



8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492

1.800.284.2378
301.628.5000 *tel*
301.628.5004 *fax*

www.nursecredentialing.org

Clinical Nurse Specialist in Adult Psychiatric and Mental 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	88	58.67%
II	Professional Practice	46	30.67%
III	Organizational/System	16	10.67%
	Total	150	100%

CNS in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Board Certification Test Content Outline - effective date: April 5, 2011

Please note that the entire test content outline is associated with clinical practice that focuses on adult individuals or populations (ages 18 years and above) at risk of or diagnosed with psychiatric and/or mental health disorders.

I. Direct Care (58.67%)

A. Assessment/Analysis

Knowledge of:

1. Biological considerations (e.g., advanced pathophysiology, genomics, neurophysiology/anatomy)
2. Regulatory and legislative standards related to risk of harm to self and others
3. Developmental norms across the life span
4. Communication theories

Skills in:

5. Establishing and maintaining a therapeutic alliance
6. Differentiating between cultural/spiritual norms and psychopathology
7. Identifying and interpreting laboratory and diagnostic tests appropriate to the client (e.g., CBC, Thyroid Stimulating Hormone [TSH], complete metabolic profile, MRI)
8. Formulating a multi-axial differential diagnosis using DSM criteria
9. Performing an advanced comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment (including review of systems, risk assessment, functional assessment, cultural/spiritual assessment)
10. Performing an ongoing psychiatric assessment
11. Performing a mental status examination appropriate to the client presentation and setting
12. Identifying and interpreting mental health screening tools appropriate to the client

B. Planning

Knowledge of:

1. Access to care issues

Skills in:

2. Identifying appropriate outcomes in collaboration with the client and other health care providers
3. Prioritizing interventions based on the severity and complexity of physical and behavioral health issues
4. Developing an individualized plan of care in collaboration with the client and other health care providers
5. Selecting appropriate community resources in collaboration with the client and other health care providers

CNS in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Board Certification Test Content Outline - effective date: April 5, 2011

C. Intervention

Knowledge of:

1. Concepts related with hospitalization criteria (e.g., voluntary, involuntary)
2. Legal and ethical issues related with seclusion and restraint
3. Complementary/alternative modalities
4. Psychotherapeutic theories (e.g., psychodynamic, psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioral)
5. Pharmacology and advanced psychopharmacology
6. Grieving, death and dying
7. Models of mental health and mental illness along the continuum
8. Theories of nursing science
9. Teaching and learning theories

Skills in:

10. Selecting appropriate psychopharmacologic intervention based on client needs and resources
11. Selecting appropriate non-pharmacologic intervention based on client needs and resources (e.g., therapeutic communication, stress management, sleep hygiene)
12. Selecting and conducting appropriate psychotherapy
13. Managing psychiatric conditions using appropriate least restrictive alternatives
14. Managing crises and psychiatric emergencies (e.g., medication, biologic, behavioral)
15. Coordinating care across the continuum of wellness
16. Providing education to promote the client/family/community knowledge and understand of pertinent health issues
17. Evaluating client response to treatment and modifying plan of care
18. Providing anticipatory guidance for patients, family and communities

D. Health Promotion

Knowledge of:

1. Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies
2. Concepts related to trauma and recovery (e.g., recovery model, resiliency, trauma informed care)
3. Principles of epidemiology

Skills in:

4. Selecting the appropriate prevention strategies based on client needs and resources
5. Performing a wellness assessment
6. Evaluating client's progress in health promotion and disease prevention activities
7. Interpreting risk analysis findings to facilitate health promotion activities

CNS in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Board Certification Test Content Outline - effective date: April 5, 2011

II. Professional Practice (30.67%)

A. Legal/Ethical Issues

Skills in:

1. Advocating for the protection of patient and community (e.g., client determination, access to care, confidentiality, HIPAA, informed consent)
2. Using ethical principles to identify and resolve ethical dilemmas

B. Professional Issues

Knowledge of:

1. Scope and standards of practice (e.g., ANA, NACNS, APNA, legislative)

Skills in:

2. Maintaining professional boundaries
3. Referring clients whose complex issues are beyond the individual's scope of expertise
4. Providing official/legal documentation for client needs for services and/or accommodations

C. Evidence-Based Practice

Knowledge of:

1. Research process and evidence-based practice principles

Skills in:

2. Analyzing research findings and other evidence for their potential application to clinical practice
3. Integrating evidence-based findings and/or clinical guidelines into professional practice

III. Organizational/System (10.67%)

A. Theories and Models

Knowledge of:

1. Change theory
2. Leadership theory
3. Systems
4. Consultation

B. Systems Improvement

Knowledge of:

1. Models of performance improvement (e.g., TQI, CQI)
2. Project management techniques

Skills in:

3. Identifying opportunities for quality improvement across the spheres of influence
4. Advocating for quality improvement initiatives
5. Evaluating the effectiveness of quality improvement initiatives
6. Facilitating change within quality improvement initiatives

**CNS in Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Board Certification
Test Content Outline - effective date: April 5, 2011**

C. Information Management

Skills in:

1. Documenting client information in accordance with regulations and standards
2. Using technological and other resources to enhance clinical practice (e.g., Web references, algorithms, patient education resources, Internet resources, electronic medical records)

Last Updated: 1/8/2010

Copyright © 2010 by American Nurses Credentialing Center. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system.