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Clinical Nurse Specialist in Adult Health Board Certification Test Content Outline - effective date: April 5, 2011

There are 175 questions on this examination. Of these, 150 are scored questions and 25 are pretest questions that are not scored. Pretest questions are used to determine how well these questions will perform before they are used on the scored portion of the examination. The pretest questions cannot be distinguished from those that will be scored, so it is important for a candidate to answer all questions. A candidate's score, however, is based solely on the 150 scored questions. Performance on pretest questions does not affect a candidate's score.

This Test Content Outline identifies the areas that are included on the examination. The percentage and number of questions in each of the major categories of the scored portion of the examination are also shown.

Category	Domains of Practice	No. of Questions	Percent
I	Direct Care	58	38.67%
II	Professional Practice	25	16.67%
III	System Leadership	19	12.67%
IV	Foundational Knowledge	48	32.00%
	Total	150	100%

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I Direct Care (38.67%)

A. Assessment and History

Knowledge of:

1. Assessment tools (e.g., pain, nutrition, depression, violence, caregiver burden)
2. Risk assessment (e.g., genetics, anticipatory guidance)
3. Metabolic requirements (e.g., diabetes, renal, cardiac)
4. Atypical presentation of illness (e.g., acute myocardial infarction (AMI), depression, sepsis, delirium)

Skills in:

5. Obtaining comprehensive data from multiple sources about context and etiologies necessary to formulate differential diagnoses and plans of care.
6. Performing a comprehensive adult assessment across the lifespan (including functional, mental status, medication, environment, relative risk assessment, spiritual, nutritional status [e.g., body mass index (BMI), labs, dysphagia], support systems, etc.)
7. Conducting a problem focused assessment
8. Accessing evidence based assessment tools

B. Diagnostic Reasoning

Knowledge of:

1. Disease progression/pathophysiology (e.g., geriatric syndromes, atypical presentation of illness, comorbidities, acute exacerbation of chronic illness)

Skills in:

2. Synthesizing assessment data to formulate diagnoses for clinical problems amenable to CNS interventions (e.g., patients, families, and systems; including environmental context)
3. Prioritizing nursing and differential diagnoses
4. Differentiating between age related changes and disease
5. Interpreting diagnostic data (e.g., imaging, labs, genetics)

C. Interventions

Knowledge of:

1. Pharmacology (e.g., food/drug interactions, adverse drug events and safe medication practice/systems)
2. Psychoneuroimmunology (e.g., guided imagery, herbals, music therapy)
3. Evidence-based practice, clinical practice guidelines, standards of care (e.g., skin, pain, glycemic control, hypertension)

Skills in:

4. Prescribing nursing therapeutics, non-pharmacologic interventions, diagnostic measures, equipment, procedures and treatments
5. Integrating complementary and integrative therapies into treatment plans (e.g., massage, herbals, music therapy)
6. Individualizing plans of care considering unique/atypical physiology or developmental age related needs (e.g., skin integrity, sexual functioning, functional status, end-of-life)
7. Meeting nutritional needs of specific populations (considering culture, religion, personal preference, health status)
8. Incorporating evidence-based practice into individualized plans of care (e.g., standards of care, Cochrane Database, core measures, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality [AHRQ])

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9. Integrating case management/coordination of care across the continuum (e.g., using pathways, care maps, benchmarks)

D. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Knowledge of:

1. Primary and secondary prevention strategies
2. Behavioral change theories (e.g., adherence, change, health belief model)

Skills in:

3. Facilitating patient and family health and wellness promotion and disease prevention based on risk assessment (e.g., tobacco cessation, behavioral counseling techniques)
4. Determining practice and system interventions that will promote patient, family, and community safety and wellness (e.g., immunization schedules, screenings, pap smears, infection control and prevention, education)

E. Outcomes Evaluation

Knowledge of:

1. Nurse sensitive quality indicators

Skills in:

2. Comparing patient health outcomes with established benchmarks
3. Determining outcome criteria based on individualized patient need
4. Evaluating programs/innovative models of practice across the continuum of care
5. Evaluating and modifying the plan of care based on patient response

F. Advocacy

Knowledge of:

1. Teaching and learning theories
2. Financial and reimbursement influences on care (e.g., insured, underinsured, uninsured)
3. Health literacy
4. Caregiver needs (e.g., stress, respite, resource availability, knowledge, cultural, caregiver burden)

Skills in:

5. Fostering patient and families self-care abilities
6. Facilitating decision making (e.g., empowerment, prioritization, palliative care, end-of-life)
7. Coaching patient and family to navigate the healthcare system
8. Design health information and patient education appropriate to the patient's developmental level, health literacy level, learning needs, readiness to learn, and cultural values and beliefs.
9. Providing anticipatory guidance
10. Facilitating intra- and inter-agency communication

II Professional Practice (16.67%)

A. Consultation/Collaboration

Knowledge of:

1. Interdisciplinary team roles and functions
2. Internal and external consulting
3. Stages of consultation

Skills in:

