



College of
**REGISTERED
PSYCHIATRIC NURSES**
of Alberta

COMPETENCIES

Registered Psychiatric Nurses Competencies for Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests

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RPN COMPETENCIES FOR PRESCRIBING SCHEDULE 1 DRUGS AND ORDERING DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

PURPOSE

This document will outline the **competencies** required by Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPN) who will be authorized to prescribe Schedule 1 drugs and order diagnostic tests in a specific clinical area of practice using a clinical support tool. The competencies will serve as a guide for future curriculum development for RPN prescriber education and provide information to the public and employers on the practice expectations of RPNs authorized to prescribe. The Registered Psychiatric Nurse Profession Regulation (2021) allows the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta (CRPNA) to authorize RPNs to prescribe schedule 1 drugs in accordance with the requirements and standards of practice.

This document and the Registered Psychiatric Nurse Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests Standard (College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta, 2021) and Guidelines for Registered Psychiatric Nurses Prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs and Ordering Diagnostic Tests are companion documents and must be used together.

AUTHORIZED PRESCRIBER CRITERIA

The following criteria were developed for the RPN wishing to apply to prescribe schedule 1 drugs and ordering diagnostic tests.

- Application to the Registrar
- Education
- Clinical Practice
- Clinical Practice Area Support
- Clinical Support Tools

The RPN prescribes within a very specific clinical area of practice utilizing clinical support tools developed by clinical experts, in a particular geographical location and has met the additional educational requirements as outlined by CRPNA.

ASSUMPTIONS

- RPN prescribing of schedule 1 drugs and ordering diagnostic tests is within the scope of practice of an RPN authorized under the Health Professions Act, the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Regulation (2021).

- An RPN authorized to prescribe schedule 1 drugs and order diagnostic tests has additional formal education to attain the competencies required to prescribe. *Prescribing is not part of the entry level RPN education program and RPNs must complete additional College approved education to become qualified to prescribe Schedule 1 drugs and communicate diagnosis for the purpose of prescribing.*
- An RPN authorized to prescribe has a minimum of 3000 hours of RPN clinical practice satisfactory to the Registrar of which 750 hours must be in the current practice area and client population where the prescribing will occur.
- An RPN authorized to prescribe Schedule 1 drugs except controlled substances does so within the parameters of a current, evidence-informed clinical support tool designed for the specific clinical area of practice in which the RPN is currently practicing and authorized to prescribe in.
- The competencies of an RPN prescriber are built on the foundational competencies of an RPN, these new competencies will expand the existing competencies.
- An RPN authorized prescriber works within a collaborative health care team to provide comprehensive, safe, ethical, and high-quality care within a specific clinical area of practice and geographical location.
- An RPN authorized to prescribe only prescribes Schedule 1 medication that are within the parameters of a current, evidence informed clinical support tool appropriate for the specific clinical area of practice in which the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.

The competencies are organized in a conceptual framework utilizing the psychiatric nursing standards of practice.

STANDARD 1: Therapeutic Relationships

An RPN authorized to prescribe in a specific clinical area of practice demonstrates the ability to establish a therapeutic relationship that is safe, informed, confidential, and reliable with appropriate boundaries that focuses on the wellbeing of the client.

Competencies

1. Applies knowledge and understanding of therapeutic relationship in their practice and when ordering and prescribing schedule 1 medication or diagnostic tests.
2. Establishes appropriate collaborative practice relationships to support consultation and referral with other authorized prescribers in a specific clinical area of practice in which the RPN is authorized to prescribe. These may include other RPNs, RNs who are authorized to prescribe in this specific clinical area of practice, Nurse Practitioners, Physicians and Pharmacists.
3. Practices according to the principles of informed consent and confidentiality.

4. Collaborates and communicates effectively with other interprofessional health care team members involved in the care of the client to ensure a collaborative, integrated, holistic approach.
5. Ensures the client's needs remain the focus in prioritizing health concerns and developing the plan of care.
6. Applies the knowledge of effective communication skills with all health care providers, client and family involved in the care of the client to ensure continuity and coordination of care.
7. Participates as a member of the interprofessional team and understands the differences between the roles and responsibilities of team members in the prescribing process.
8. Prescribes medications or orders diagnostic tests only for a client with whom they have a therapeutic relationship.

STANDARD 2 - Competent Evidence-Based Practice

An RPN authorized to prescribe in a specific clinical area of practice demonstrates the ability to apply, integrate and draw on diverse sources of knowledge including the integration of psychiatric nursing knowledge, pharmacotherapeutics, research, ethics, spirituality, relational practice, critical inquiry and demonstrates competence in the application of knowledge and provision of evidence informed psychiatric nursing care.

