

# The Role of Mental Health Nurse in The Application of Different Treatment Modalities in Mental Health Nursing: Essay

Manal S. Alzahrani

Senior Specialist, Mental Health and Psychiatric Hospital, Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.  
e-mail: ommemad@outlook.sa

Received February 28, 2023, accepted March 15, 2023, published April 1, 2023.

**Keyword:** Mental health nurse, treatment modalities, nursing

**Citation:** Alzahrani, M. S. (2023). The role of the mental health nurse in the application of different treatment modalities in mental health nursing: Essa. *Evidence-Based Nursing Research*, 5(2), 45-47. <https://doi.org/10.47104/ebnrojs3.v5i2.287>.

Many mentally ill patients receive their treatment from different psychiatric specialties such as a psychologist, psychiatrists, or mental health counselors. Nurses also can have valuable role in participating in psychiatric care plans due to their close observation and contact with the patient (Fung et al., 2014). The psychiatric nursing role had expanded over the years. In the past, psychiatric nurses' role was limited to providing patient care and giving pharmacotherapy. Nowadays, psychiatric nursing roles become more effective with individuals, families, and communities through assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the nursing care plan designed according to individual and community needs.

Psychiatric nursing considers a holistic program that contains various treatment modalities and interventions aimed at returning patients to establish their normal life and activity. It involves health promotion, initiating a therapeutic environment, assisting patients with self-care activity, administering medication, providing psychoeducation, and counseling (Fung et al., 2014). There are two kinds of nursing specialties in this field mental health nursing and psychiatric nursing. Every kind of these specialty has a unique role in applying different treatment modalities (American Psychiatric Nurses Association, 2014).

Mental health nurses work in direct contact with patients and have roles such as assisting psychiatrists in assessing, diagnosing, and managing psychiatric problems, besides working with others in the medical field as team members to provide holistic patient care. On the other hand, psychiatric nurses also work closely with patients. They have roles such as assisting in assessment and diagnosis, providing medication, and assisting patients in performing his activity daily living. Also, help the client during rehabilitation, but contrary to mental health nurses, psychiatric nurses must have special training in crisis intervention (Hunter et al., 2015).

Mental illness can have different treatment modalities, the same as physical illness. These treatment modalities can be in various forms and selected as a treatment method according to the patient's condition and ability. These include pharmacotherapy, psychological therapies, alternative therapies in psychiatry, counseling, psychiatric rehabilitation, and occupational therapy (Gabrielsson et al.,

2016). Because of the diversity of methods of treating mental illness, the nurse must have knowledge and skills in each of these methods besides applying this method in a scientific and safe therapeutic environment.

Pharmacotherapy means using medication to control the signs and symptoms of mental illness and return the patient to normal function. These medications can sometimes produce unpleasant side effects and negatively affect patient compliance with medication. These medications include antipsychotics, antidepressants, anxiolytics, and mood stabilizers. In pharmacotherapy, the nurses have a great responsibility in helping patients to adhere to their medication to decrease the chance of relapse (Huhn et al., 2014).

Providing psycho-education and explaining the side effects of discontinuing the medication is important to achieve nurses' roles. The nurses' roles for the hospitalized patient include administering medication, assessing for side effects, and providing psycho-education. To meet this role professionally, the nurses must have comprehensive knowledge about medications, how they work, their route of administration, the indication of uses, possible side effect, type of psycho-education that nurses can provide with each medication (Huhn et al., 2014).

Psychological therapies are sometimes referred to as "speak therapies" (Hunter et al., 2015). It involves a therapeutic relationship between therapist and client where the client can express his emotion, concern, and feeling in a safe environment. Psychological therapy also provides a supportive, non-judgmental environment where the patient can openly discuss his experiences. It may take several weeks, even years, for the client to see results from most psychological treatments. There are different types of psychological treatments designed to help with different issues, including cognitive behavior therapy, family and group therapy, interpersonal therapy, motivational interviewing, and psychoanalysis (Hunter et al., 2015).

