Academic Success and Professional Development; Part 6: Finalizing the Plan

Student’s Name:

Institutional Affiliation:
Comparison of Nursing Specialties

My selected nursing Specialty is a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), and my second preferred specialization is a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) program. Both are advanced nursing specialties concerned with improving community health and promoting public wellness. I chose PMHNP as my first choice of advanced nursing career because I have always had an interest in helping mentally ill individuals regarding the provision of quality, adequate and specialized care ever since I was young.

Both FNPs and PMHNPs possess advanced education and training; therefore, they are competent to assess mental health disorders. However, PMHNPs have more extensive education in psychiatry than FNPs (Phoenix, Chapman & Toretsky, 2019). Consequently, their scope of practice varies. PMHNPs' job description entails treating psychiatric inpatient or outpatient. They are, therefore, allowed to provide in-depth assessments of psychiatric patients, interpret diagnostic results, provide psychotherapy, consultation services, patient education, and case management independently. Additionally, PMHNPs have prescriptive authority, where they can prescribe mental illness drugs without physician supervision (Leight, Feltham & Newton, 2017). They practice in all areas of healthcare. On the other hand, FNPs receive general rather than specialized training in psychiatry.

Consequently, their practice in psychiatry is limited to diagnosing and treating minor mental health issues like depression, anxiety, or substance abuse that they encounter during their practice in the primary care setting. They are not authorized to provide psychotherapy or prescribe any other mental health medication without the collaboration of psychiatric professionals. They mainly practice in the primary care setting, and offer general care to people of all ages, presenting with any health issue. Their scope of practice, therefore, entails
performing physical exams, diagnosing illnesses, prescribe medications, ordering tests, and providing educating on healthy lifestyles and disease prevention, to the general population (Dumphy, DeSandre & Thompson, 2019). Due to the increasing prevalence of mental illnesses and the consequent increased demand for mental healthcare, the scope of practice of both FNPs and PMHNPs across many American states is expanding.

Justification of Nursing Specialty

I chose the PMHNP nursing specialty because it will allow me to contribute positively to society. Due to the increasing cases of mental illnesses across the US, there is a growing demand and shortage of specialized mental health care providers. Additionally, cultural beliefs and myths surrounding mental illnesses have resulted in social stigma, isolation, discrimination, and disrespect of mentally ill individuals. Undertaking this nursing specialty will enable me to address these issues by providing adequate care to community members, as well as mental health education, to diminish the stigma and cultural stereotypes that degrade the dignity of mentally ill individuals. Besides, through adequate care, mentally ill individuals will be able to resume their quality and productive lives.

Professional Organizations

International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses (ISPN) is one of the nursing professional organizations in the US affiliated with PMHNP specialty. ISPN supports advanced
practice psychiatric and mental health nursing by providing members with education, networking opportunities, and leadership development through periodic conferences, and online platform (Shattell, 2019). This organization is also committed to continuously improve mental health nursing by engaging in advocating for health policy to promote the well-being of both nurses and mental illness patients. ISPN also provides nurses with funding to enable their research in psychiatric and mental health issues, thus promoting evidence-based practice.

**Becoming a member of ISPN**

ISPN membership application can be done online. Membership is open to all registered nurses with interest in psychiatric-mental health nursing practice. Applicants are required to pay an application fee, and upload their CV, education and experience details as well as at least two current ISPN members for endorsement (Shell, Newton, Soltis-Jarrett, Ragaisis & Shea, 2019). Membership to this organization offers nurses an opportunity to actively engage in medical research activities, policy assessment, and review and access data on emerging trends in psychiatric and mental health care.
References


