Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

Psychiatric Nursing Procedures and Therapeutic Activities

Mental Health Nursing

Milieu therapy, activity therapy, recreational therapy, occupational therapy, therapeutic groups, patient observation and management of psychiatric wards.

For educational purposes only.

CHAPTER 23 / MENTAL HEALTH NURSING 23. Psychiatric Nursing Procedures and Therapeutic Activities

1. Milieu therapy

Milieu therapy uses the therapeutic environment, relationships, structure and activities to support safety, recovery and learning. Maintain predictable schedules, collaborative rules, privacy, respectful communication, safe space, access to meaningful activity and participation in decisions. Rules must be justified by care/safety, not punishment. Environmental risk review includes ligature hazards, access to dangerous items and emergency readiness according to setting.

2. Therapeutic activities

Activity	Purpose and precautions
Activity therapy	Structured tasks support attention, routine, pleasure, self-efficacy; match interests and ability.
Recreational therapy	Enjoyable games, movement or art promote engagement/social contact; adapt for safety and preferences.
Occupational therapy	Functional assessment and individualized daily living/occupation goals by qualified team.
Therapeutic groups	Shared learning/coping with purpose, size, ground rules, confidentiality limits and trained facilitation.
Relaxation and social skills practice	Support emotion regulation, communication and structured practice; voluntary participation.

3. Patient observation

Observation level depends on current individual risk and clinical plan, ranging from routine checks to continuous direct observation when required. Conduct therapeutically, preserve dignity/privacy while meeting safety needs, ensure handover and coverage, document time, observed behaviour, location, mental/physical state, action and response. Reassess whenever condition changes. Do not chart retrospective assumed observations or leave an at-risk patient without agreed coverage.

Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

4. Ward management and procedures

Admission assessment, safe storage of belongings according to lawful policy, medication checks, vital signs, physical care and infection prevention. Schedule treatment, activity, sleep and meals; support respectful ward community meetings. Use multidisciplinary handover, emergency equipment checks and incident reporting. Assess each patient before group activity (distress, mobility, safety, consent). De-escalate agitation using least restrictive approaches; seclusion is prohibited under Indian MHCA, restraint only with strict statutory safeguards.

5. Clinical example

For a patient withdrawn with depression, agree a brief preferred activity, offer support without forcing participation, document engagement and distress, gradually increase based on preference and function. If sudden agitation or suicidality emerges, pause group participation and conduct individualized assessment.

6. Important Examination Questions

Long Answer Questions

1. 1. Explain milieu therapy and therapeutic activities and role of nurse.

Short Answer Questions

1. 1. Describe observation levels
2. 2. explain recreational/occupational therapy
3. 3. discuss safe ward management.

Very Short Answer Questions (with answers)

1. 1. What is milieu therapy? - Therapeutic use of environment and relationships.
2. 2. Is activity participation forced routinely? - No.

7. Quick Revision

- Observation is active therapeutic care.
- Activities must be purposeful and individualized.
- Maintain rights and safety in the ward.

8. Conclusion

Observation is active therapeutic care. Activities must be purposeful and individualized. Maintain rights and safety in the ward.

NURSE'S CONTENT / MENTAL HEALTH NURSING 39

B.SC. NURSING / CHAPTER-WISE STUDY NOTES

Practice questions

Choose one best answer. The answer key and explanations follow the questions.

Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

1. What is the central method of milieu therapy?

A. Use of medication as the sole ward intervention

B. Isolation from all meaningful activities

C. Using ward rules primarily as punishment

D. Therapeutic use of the environment, relationships, structure and activities

2. What should determine a patient's level of observation?

A. Current individual risk and the clinical plan

B. The diagnosis alone for the whole admission

C. Staff preference without a clinical assessment

D. A fixed level that never changes

3. Before including a patient in a group activity, which factors should the nurse assess?

A. Only the availability of an empty chair

B. Distress, mobility, safety and consent

C. Only the patient's diagnosis label

D. Only whether the activity is convenient for staff

Nurses Content
Downloaded from nursescontent.com

Answer key and explanations

1. D - Therapeutic use of the environment, relationships, structure and activities

Milieu therapy uses the everyday therapeutic environment to support safety, recovery and learning.

2. A - Current individual risk and the clinical plan

Observation is individualized and should be reassessed with changes in condition.

3. B - Distress, mobility, safety and consent

The chapter requires individual assessment of readiness and safety before activity.

Source and attribution

Online chapter:
https://nursescontent.com/learn/mental-health-nursing/unit-23-psychiatric-nursing-procedures-and-therapeutic-activities/

Downloaded from Nurses Content. Branding identifies the delivery website. Original author credits, third-party licences and applicable rights remain unchanged.