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*REPAGING IN THE TABLE OF CONTENTS DURING TYPE SETTING*
FOREWORD

The Tanzania Nursing and Midwifery Council (TNMC) recognizes the challenges facing the nursing profession as a result of ongoing reforms both, political and social that tally with the requirements of MDG and vision 2015. To address these challenges the TNMC commissioned the professional nurses from various disciplines to develop standards of proficiency for mental health. This is a major step towards improving the quality of mental health care and advancing mental health nursing profession in Tanzania.

The document covers the standards, areas of competencies and core competencies. TNMC hopes that this document will be a key guide in both education and clinical practice.

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Dr. Khadija Innocensia Malima, PhD, RN
TNMC-Chairperson
PREFACE
It is with much excitement that the TNMC is presenting standards of proficiency for mental health practice. As we are at the beginning of the 21st century, mental health nursing is facing new challenges in how we approach care and treatment of people with mental health problems.

We now have more scientific knowledge to understand people with mental health problems and the complexity in managing them than before. The bio psychosocial paradigm is alive and well. It provides a solid organizing framework for education, research and practice in mental health.

Seasoned expert educators and practitioners who are at the cutting edge of both the science and art of mental health nursing have written the standard of proficiency for mental health nursing. As recognized leaders in the field, they are able to provide a comprehensive perspective of mental health nursing standards in clear and easily understood terms. The standards are solidly grounded in:

- Ethical and legal framework
- Professional practice
- Collaboration in mental health care
- Documentation and reporting
- Utilization of resources
- Professional development
- Conducting research and utilization of research findings.

TNMC hopes that this document helps to enhance the status of mental health nursing as a substantive health care special field with well defined knowledge base and standards. The ultimate aim is to help improve the care of our patients and their quality of life. TNMC firmly believe that this thorough contemporary and clinically relevant document will also effectively nurture students in their quest to become competent mental health nurse practitioners.

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Lena Mfalila
Registrar
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMO</td>
<td>Assistance Medical Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immune Deficiency Virus</td>
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<td>HSR</td>
<td>Health Sector Reform</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>TNMC</td>
<td>Tanzania Nurses and Midwives Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSM V TR</td>
<td>Diagnostic Statistical Manual Text Revised, 5th edition</td>
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<td>ICD 10</td>
<td>International Classification of Diseases, 10th edition</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Mental disorders contribute greatly to disease burden in Tanzania and other countries and cause immense suffering. People with these disorders are often subjected to stigma and discrimination, poor quality of life and increased mortality. These disorders are the cause of staggering economic and social costs.

According to Mary C. Townsend (2013) Psychiatric Health Nursing Concepts and care 4th edition, mental health is defined as successful adaptation to stressors from the internal or external environment, evidenced by thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that are age appropriate and congruent with local and cultural norms.

Many scholars define mental health nursing differently. Uys and Middleton (2004) defined Mental health nursing as an interpersonal process in which counseling is aimed at supporting and facilitating healthy lifestyle functioning.

Mental disorders are classified based on DSM V and ICD 10 systems of classification that should be adhered to by all mental health nurses attending mental health clients. People with these disorders are often subjected to social isolation, poor quality of life and increased mortality. These disorders are the cause of staggering economic and social costs.

Mental disorders affect and are affected by chronic conditions such as cancer, heart and cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and HIV/AIDS. If not well treated, they bring about unhealthy behavior, non-compliance with prescribed medical regimens, diminished immune functioning, and poor prognosis.

Cost-effective treatments exist for most disorders and, if correctly applied, could enable most of those affected to become functioning members of society. Barriers to effective treatment of mental disorders include lack of recognition of the seriousness of mental disorder, lack of understanding about the benefits of services, and stigma and discrimination.

