
d. Antipsychotics			
e. Mood stabilizers			
f. Antidepressants			
g. Drugs for psychoactive substance abuse	C		

Key:

Prescribe	
C	In consultation with relevant health team member

Appendix II: Investigations Schedule

INVESTIGATIONS	HIGHER DIPLOMA	POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA	MASTERS
Laboratory Tests			
1. Complete blood count (CBC)			
2. Blood sugar (RBS/FBS)			
3. Urea/Electrolyte/Creatinine (U/E/C)			
4. HIV (Rapid)			
5. VDRL (Rapid)			
6. Toxicology studies			
7. Blood slide for malaria parasite			
8. Liver Function Tests(LFTs)			
9. Urinalysis (Dipstick)			
10. Pregnancy test (rapid)			
11. Stool Microscopy			
12. Thyroid function test			
13. Arterial Blood Gases (ABGs)			
Radiological Tests			
1. CT Scan- head			

2. Electroencephalogram (EEG)			
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Key:

Order, Perform, interpret and Utilize	
Order, interpret and utilize	
Interpret and utilize	

Appendix III: Comparative table of the different levels of mental health & psychiatric nurse specialty

Higher diploma	Post graduate Diploma	Master
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric evaluation/assessment to individuals, families and communities. 2. Order, perform, interpret and utilize laboratory and radiological results to make clinical decisions regarding patient care as per appendix 2. 3. Utilize the recommended diagnostic and classification systems (DSM and ICD) in the diagnosis of mental disorders. 4. Coordinate and conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric care to individuals, families and communities. 5. Prescribe, administer and dispense psychotropic and related medications to the persons with mental disorders as per appendix 1. 	<p>In addition to the scope of practice for the Higher Diploma in mental health& psychiatric nursing, the post graduate nurse will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct, coordinate and conduct comprehensive mental health and psychiatric evaluation/assessment for individuals, families and communities. 2. Prescribe and provide psychiatric emergency care to persons with mental disorders patients in line with stipulated guidelines. 3. Prescribe, perform, coordinate ECT as well as provide pre-, intra- and post-ECT care. 4. Prescribe and provide psychosocial care to individuals, families and communities 	<p>In addition to the scope of practice for the postgraduate Diploma in mental health& psychiatric nursing, the masters nurse will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiate, direct and undertake mental health advocacy activities. 2. Design, Initiate and provide community mental health services and psycho-education to communities as appropriate. 3. Design, initiate and implement strategies to enhance community participation in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health disorders. 4. Design, implement and evaluate school mental health- psychiatric nursing programs. 5. Initiate and direct development of policies and guidelines that promote access to mental health and psychiatric care services.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Provide psychiatric emergency care to persons with mental disorders patients in line with stipulated guidelines. 7. Provide pre, intra- and post-procedure care to patients undergoing Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). 8. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in offering forensic mental health care. 9. Prescribe and provide psychosocial care to individuals, families and communities. 10. Provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental health disorders. 11. Provide mental health and psychiatric nursing services to persons with substance use disorders. 12. Collaborate with the multidisciplinary health team in admission, transfer, referral, discharge and follow up of patients from psychiatric/mental health settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Provide forensic mental health care. 6. Prescribe and provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental health disorders. 7. 8. Implement curriculum related to mental health- psychiatric nursing for diploma and higher diploma level. 9. Follow up on care given to patients from psychiatric/mental health settings. 10. Initiate development/review of assessment tools for diagnosis/screening of mental disorders. 11. Design and Implement strategies to reduce stigma. 12. Manage mental health and psychiatric services and facilities as well as training institutions. 13. Initiate and undertake mental health advocacy activities in various mental & psychiatric settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Initiate and direct development/review of assessment tools for diagnosis/screening of mental disorders. 7. Initiate, conduct, utilize and disseminate research findings to improve care in mental health and psychiatric settings. 8. Supervise research projects and thesis/dissertations. 9. Design, implement and evaluate curriculum related to mental health- psychiatric nursing for graduate and postgraduate level. 10. Manage mental health and psychiatric services at all levels of health care provision as well as training institutions. 11. Provide consultancy in mental health & psychiatric care.
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<p>13. Contribute in making ethical decisions regarding patient care outcomes.</p> <p>14. Implement strategies to reduce stigma.</p> <p>15. Implement strategies to enhance community participation in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health disorders.</p> <p>16. Provide community mental health and psychiatric nursing services.</p> <p>17. Initiate and conduct school mental health and psychiatric nursing programs.</p> <p>18. Manage mental health and psychiatric services at hospital wards/units' level.</p> <p>19. Participate in mental health advocacy activities in various mental & psychiatric settings.</p> <p>20. Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning through acquisition of relevant Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) that enhances practice.</p>	<p>14. Initiate and provide community mental health and psychiatric services.</p> <p>15. Initiate and implement strategies to enhance community participation in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health disorders.</p> <p>16. Initiate development of policies and guidelines that promote access to mental health and psychiatric care services.</p> <p>17. Conduct and utilize research findings to promote quality mental health and psychiatric care.</p> <p>18. Coordinate and provide clinical mentorship, training and supervision to multidisciplinary team members.</p> <p>19. Coordinate and facilitate learning in Mental health- psychiatric nursing related training programs</p>	
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21. Participate and utilize research findings to promote quality of mental health and psychiatric care.	20. Manage mental health and psychiatric services and facilities as well as training institutions.	
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4.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assessment

The organized, systematic and continuous process of observations and measurements of mental health- psychiatric care. Assessment includes the use of history taking, physical examination, behaviour observation, mental status examination and carrying out investigations.

Collaborative

Refers to working with other people towards a common objective. Collaboration includes group decision-making about division of tasks, the plan of action and implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Competencies

Basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to safely perform the prescribed role.

Evidence Based practice

Integration of clinical expertise, patient values, and the best research evidence in the decision-making process for patient care.

Holistic Care

Caring for the whole person, including, but not limited to physical, mental and psychosocial aspects

Mental Health

Defined by WHO as a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to his or her community.

Mental disorder

Defined in DSM5 as a behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual that reflects an underlying psychobiological dysfunction.

Multidisciplinary team

A group of health care workers who are members of different disciplines/professions each providing specific services to the patient

Preventive

Refers to actions taken by individuals, families, communities, health care providers and others to halt or delay occurrence of mental health disorders at primordial, primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Registered

A person having been entered in the NCK registers of nurses or midwives in Kenya

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