Competencies

1. Demonstrates knowledge of the health conditions being managed in the specific clinical area of practice and understands and articulates the progress of the condition and how to assess the severity of the condition and the management of same.
2. Conducts a comprehensive health and mental health assessment of the client.
3. Applies theory/evidence informed knowledge, skill, and critical judgement to assess, plan, implement and evaluate the practice of psychiatric nursing in relation to the specific clinical area the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.
4. Applies critical thinking and clinical reasoning in the problem-solving process between the current medication plan, and the current health condition of the client.
5. Synthesizes and applies recognized theories or frameworks to engage in innovative problem solving to assess the use of supplements, alternative and complementary therapies, and the impact that they may have on the current client condition and plan of care including prescribing decisions.
6. Applies the clinical support tool to make a psychiatric nursing diagnosis.

7. Uses critical inquiry and critical reasoning in decision making to synthesize and integrate client health information to ascertain that sufficient information has been obtained about the client's co-existing conditions, current treatments, and health history, to identify possible risks and contradictions.
8. Develops a care plan based on evidence-informed practice and the clinical support tool for the specific clinical practice area.
9. Recognizes when information about the clients is not clear, incomplete, or more information is required to make safe prescribing decisions and takes the appropriate steps to obtain the relevant information.
10. Uses the clinical support tool as a guide when ordering the appropriate diagnostic tests in the specific clinical area of practice.
11. Applies knowledge of pharmacotherapy, psychopharmacology when prescribing medication.
12. Demonstrates understanding of the principles of prescribing and evidence informed prescribing practices.
13. Demonstrates understanding of drug interactions and actions of other medications that are prescribed for the client.
14. Utilizes the clinical support tool to prescribe pharmacotherapy based on the client's health history, current health status, disease, disorder, condition and stage of life, and individual circumstances.
15. Remains current in knowledge relevant to the specific clinical area of practice that demonstrates understanding of factors that may impact diagnostic test results.
16. Interprets the results of appropriately ordered screening and diagnostic tests to inform safe prescribing.
17. Synthesises information from the health record and comprehensive assessment to develop provisional and differential diagnoses consistent with scope of practice in relation to the specific clinical area the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.
18. Recognizes when it is clinically appropriate not to intervene and when it is clinically appropriate to implement non-pharmacological treatments, in collaboration with the client, family, and other members of the interprofessional health-care team as appropriate, while considering client perspectives, and best outcomes.
19. Identifies common causes of medication errors and adverse events and implements strategies to reduce the risks of these occurring.
20. Develops a plan of care based on evidence-informed practice and clinical support tools that have been developed for the specific clinical area of practice the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.
21. Discusses with the client and other health care providers their experience with implementing the treatment plan, adherence, including any issues arising and possible ways to improve adherence, perception, or observation of the prescriptions benefits, adverse effect; and assessment of whether the therapeutic goals have been achieved and documents the discussion appropriately.

22. Discusses prescribed medications with the client including rationale for selection, expected benefits, interactions of the drug, potential side effects, administration, instructions, importance of compliance, and recommended follow-up.

STANDARD 3 - Professional Responsibility and Accountability

An RPN authorized to prescribe in a specific clinical area of practice demonstrates professional responsibility and accountability and practices in a safe, competent, and ethical manner that meets the standards of the profession and legislated requirements.

Competencies

1. Maintains current registration and licensure and meets the criteria for RPN authorized prescriber.
2. Practices in accordance with provincial and federal statutes/acts/regulation/by-laws and within the Code of Ethics, Standards of Psychiatric Nursing practice and relevant legislation governing pharmacological practice.
3. Assumes responsibility and accountability for own practice and exercises professional judgment when using agency policies, procedures, reporting programs and clinical support tools in the specific clinical area the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.
4. Demonstrates accountability for any prescribing decisions and ordering of diagnostic tests including awareness that these accountabilities cannot be delegated to another health care provider.
5. Maintains accurate and complete documentation of the client consultation, clinical examinations and investigative results, risk factors, client's decision (treatment or no treatment) any changes in the medication plan and rational for same (if relevant) and outcomes of the treatment plan.
6. Obtains informed consent that explains the risks and benefits of the purposed therapeutic options and takes appropriate action when client is unable to provide informed consent or capable of decision making.
7. Practices within the limits of the RPNs education, and additional education in prescribing and scope of practice and understands the limits of own competence in these areas.
8. Demonstrates respect for the scope of practice of other health care providers and their contribution to the collaborative team, particularly those health care providers with prescribing rights.
9. Demonstrates understanding of the ethical and professional framework for accountability and responsibility in relation to prescribing and ordering diagnostic tests in the specific clinical area the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.