Most middle and low-income countries devote less than 1% of their health expenditure to mental health. Consequently mental health policies, legislation, community care facilities, and treatments for people with mental disorders are not given the priority they deserve. For example, human resource for mental health services in Tanzania is still a challenge. The country has very few psychiatrists available mainly at Zonal Referral Hospitals only as a result majority of the workload is being done by nurses. Therefore, developing standards for mental health nursing practice in Tanzania will improve the quality of mental health nursing practice by providing legal competencies expected from these nurses in order to provide quality and safe services.
RATIONALE

The need to review the standards of proficiency for Mental Health Nursing practice in Tanzania considers the challenges and changes experienced in mental health care delivery system. The major changes include; Health Sector Reforms (HSR); Social dynamics and changes in Nursing Education and practice; Tanzania Mental health Act, 2008; Current Nursing and Midwifery Act, 2010; Classification of mental disorder (DSM V from DSM IV TR); technological advancement and changes in structural health system. It also focuses on the requirements of the Millennium Development Goals and the Vision 2025.

SCOPE OF MENTAL HEALTH NURSING PRACTICE

The mental health practice recognizes the registered Mental health nurse as an independent service provider who functions within the health care team in collaboration with other stakeholders with the aim to promote mental health, prevention of mental illness, diagnose and treat mental illness, and give psychosocial rehabilitation services to mental ill individuals. The scope of practice ranges from individual, family to community as well as from promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The principles that guide the scope of mental health nursing practice are:

- Mental health nursing is an autonomous self-regulating profession based on scientific principles of practice. It is also an art and science and aims at professional excellency

- Mental health nursing practice responds to client’s health needs both actual and potential guided by the nursing process.

- Mental Health Nursing practice is based on the scientific process of assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation and it incorporates research as an essential component in the development of knowledge required for improvement of client care.

- Mental health nursing practice embraces compassion, responsibility, empathy, accountability, continuous enhancement of competence and ethical conduct using innovative strategies, advocacy for safe and supportive working environment.

- In providing care the Mental Health Nurse functions as a member of the health care team within the parameters of his/her professional preparation .He/she promotes the dignity of a client and recognizes him/her as an important partner to the health care team. He/she collaborates with stakeholders, coordinates and advocates for accessible, acceptable and affordable mental health services to protect the interests and rights of the client.

- The Mental Health Nurse, advocates for safe and supportive working environments that foster provision of quality mental health care in various settings –home, schools, communities, work places and health facilities.
STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR MENTAL HEALTH NURSE
The standards of proficiency for mental health nurse describe the minimum parameters of required professional behavior for mental health practice in Tanzania. They are authoritative statements by which the nursing profession describes the responsibilities for which mental health nursing practitioners are accountable. They provide boundaries for practice and describe a level of care, values and priorities that are common to the mental health-nursing specialty.

The standards of Mental Health Nursing are congruent with general nursing standards and are broad in scope of practice, competencies and content to allow for institutional and individual interpretation and variation. Their intent is to augment existing nursing professional standards, providing nurses with direction, and promoting quality care and excellence in mental health nursing practice.

GENERAL STANDARDS

1. Practice in accordance with diversity in culture, values and belief systems, ethical and legal framework which ensures the primacy of patient/client interest that is non-discriminatory.
2. Practice mental health based on scientific approaches of assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation in all settings.
3. Appreciates the significance of independence and collaboration in mental health care that provides care consistent with the mental, physical, spiritual, psychological and social needs of the individual.
4. Maintains professional excellence, credibility and competence through evidence based practice and actively promotes practice innovation through continuous professional development, clinical supervision and reflective practice.
5. Documents and reports accurately all relevant information on the client situation and care to facilitate continuity of care and contribute to the body of knowledge of the profession.
6. Manages and maximizes utilization of resources to improve quality of Mental Health services.
7. Conducts research and utilizes research findings to improve client care and contributes to the body of Mental Health nursing knowledge.
8. Integrates international, national, local policies and guidelines with professional Standards and competencies in the provision of mental health services.

AREAS OF COMPETENCIES

- Professional, ethical and legal practice.
- Mental Health promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative.
DESCRIPTION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH NURSING STANDARDS

STANDARD I: Practice in accordance with diversity in culture, values and belief systems, ethical and legal framework which ensures the primacy of patient/client interest that is non-discriminatory.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Applies the principles, beliefs, norms and values enshrined in the Code of Ethics to ensure provision of cultural diversity care in line with the ethos of the profession.

Familiarizes self with the legal, statutory, ethical principles and parameters which guide nursing and other health professionals.

