San Bernardino County
Department of Behavioral Health

Nursing Staff Orientation Protocol

Effective Date 08/18/2015 CaSonya Thomas, Director

Purpose

To outline Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) process for orientation of newly hired regular status nursing staff, including Mental Health Nurse II (MHNII), Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) and Psychiatric Technician (PT) staff.

General Orientation Requirements

All newly hired DBH employees are required to attend County and DBH orientation per the New Hire Policy. Newly hired employees transferring from within the County do not need to attend County orientation.

Newly hired nursing staff will be assigned trainings in Relias based on job classification, as noted in the Nursing Staff Relias Orientation Training List. Relias trainings are to be completed during the Beginning Phase of the Unit-Specific Orientation referenced herein, and new shall provide documentation of completed trainings to the assigned preceptor.

Unit-Specific Orientation Requirements

Nursing staff will complete on-the-job unit-specific orientation and training with a preassigned Mental Health Nurse II preceptor following the County and DBH orientations. The assigned preceptor must have at least six (6) months of experience for equal or lower level staff, have demonstrated competency and skill proficiency, be in good standing, and have approval by his/her respective supervisor to participate as a preceptor. Although there will be a primary "assigned" preceptor to provide on-the-job orientation and training, the new staff may have additional preceptors throughout the unit-specific orientation based on the need for exposure and training in multiple areas.

The unit-specific orientation has three phases described in the table below. It may vary in duration from one (1) to four (4) weeks based on experience, existing knowledge, exhibited skills and competencies. The duration of this orientation will be determined by the employee's direct supervisor based on advisement by preceptor of employee's skill and competency level. The preceptor will provide ongoing technical assistance, mentorship and feedback to the employee throughout the unit-specific orientation process. The direct supervisor will ensure the employee meets all required competency standards within the first six (6) months of employment and annually thereafter. If there is a concern regarding the new employee's competency in medical issues during orientation, the Nurse Manager is to be contacted.

Phase	Description
Beginning	At the beginning of the unit-specific orientation new nursing staff will complete a written test, verbal demonstration, or provide documentation of completed training in order to demonstrate current skills and competencies.

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Unit-Specific Orientation Requirements (continued)

Phase	Description
Beginning (continued)	The mechanism to determine competency level will depend on the skill being assessed.
Intermediary	During the unit-specific orientation nursing staff will provide client care following unit protocols, resource materials, department policies; procedures, manuals, and applicable state and federal laws. Initially the preceptor will work on a one-on-one basis with the employee and as the employee develops knowledge and needed skills, he/she is expected to be able to function more independently. The assigned preceptor will be available to guide and provide technical assistance throughout the orientation process. Assessment of competency level will continue throughout the orientation intermediary phase. At completion of the unit-specific orientation, the nursing staff will have gained familiarity and working knowledge of DBH's organizational structure and operations; job expectations and specific duties; the physical clinic environment and specific clinic protocols; applicable policies, procedures and manuals; and Department resources and requirements.
End	The assigned preceptor will meet with the employee to discuss skills and competencies acquired throughout the orientation process. The preceptor will confirm or deny the new employee's ability to function based on required competencies, related criteria, and document on the Unit-Specific Orientation Competencies Checklist. The preceptor will meet with employee's direct supervisor to report met/unmet competencies and provide a signed copy of Unit-Specific Orientation Competencies Checklist. If performance is unsatisfactory and/or competency standards are not met in any area, the supervisor (in consultation with the preceptor) will determine next steps which may include extension of orientation, assignment to another preceptor, etc. The supervisor shall notify the DBH Nurse Manager and employee of action plan/follow-up as documented in the checklist and provide a copy of the completed Checklist to the Nurse Manager.

Required Competencies

Newly hired nursing staff will be expected to acquire competencies during the DBH orientation and unit-specific orientation that will assist them in performing their job duties within the Department effectively. Expected competencies include, but not limited to:

- Understand job functions, department-specific job duties, work performance process and expectations.

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Required Competencies (continued)

- Understand applicable policies and procedures in the DBH SPM, specifically those under: Target Populations (i.e., Adult, Children's, Older Adult, TAY), Clinical Practice, Compliance, Medical Services, Business Operations, Human Resources, Quality Management, and those identified by preceptor and supervisor.
- Locate and understand Disaster/Safety manuals and clinic-specific manual and protocols, including the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), EAP Team assignments, evacuation plan, and hazardous materials handling.
- Familiarity with the assigned clinic, including identification of registration area, triage area, phone list, first aid kits, clinic resource manuals, evacuation map, fire extinguishers, and medication room.
- General knowledge of psychotropic medications and their indications, prescribed in the area of psychiatry.
- Identify and understand services provided at clinic; days/hours of operations, medications used in clinic, medications policies and procedures, medication room protocols, and any special procedures.
- Identify and locate DBH organizational chart, phone lists, web blasts, Information Notices, Interim Instruction Notices, forms, etc.
- Identify cultural factors that may affect treatment of target population, including barriers and strategies.
- Maintain collaborative therapeutic relationships with clients.
- Accurately collect assessment information and effectively communicate to physician/psychiatrist.
- Properly formulate risk assessment and effectively communicate to physician/psychiatrist.
- Properly order lab work and check/review lab results and conduct appropriate follow-up timely.
- Administer medications safely and appropriately.

Note: The aforementioned competencies may vary based on specific program(s) each new staff is assigned to. The preceptor and supervisor will make determination of needed competencies and notate if applicable on the Unit-Specific Orientation Competencies Checklist, as appropriate.

References

- California Board of Registered Nursing www.rn.ca.gov
- California Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians www.bvnpt.ca.gov

Related Policy and Procedure

DBH Standard Practice Manual:

- TRN8001: Education and Training Policy
- HR4004: New Hire Policy