Without a doubt, psychological therapies can help patients reduce their stress and help facilitate their feeling of improvement. Unfortunately, the role of nurses in this kind of therapy until now is limited due to the view that nurses' role is exclusive to providing medication, assisting patients with personal care, and ward activities. A study conducted in

2014 found that mental health nurses had insufficient awareness about their roles, negative view, and limited application regarding psychological therapies. The positive aspect is that developing countries have started to develop certain strategies to activate the role and participation of mental health nurses in psychological therapies by increasing awareness about the role of nurses in these types of therapy. Encouraging the patient to engage in psychological therapies, besides supporting the patient to express his feeling and emotion during therapy, is important to achieve this role (Fisher, 2014).

Alternative medicine in psychiatry is a group of practices that individuals perform according to their culture, personal beliefs, and value to reach healing. According to a study conducted in 2015, it is estimated that around 1700 kinds of alternative methods can be used to treat psychiatric patients, which can also help them promote healing and comfort (Brondino et al., 2015). Complementary therapies and their fundamental have been elements of nursing since their beginnings. In the books and diary of Florence Nightingale, she focuses on the importance of manipulating and creating a therapeutic environment in which healing can occur.

Nurses must believe that this kind of therapy has been a part of nursing care since the beginning. Such therapies include meditation, imagery, support groups, music therapy, aromatherapy with massage, and active listening (Brondino et al., 2015). In a study conducted in 2017, they found that a combination of nursing care, with complementary therapy such as music therapy, aromatherapy with massage, and yoga in patients with mild to moderate severity of major depressive disorder has a positive effect on raising the patient self-esteem and enhance his coping abilities (Aalbers et al., 2017). Nurses need to have knowledge and awareness of this kind of therapy and support the mentally ill patient when selecting each type of these therapies, besides collaborating with other relevant specialties to facilitate maximum patient health and stability (Brondino et al., 2015).

Psychiatric rehabilitation assists mentally ill patients in restoring their physical and mental skills and function through participation, socializing, and living in their community with less sense of disability and inferiority. Although psychiatric rehabilitation does not mean ignoring the presence of mental disorders, rehabilitation practice promotes the individual's capacity to live with mental illness (Hunter et al., 2015). The nurses aid patients in developing coping skills to adjust to the life distorted by the mental illness by creating a therapeutic healing environment for clients and their families to give them a chance to grow and develop (Hunter et al., 2015).

A study conducted in 2014 defined the roles and duties of nurses in psychiatric rehabilitation, such as teacher, caregiver, collaborator, and client advocate. The teacher's role can be achieved by teaching clients and their families about the disease process and the possible way to adapt to it, besides teaching them coping skills to change their views about mental illness. The caregiver can be fulfilled through the design of a plan of care that includes education and standard nursing care to restore patients' function and

prevent complications. Collaborator through work with team members and other healthcare specialties to facilitate a healing environment. Client advocating means advocating strategies and guidelines that improve the lives of individuals with mental illness by engaging them in activities and events that will positively impact the community's view about the mental disorder (Killaspy, 2014).

Counseling in mental health refers to the technique that assists the client in utilizing a problem-solving process to identify and manage stress, improving the interpersonal relationship among the client, family, and healthcare team (Hunter et al., 2015). Counseling can greatly impact patients and their families by facilitating behavior change, improving the client's ability to establish and maintain relationships, enhancing the client's effectiveness and ability to cope, and helping the client to express thoughts and feelings that had been blocked off or denied. On the contrary, people think counseling is concerned with how individuals perceive and react to the situation and do not give a solution.

Nurses have generally recognized competence in counseling due to their professional preparation. Nurse counselor, also known as nurse consultant, work in various settings where her roles focus on ensuring the delivery of quality client care service. Although some counselors are directly involved in client care, other contribute are to psychiatric nurses' professional training and development. In the clinical setting, nurses consultant assess clients' health problems, give nursing care, provide psycho-education, and advise the client on disease prevention and health maintenance (Vaughan, 2016).

Occupational therapy had a primary purpose of support and improve patient participation in life through engagement in occupation. Occupational therapy improves people's lives by diverting their attention from illness (Ikiugu et al., 2017). Some examples of occupational therapy are drawing, the accessories industry, and sewing. Occupational therapy is often applied to hospitalized patients under a multidisciplinary team's supervision involving an occupational therapist, psychologist, physiatrist, and social worker.