- Empowers those affected by mental health issues to be aware of and exercise their rights in relation to health care.
- Protects clients from any discrimination, violation of their privacy and confidentiality
- Manages the delivery of care services within the sphere of one’s own accountability.

STANDARD 2: Practice mental health based on scientific approaches of assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation in all settings

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Conduct need assessment by using effective communication, interpersonal and client-provider interaction skills in conducting mental health assessment including risk assessment in the aspects of history taking and mental state evaluation.
- Formulates accurate nursing diagnosis and prioritize to clarify client’s needs including learning, information/and counseling. Determines client-centered goals for nursing care plan in collaboration with the client, family and other members of the health care team
- Identify client immediately need for help and Initiates, directs, and actively participates in providing nursing care to clients in varying situations based on nursing care plan.
- Prescribes specific medication after undergoing special training.
- Adhere to legal and related ethical issues in provision of mental health services
• Creates an enabling environment that is therapeutic to meet the client’s needs that meets client’s satisfaction.
• Safeguard the rights of clients with mental health issues, the family, careers and the community.
• Determines the effectiveness of nursing care interventions based on intended client outcomes.

**STANDARD 3:** Appreciates the significance of independence and collaboration in mental health care that is consistency with the mental, physical, spiritual, psychological and social needs of the individual.

**CORE COMPETENCIES**

• Coordinates services and specific care activities within multidisciplinary teams, organizations and special interest groups (e.g. Narcotic Anonymous (NA), Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) groups and People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) involved in client care
• Adhere to comprehensive care of client with mental disorders
• Links client care to family, groups, community and other relevant health care providers.
• Supports community based health care providers in an effort to empower households with accurate health information.

**STANDARD 4:** Documents and reports accurately all relevant information on the client situation and care to facilitate continuity of care and contribute to the body of knowledge of the profession.

**CORE COMPETENCIES**

• Document all relevant information in the care plan and produce meaningful reports of the assessment, diagnosis, implementation and evaluation of client care using predetermined protocols in clinical settings.
• Give reports to other care providers with particular emphasis on critical areas relevant to continuity of care, in consultation with the client or family.
• Analyzes, interprets and utilizes documented information for improving client care - and decision making.
• Provides relevant information which will be shared by colleagues using appropriate channels of communication such as meetings and seminars

**STANDARD 5:** Manages and maximizes utilization of human and non-human resources to improve quality of Mental Health services.
CORE COMPETENCIES

- Maintain inventories of resources (human and non-human) needed for providing mental health services.

- Utilizes resources effectively based on information gathered regarding acceptability of services, the health care setting and technologies used for providing care.

- Collaborate with team members in matching client needs with the competence and skills of those providing care in the most cost-effective manner.

- Works in collaboration with non-health professionals such as community workers, traditional health providers, family members and volunteers for providing specific, simple, safe and agreed upon care for mentally sick patients.

- Implements and upholds rational medicine use policy and promotes the non-pharmacological management of mental health conditions among the community and client he serves.

STANDARD 6: Maintains professional excellence, credibility and competence through evidence based practice and actively promotes practice innovation through continuous professional development, research, clinical supervision and reflective practice.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Recognizes the need to continuously reviewing own practice, knowledge and attitudes to identify gaps resulting from the emergence of new approaches to practice and education.

- Identifies own learning needs for improving practice, and enhancing own professional knowledge.

- Participates in self-directed learning activities aimed at updating and upgrading own competencies for professional practice.

- Participates in continuous professional development.

STANDARD 7: Demonstrates evidence based practice and actively promotes utilization research findings for the purpose of improving clients’ care and contribute to the body of knowledge in Mental Health nursing.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Consistently engages in activities to use and develop evidence base for practice, and utilizes practice innovation where evidence is lacking or a novel approach is required.
• Demonstrates regular engagement in activities of research, education and professional development, clinical supervision and reflective practice.

  o Engages in activities that support others in activities of research, education and professional development, clinical supervision and/or reflective practice.

**STANDARD 8. Integrates international, national, local policies and guidelines with professional Standards and competencies in the provision of mental health services.**

**CORE COMPETENCES**

• Maintain self awareness of international legislation for mental health, relevant statutes, policies, standards, competencies, and guidelines.
• Practices consistently with national and international law requirements and available local policies..
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