4. Establishing, improving and sustaining collaborative relationships within and across

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- departments, organizations, networks and agencies
 - 5. Facilitating interdisciplinary team processes to achieve outcomes (e.g., team building, negotiation, conflict management, practice improvement)
 - 6. Providing consultation services for complex issues across the spheres of influence
 - 7. Serving as a content expert (e.g., needs assessment, professional development, nursing orientation and internship programs)
- B. Coaching, mentoring, precepting, and role modeling
- Knowledge of:
- 1. Comparison of coaching, precepting, mentoring and role modeling
 - 2. Adult learning principles
- Skills in:
- 3. Functioning as a role model in the delivery of expert and compassionate nursing practice
 - 4. Mentoring staff, students, health professionals and others to acquire new knowledge and skills and develop their careers
 - 5. Providing feedback and evaluation
 - 6. Coaching and skills development
- C. Professional Accountability and Ethics
- Knowledge of:
- 1. Scopes and standards of practice
 - 2. Ethical principles (e.g., bioethics, codes of ethics, competency vs. capacity, consent/assent)
 - 3. Moral distress
- Skills in:
- 4. Using ethical frameworks for complex healthcare situations (e.g., allocation of resources, compacity, patient and family values and preferences, autonomy, clinical effectiveness, scientific advances, external influences)
 - 5. Engaging resources to resolve issues related to moral distress and ethical conflict (e.g., activate ombudsman/ethics consult team, care conferences, chaplain)
 - 6. Advocating for equitable patient care
 - 7. Promoting a practice climate that analyzes the risks, benefits and outcomes of proposed healthcare regimen for target populations (e.g., informed consent, use of advanced directives, end-of-life, support decision making)

III Systems Leadership (12.67%)

- A. Process improvement
- Knowledge of:
- 1. Models and principles of quality improvement (e.g., Six Sigma, failure mode and effects analysis [FMEA], root cause analysis)
 - 2. Program development (e.g., needs assessment, program evaluation)
 - 3. Available resources for process improvement (e.g., Institute of Healthcare Improvement (IHI) bundles, national patient safety goals)
- Skills in:
- 4. Evaluating practice that considers safety, timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and patient-centered care (across all spheres of influence; e.g., data collection, data analysis, data trend identification, process structure outcome measures)
 - 5. Comparing patient/client health outcomes with established benchmarks
 - 6. Differentiating between outcomes that require care process modification at the

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individual patient level and those that require modification at the system level.

7. Identifying practice improvement opportunities through data analysis and monitoring (across all spheres of influence)
8. Designing practice improvement based on system level assessment (including considering drivers and barriers [e.g., political, regulatory, financial], evidence-based practice, etc.)

B. Regulatory and accreditation standards

Knowledge of:

1. Organization accreditation standards (e.g., The Joint Commission, Magnet, Nurses Improving Care for Health System Elders [NICHE], Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities [CARF], Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [CMS])
2. Regulations and standards for the work place (e.g., sexual harassment, work place violence, equal employment opportunities)

Skills in:

3. Fostering a healthy work environment
4. Promoting compliance with regulatory, accrediting and professional standards

C. Resource Management

Knowledge of:

1. Budgeting and financial principles (e.g., types of budgets, reimbursement, full time equivalency [FTE], diagnosis related groups [DRG])

Skills in:

2. Recommending practice, product and service modifications based on fiscal and budgetary implementations
3. Managing resources including human, financial, and information
4. Conducting cost/benefit analysis (e.g., clinical technologies, products, services)
5. Designing programs to improve efficacy and efficiency using business management principles (e.g., strategic plan, business plan, return on investment [ROI], deliverables, proposals)

IV Foundational Knowledge (32.00%)

A. Research/Evidence-based Practice

Knowledge of:

1. Evidence-based practice principles (e.g., levels of evidence, PICO format)
2. Research process (including human subject protection, qualitative and quantitative research, research utilization and analysis)

Skills in:

3. Conducting a literature search (e.g., accessing databases, searching strategies including keywords)
4. Analyzing research findings and other evidence for their potential application to clinical practice
5. Integrating evidence-based practice into new or existing policies and procedures of care
6. Disseminating research findings
7. Interpreting statistical analysis
8. Evaluating the need for improvement or redesign of care delivery processes to improve safety, efficiency, reliability and quality
9. Fostering a culture of scientific inquiry across the spheres of influences (considering

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barriers and facilitators)

B. Communications

Knowledge of:

1. Communication theories (e.g., active listening, motivational interviewing)

Skills in:

2. Resolving conflicts
3. Establishing and maintaining therapeutic relationships (e.g., identification of appropriate and inappropriate therapeutic relationships, designing programs to promote the establishment of appropriate therapeutic relationships)
4. Communicating information through formal and informal presentations and publications (e.g., community groups, websites, professional organization meetings)
5. Evaluating the effectiveness of communications across the spheres of influence (e.g., with patients, health care providers, interdisciplinary teams, community)
6. Communicating within multi-media modalities (e.g., teleconferencing, computer based technologies [internet, intranet], brochures)

C. Nursing and other theories related to CNS practice

Skills in:

1. Applying theory to practice (e.g., nursing, family, role, psychosocial, leadership/management, risk management, quality improvement)
2. Applying theory to program development (e.g., nursing, family, role, psychosocial, leadership/management, risk management, quality improvement)

D. Cultural Competence (e.g., culture, ethnicity, spirituality, sexuality, linguistic)

Knowledge of:

1. Community resources associated with meeting diverse cultural needs
2. Cultural influences on patient's health and health behaviors

Skills in:

3. Conducting an in-depth cultural needs assessment
4. Facilitating care for culturally diverse individuals and communities

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