PSYCHIATRIC-MENTAL HEALTH NURSE ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES FOR ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE

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Abstract

Competencies have been developed for mental health clinicians in assessing and managing suicide risk; however, there are no standard competencies for psychiatric registered nurses. Widely accepted nursing practices do not meet suicide-specific standards of care or evidence-based criteria. Therefore we propose the following essential competencies for psychiatric registered nurses working in hospital settings as a guide for practice. These competencies are based on a comprehensive review of the extant research literature (both qualitative and quantitative) relevant to assessment and management of hospitalized patients admitted to a psychiatric setting.

The role of the nurse specific to suicide prevention includes both systems and patient level interventions. At the systems level the nurse assesses and maintains environmental safety, develops protocols, policies, and practices consistent with zero suicide, and participates in training for all milieu staff. At the patient level, the nurse assesses risk for suicide, provides suicide-specific psychotherapeutic interventions, monitors and supervises at-risk patients, and assesses outcomes of all interventions. The expectation is that these essential competencies will serve to provide the foundation for training curricula and in measuring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for expert care. The presentation will illustrate the essential competencies for assessment and management of individual at risk for suicide.

Keywords: Competencies, Suicide



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