The nurses can play a direct and vital role during this kind of therapy through environment modification, collaboratively working with an occupational therapist in a manner that foster hope and motivation and encourage socialization, educating client to develop new skills, as well as designing a nursing care plan that involves certain occupational therapy that is suitable to patient ongoing condition, physical, and psychological ability (Hunter et al., 2015).

In conclusion, psychiatric nurses have multiple roles and obligations when caring for patients with mental illness. These roles vary from ward activities to assisting patients during treatment and recovery, providing medication, helping them with grooming and personal hygiene, and educating patients and their families. At the same time, psychiatric nurses also deal with agitated patients and help them to develop coping skills to manage their illness. Some psychiatric nurses also help clients to develop their social skills and improve their interpersonal relationships by

engaging them in group therapy. Also, psychiatric nurses can play a vital role in applying each treatment modality through participation with other team members from different specialties to improve patient conditions. To attain these roles, psychiatric nurses must have high knowledge and skills to apply different treatment modalities. Nurses have to be confident of their self and bold in the application of those methods through cooperation with the administration. Psychiatric nurse should do her best in the activation of those programs in the place where they work. Also, the nurses have to understand their role in different types of treatment modalities aiming to prevent roles from overlapping with other specialties, assess the patient's ability to engage in the treatment, and evaluate the patient's ability to integrate into the treatment.

## Reference

- Aalbers, S., Fusar-Poli, L., Freeman, R. E., Spreen, M., Ket, J. C., Vink, A. C., Maratos, A., Crawford, M., Chen, X. J., & Gold, C. (2017).** Music therapy for depression. The Cochrane database of systematic reviews, 11(11), CD004517. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD004517.pub3>
- Hunter, L., Weber, T., Shattell, M., & Harris, B. A. (2015).** Nursing students' attitudes about psychiatric mental health nursing. *Issues in mental health nursing*, 36(1), 29–34. <https://doi.org/10.3109/01612840.2014.935901>
- Brondino, N., Fusar-Poli, L., Rocchetti, M., Provenzani, U., Barale, F., & Politi, P. (2015).** Complementary and alternative therapies for autism spectrum disorder. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/258589>.
- Fisher, J. E. (2014).** The use of psychological therapies by mental health nurses in Australia. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 21(3), 264–270. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpm.12079>.
- Fung, Y. L., Chan, Z., & Chien, W. T. (2014).** Role performance of psychiatric nurses in advanced practice: a systematic review of the literature. *Journal of psychiatric and mental health nursing*, 21(8), 698–714. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpm.12128>
- Gabrielsson, S., Sävenstedt, S., & Olsson, M. (2016).** Taking personal responsibility: Nurses' and assistant nurses' experiences of good nursing practice in psychiatric inpatient care. *International journal of mental health nursing*, 25(5), 434–443. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12230>
- Huhn, M., Tardy, M., Spineli, L. M., Kissling, W., Förstl, H., Pitschel-Walz, G., Leucht, C., Samara, M., Dold, M., Davis, J. M., & Leucht, S. (2014).** Efficacy of pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy for adult psychiatric disorders: a systematic overview of meta-analyses. *JAMA psychiatry*, 71(6), 706–715. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.112>
- Ikiugu, M. N., Nissen, R. M., Bellar, C., Maassen, A., & Van Peurse, K. (2017).** Clinical Effectiveness of Occupational Therapy in Mental Health: A Meta-Analysis. *The American journal of occupational therapy: Official publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association*, 71(5), 7105100020p1–7105100020p10. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2017.024588>
- Killaspy H. (2014).** Contemporary mental health rehabilitation. *East Asian archives of psychiatry: Official journal of the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists = Dong Ya jing shen ke xue zhi : Xianggang jing shen ke yi xue yuan qi kan*, 24(3), 89–94.
- Vaughan, M. (2016).** Changing the Subject? Psychological Counseling in Eastern Africa. *Public Culture*, 28(3), 499–517. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-3511514>.