

# HEALTH COMMISSION OF VICTORIA

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## PSYCHIATRIC NURSING

Psychiatric nursing begins with a caring attitude towards oneself and all other human beings, an awareness of and a sensitivity to the needs of all people, and a readiness to respond to these needs. The psychiatric nurse works as a unique individual in a team of other unique individuals, all contributing their knowledge and skills in assessing, planning and implementing professional care.

The people in need of help include the elderly, those distressed by emotional problems, and those who have turned to alcohol and drugs for help.

Psychiatric nursing involves helping people to resolve their difficulties, finding ways for needs to be met, returning people in hospital back to their homes, families and community, so they are better able to care for themselves and enjoy a healthier life. This also means liaising with helping agencies in the community and providing follow-up care.

Psychiatric nursing encompasses a wide range of activities :-

- giving physical care to meet the physical needs of people, or helping them to care for themselves.
- using technical skills in administering medications and other treatments.
- observing behaviour, assessing progress in personal growth, recording and reporting back to others in the team for evaluation of care given and further planning.
- listening and understanding, and allowing people to grow emotionally and find better ways of coping, by being non-judgemental and supportive.
- teaching, training and giving guidance to those who need to learn new skills or relearn old ones.
- taking responsibility for the professional decisions one makes, being accountable to those in one's care, team and general public.
- sharing oneself in a way that leads to developing, changing and growing as a person, as well as promoting the health of others by the personal interest and involvement shown in their care.

Psychiatric nursing is about being human, being concerned for human rights, seeing value in human life, caring for people, and promoting good mental and physical health.