

## Psychiatric Technology Program

### Nature Of The Work

Psychiatric Technicians care for developmentally disabled, mentally disabled or emotionally disturbed individuals. They work with a team that may include psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, social workers, and therapists. In addition to helping clients/patients to dress, bathe, groom themselves, and eat, socialize with them and lead them in educational and recreational activities. Psychiatric technicians may play card games or other games with patients, watch television with them, or participate in group activities, such as playing sports or going on field trips. They observe clients/patients and report and document any physical or behavioral signs that might be important for the care of clients/patients. They escort/accompany patients to and from therapy and treatment. Because they have such close contact with clients/patients, psychiatric technicians can have a great deal of influence on their outlook and treatment outcomes.

### Work Environment

Work can be physically demanding. They spend many hours standing and walking, and they often face heavy workloads. They must guard against back injury because they may have to move patients into and out of bed or help them to stand or walk. It is important for them to be trained in and to follow the proper procedures for lifting and moving patients. Also may face hazards from minor infections and major diseases, such as hepatitis, but can avoid infections by following proper procedures.

Physical activities required to complete essential functions of a psychiatric technician:

1. **Standing/walking:** Standing and walking is required for majority of time spent in the clinical area (4-7 hours). Standing in one position is required while performing certain aspects of patient care. Walking occurs on vinyl, tile, linoleum or carpeted floors.
2. **Ability to sprint, run and rapidly** get to the scene of an emergency. Run for help or run to avoid injury
3. **Sitting:** Sits while charting or entering data into computer. May also sit while receiving/giving verbal report at start/end of shift. May also sit during breaks and lunch period. Total sitting is less than two hours for each seven-hour shift, depending on clinical assignment. May also sit in the classroom from 5-6 hours.
4. **Lifting:** Regularly lifts medical supplies, medications, patient supplies, patient charts, weighing up to ten pounds. Also lifts CPR equipment and other medical equipment weighing up to 44 pounds. Required to assist in lifting and transferring patients, of varying weights, and is expected to request assistance when lifting, ambulating and repositioning patients. Must be able to support at least 75 pounds to reposition, transfer and ambulate patients safely.
5. **Carrying:** Frequently carries medical supplies and other items weighing up to 44 pounds. Occasionally carries certain medical equipment, weighing up to fifty pounds.
6. **Pushing/pulling:** Pushing/pulling 71-100 pounds is required when administering patient therapy and care, as well as when pushing equipment such as oxygen tanks and monitors, and when transporting patients in wheelchairs, gurneys. Pushing required at 3.5 pounds of pressure when administering CPR. Full manual dexterity of both upper extremities required.
7. **Climbing:** No significant climbing required; may be required to climb a step stool or go up stairs.
8. **Bending:** Required when administering patient care. Must be able to bend to touch floor to remove environmental hazards.
9. **Crawling:** Not required.
10. **Reaching:** Reaching above head required when performing aspects of care such as hanging and adjusting IV bags.

11. **Squatting/kneeling:** Required when operating medical equipment and performing aspects of patient care such as CPR.
12. **Twisting:** Twisting at waist required when bathing patients and performing other procedures.
13. **Repetitive motion:**
  - a. **Hands:** Required for grasping and fine manipulation, for patient care, including preparation and administration of injections.
  - b. **Feet:** No repetitive motion of feet is generally required other than for normal walking and standing. Operation of foot control is required when using sinks, hospital beds and other specialized equipment.
14. **Driving required:** No. Student nurses are responsible for their own transportation to and from affiliating clinical agencies.
15. **Speaking:** Must be able to clearly speak English to communicate, assess and educate patients. Must also be able to communicate verbally with physicians and other professionals involved in patient care.
16. **Hearing:** Must have normal hearing (aid permitted) in order to perform physical assessments, including listening with a stethoscope for bowel sounds, heart and lung sounds. Must also be able to hear to detect subtle yet critical information regarding patient condition including alarms, and to communicate with physicians and other professionals involved with patient care. Normal hearing required for discussion with others by telephone.
17. **Visual activity:** Required within normal limits for monitoring equipment, reading medical data, preparing and administering medications and injections, performing physical assessments of patients including subtle changes in color.
18. **Depth perception:** Required for fine task such as administering injections, sterile catheter insertions (urinary), Nasogastric tube insertions.
19. **Fine motor skills:** Must have fine motor skills of all fingers and be able to grasp and control medical equipment and to perform precise procedures such as sterile dressing change. Must be able to grasp objects such as a pen to prepare handwritten reports.
20. **Tactile sensation:** Must be able to assess patients through palpation with fingers and hand; must be able to distinguish warm/cold and be able to feel vibrations.
21. **Smell:** Must have normal sense of smell to detect odors indicating unsafe conditions or changing patient status

### **Typical Tasks**

- Maintain order and supervise the conduct of clients/patients
- Help to maintain a clean and healing environment and assist clients/patients with personal hygiene skills
- Encourage clients/patients to develop work skills and social relationships and participate in recreational activities
- Observe and influence client/patient behavior
- Teach, counsel, and write reports describing physical and emotional symptoms
- Provide routine and emergency nursing care
- Maintain the safety of persons and property
- Establish effective therapeutic relationships with clients/patients
- Maintain effective patient-staff boundaries
- Recognize symptoms requiring medical or psychiatric attention
- Provide individual or group therapy or behavior modification interventions/techniques
- Work with the treatment team to provide occupational, recreational, vocational, and educational therapy for clients/patients
- Think and act quickly in an emergency
- Develop clear and concise reports of incidents
- Analyze situations accurately and take effective action
- Administer medications and treatments

- Assist in the physical containment of assaultive patients
- Supervise patient work crews/groups
- Observe and document on clients/patients with special precautions, such as suicide or self-harm or self injurious behaviors
- Assist the unit physician with client's health concerns
- Feeding clients/patients
- Changing diapers of clients/patients

### **Work Environment**

- May be exposed to infections and contagious disease, without prior notification.
- Regularly exposed to the risk of blood borne diseases.
- Exposed to hazardous agents, body fluids and wastes.
- Subject to hazards of flammable, explosive gases.
- Subject to burns and cuts.
- Contact with clients/patients having different religious, culture, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, psychological and physical disabilities, and are under a wide variety of circumstances.
- Handle emergencies or crisis situations
- Subject to many interruptions.
- Requires judgment/action which could result in death of patient.
- Exposed to products containing latex.