10. Recognizes personal and professional limitations in relation to prescribing in the specific clinical area the RPN is authorized to prescribe in and knows when and how to refer/consult/seek guidance from another member of the collaborative health care team.
11. Manages expectations and pressures to prescribe from multiple sources.
12. Assumes responsibility and accountability for professional competence and fulfills the requirements for prescribing competence in the specific clinical area the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.
13. Participates in the review, development, and improvement of prescribing practice such as, but not limited to, quality improvement and risk management practices, prescribing audit tracking systems, clinical decision-making tools, and organizational policies which support safe prescribing practices.

STANDARD 4 - Professional Ethical Practice

An RPN authorized to prescribe in a specific clinical area of practice understands, upholds, and incorporates into their practice the Code of Ethics of the profession and other CRPNA documents on prescribing and ordering diagnostic tests.

Competencies

1. Practices with honesty, integrity, respect and implements strategies to address any influences that may bias prescribing decisions such as marketing, professional or financial gain, conflicts of interest and the RPNs own beliefs, values, and experiences.
2. Applies ethical principles when ethical issues are identified to address situations of ethical dilemmas in the specific clinical area of practice the RPN is authorized to prescribe in.
3. Applies ethical and legal consideration in maintaining confidentiality in all forms of communication, written, oral and electronic.
4. Endeavours to provide culturally sensitive care and to recognize the client's right to refuse treatment or the medication prescribed.

GLOSSARY

<i>Accountability</i>	The obligation to answer for the professional, ethical, and legal responsibilities of one's activities and duties (Ellis & Hartley, 2009).
<i>Acuity</i>	The degree of severity of a client's condition and/or situation (CRNBC, 2011).
<i>Approved Psychiatric Nursing Program</i>	A psychiatric nursing education program approved council, as requested by the registrar, in accordance with RPN prescribing and ordering of diagnostic test standards and criteria.
<i>Client</i>	In this document client refers to the individual, groups, and community who are the recipient of psychiatric nursing services.
<i>Clinical Practice Area</i>	The clinical area where an RPN who is authorized to prescribe and to order diagnostic tests, practices. The focus of the clinical practice may be related to the type of care (e.g. wound care), practice setting (e.g. mental health clinics, community mental health, corrections, brain injury units,), specific issue (e.g. sexually transmitted infection, sexual assault), or medical diagnostic grouping (e.g. diabetes or other chronic disease management).
<i>Clinical Support Tool</i>	An evidence informed tool used by the practice setting to guide decisions related to prescribing and ordering of diagnostic tests. The clinical support tool may be in the form of a protocol, algorithm, or clinical practice guideline.
<i>Collaborate (or collaboration)</i>	Client care involving joint communication and decision-making processes among the client, the psychiatric nurse, and other members of an interprofessional health- care team who work together to use their individual and shared knowledge and skills to provide optimum client-centered care.
<i>Competence</i>	The knowledge, skills, judgements, attitudes, and values required for successful functioning as a registered psychiatric nurse.
<i>Consultation</i>	Conferring with, seeking information, advice, or direction.
<i>Evidence-Informed</i>	The ongoing process that incorporates evidence from research, clinical expertise, client preferences, and other available resources to make nursing decisions with clients (CNA, 2010b).

<i>Pharmacotherapy</i>	Treatment and prevention of diseases, disorders, and/or symptoms by means of drug therapy. This includes consideration for characteristic interactions of a drug with the body in terms of absorption, distribution, metabolism, excretion, and the interactions that may occur between drugs.
<i>Psychopharmacology</i>	The study of substances that influence mental states. Such agents induce changes in mood, sensation, thinking, or behavior, and may be derived from plants or other natural sources or chemically synthesized in a laboratory.
<i>Schedule 1 Drug</i>	Drugs that require a prescription from an authorized prescriber (Alberta Pharmacy and Drug Act, 2000).
<i>Standard</i>	An authoritative statement that describes the required behavior of every psychiatric nurse and is used to evaluate individual performance
<i>Therapeutic Relationship</i>	An interpersonal process that is purposeful, goal directed and focused on achieving outcomes in the best interest of the client.

REFERENCES

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