

Evidence-Based Mental Health Nursing Interventions: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

One of the main causes of disability in the world and a major contributor to the global burden of disease is mental health issues. The need for evidence-based mental health nursing interventions has been brought to light by the rising rates of depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, substance use disorders, and suicide. Assessment, therapeutic communication, psychosocial support, medication management, psychoeducation, crisis intervention, rehabilitation, and recovery-oriented care are all critical functions of mental health nurses. To improve mental health outcomes, evidence-based nursing combines patient choices, clinical knowledge, and the best available scientific evidence. The current research on successful mental health nursing treatments and their effects on patient recovery, quality of life, treatment compliance, and relapse prevention is compiled in this review.

Keywords: Mental health nursing, Evidence-based practice, Psychiatric nursing, Therapeutic communication, Psychosocial interventions, Recovery-oriented care, Mental disorders.

Introduction

Mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. According to the World Health Organization, mental health enables individuals to cope with everyday stress, realize their abilities, work productively, and contribute positively to society. Mental illnesses affect individuals of all age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds and are associated with substantial personal, social, and economic consequences.¹⁻³

Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and substance use disorders contribute significantly to disability-adjusted life years worldwide. The growing

prevalence of these conditions has increased the demand for effective, evidence-based psychiatric care delivered by skilled mental health professionals.²

Mental health nursing has evolved from a custodial model of care to a patient-centered, recovery-oriented, evidence-based practice emphasizing holistic assessment, therapeutic relationships, psychosocial rehabilitation, and community reintegration. Evidence-based mental health nursing combines research evidence, clinical expertise, and patient preferences to provide safe, effective, individualized, and compassionate care.³⁻⁵

Mental health nurses are integral members of multidisciplinary teams and provide continuous assessment, counseling, medication management, psychoeducation, family support, crisis intervention, and rehabilitation. Through evidence-based interventions, psychiatric nurses contribute significantly to symptom reduction, relapse prevention, treatment adherence, improved functioning, and enhanced quality of life among individuals experiencing mental illness.⁴⁻⁶

This review aims to summarize current evidence regarding evidence-based mental health nursing interventions and their effectiveness in improving clinical outcomes among individuals with mental health disorders.

Evidence-Based Mental Health Nursing Interventions

1. Comprehensive Mental Health Assessment

Comprehensive psychiatric assessment is the foundation of evidence-based mental health nursing. Assessment involves systematic collection of biological, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, and environmental information to identify patient needs and formulate individualized nursing care plans.

A complete assessment includes:

- Presenting complaints.
- Psychiatric history.
- Medical and surgical history.
- Family history.
- Substance use history.
- Medication history.
- Mental Status Examination (MSE).
- Risk assessment.
- Functional assessment.
- Social and occupational history.

Early identification of psychiatric symptoms facilitates timely diagnosis, individualized treatment planning, and improved clinical outcomes.

2. Therapeutic Communication

Therapeutic communication is considered one

of the most effective evidence-based nursing interventions in psychiatric care. It promotes trust, empathy, emotional expression, and collaborative problem-solving while strengthening the nurse-patient relationship.

Key therapeutic communication techniques include:

- Active listening.
- Empathy.
- Reflection.
- Clarification.
- Validation.
- Open-ended questioning.
- Silence.
- Summarization.
- Reality orientation.
- Positive reinforcement.

Effective communication reduces anxiety, enhances patient engagement, improves treatment adherence, and promotes recovery.

3. Establishing the Therapeutic Nurse–Patient Relationship

The therapeutic relationship forms the cornerstone of psychiatric nursing practice. It is characterized by trust, respect, confidentiality, empathy, and professional boundaries.

Evidence indicates that strong therapeutic relationships improve:

- Patient satisfaction.
- Medication adherence.
- Symptom management.
- Emotional well-being.
- Recovery outcomes.
- Quality of life.

The nurse should maintain consistency, honesty, cultural sensitivity, and nonjudgmental attitudes throughout the therapeutic process.

4. Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation is a structured educational intervention that empowers patients and families by improving knowledge regarding mental illness, treatment options, medication adherence, relapse prevention, stress management, and coping strategies.

Common psychoeducation topics include:

- Nature of mental illness.
- Medication adherence.
- Recognition of early warning signs.
- Stress management.
- Lifestyle modification.
- Sleep hygiene.
- Substance abuse prevention.
- Family support.
- Community resources.

Research demonstrates that psychoeducation significantly reduces relapse rates, improves treatment compliance, decreases hospitalization, and enhances long-term recovery.

5. Medication Management

Psychotropic medications remain an essential component of treatment for many psychiatric disorders. Mental health nurses play an important role in ensuring safe medication administration and monitoring therapeutic effectiveness.

Responsibilities include:

- Administering prescribed medications.
- Monitoring adverse drug reactions.
- Assessing therapeutic response.
- Promoting medication adherence.
- Educating patients regarding dosage and side effects.
- Monitoring laboratory investigations when indicated.
- Identifying medication interactions.

Regular monitoring minimizes complications while

improving symptom control and patient safety.

6. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-Based Nursing Interventions

Although Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is traditionally delivered by trained therapists, mental health nurses can incorporate CBT principles into daily nursing practice.

Evidence-based CBT-oriented nursing interventions include:

- Identifying negative automatic thoughts.
- Promoting positive thinking.
- Teaching problem-solving skills.
- Goal setting.
- Behavioral activation.
- Relaxation training.
- Coping skill development.
- Self-monitoring techniques.

These interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and stress-related conditions.

7. Suicide Risk Assessment and Prevention

Suicide prevention is one of the highest priorities in psychiatric nursing practice. Every patient presenting with depression, psychosis, substance abuse, or suicidal ideation should undergo systematic suicide risk assessment.

Evidence-based nursing interventions include:

- Suicide risk screening.
- Continuous observation for high-risk patients.
- Removal of harmful objects.
- Safety planning.
- Crisis intervention.
- Family involvement.
- Immediate referral for psychiatric evaluation.
- Documentation of suicide risk.

- Follow-up after discharge.
Early identification and prompt intervention substantially reduce suicide attempts and suicide-related mortality.

8. Crisis Intervention

Psychiatric crises require immediate, structured, and evidence-based nursing management. Crisis intervention focuses on restoring emotional stability, reducing distress, and preventing harm.

Key nursing interventions include:

- Rapid assessment.
- Ensuring patient safety.
- Emotional support.
- Therapeutic communication.
- De-escalation techniques.
- Problem-solving assistance.
- Referral to specialized services.
- Follow-up care.

Early crisis intervention minimizes psychological trauma and promotes recovery.

9. Family-Centered Mental Health Care

Family involvement significantly improves long-term psychiatric outcomes. Mental health nurses educate family members regarding illness management, medication adherence, communication skills, coping strategies, and relapse prevention.

Supportive family environments reduce caregiver burden, decrease relapse rates, improve treatment adherence, and facilitate successful community reintegration.

Evidence-Based Mental Health Nursing Interventions: A Comprehensive Review (Part II)

10. Recovery-Oriented Mental Health Care

Recovery-oriented care is a person-centered approach that focuses on enabling individuals with mental illness to lead meaningful and satisfying lives despite ongoing symptoms. Rather than emphasizing illness alone, this

model promotes hope, empowerment, self-determination, social inclusion, and resilience.

Evidence-based nursing interventions include:

- Encouraging patient participation in care planning.
- Promoting shared decision-making.
- Identifying individual strengths.
- Supporting self-management strategies.
- Facilitating vocational and educational rehabilitation.
- Encouraging peer support and community participation.

Research has demonstrated that recovery-oriented care improves self-esteem, treatment adherence, functional independence, and overall quality of life.

11. Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Psychosocial rehabilitation (PSR) is an essential evidence-based intervention designed to help individuals with severe mental illness regain optimal functioning within their families and communities. Psychiatric nurses actively participate in rehabilitation programs that enhance independence and social integration.

Major rehabilitation interventions include:

- Social skills training.
- Activities of daily living (ADL) training.
- Vocational rehabilitation.
- Cognitive remediation.
- Supported employment.
- Community reintegration.
- Recreational therapy.

Psychosocial rehabilitation reduces disability, enhances social functioning, decreases relapse rates, and promotes long-term recovery.

12. Group Therapy and Support Groups

Group-based interventions provide opportunities for patients to share experiences, develop coping strategies, and receive

emotional support from peers. Mental health nurses often facilitate psychoeducational and therapeutic groups.

Benefits include:

- Reduced feelings of isolation.
- Improved interpersonal communication.
- Better emotional expression.
- Enhanced coping abilities.
- Increased motivation for recovery.
- Greater treatment adherence.

Support groups are particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders.

13. Community Mental Health Nursing

Community-based psychiatric care has become a cornerstone of modern mental health services. Mental health nurses provide comprehensive care outside hospital settings through home visits, outpatient clinics, community rehabilitation centers, schools, workplaces, and primary healthcare facilities.

Community nursing interventions include:

- Home-based mental health assessment.
- Medication supervision.
- Family counseling.
- Health education.
- Relapse prevention.
- Crisis management.
- Referral services.
- Follow-up care.
- Rehabilitation support.

Community mental health services reduce unnecessary hospitalization while improving continuity of care and patient satisfaction.

14. Management of Aggressive and Violent Behavior

Aggression is occasionally encountered in psychiatric settings and requires evidence-based, patient-centered management. Nurses

should prioritize non-pharmacological approaches before considering restrictive interventions.

Evidence-based strategies include:

- Early identification of triggers.
- Verbal de-escalation techniques.
- Calm and respectful communication.
- Environmental modification.
- Maintaining personal safety.
- Team-based intervention.
- Appropriate use of emergency medication when prescribed.
- Physical restraint or seclusion only as a last resort and according to institutional policies and legal standards.

These interventions minimize injuries while preserving patient dignity and therapeutic relationships.

15. Sleep Promotion Interventions

Sleep disturbances are common among individuals with mental health disorders. Poor sleep negatively affects emotional regulation, cognition, and recovery.

Nursing interventions include:

- Sleep hygiene education.
- Establishing regular sleep routines.
- Reducing environmental noise.
- Limiting caffeine intake.
- Relaxation exercises before bedtime.
- Medication monitoring when indicated.
- Behavioral interventions for insomnia.

Improved sleep contributes to better mood, reduced anxiety, enhanced cognitive functioning, and overall recovery.

16. Digital Mental Health and Telepsychiatry

Advances in digital health have expanded access to mental healthcare through telepsychiatry, mobile applications, and online counseling platforms.

Evidence supports the use of:

Impact of Evidence-Based Nursing Interventions on Mental Health Outcomes

Evidence consistently demonstrates that evidence-based psychiatric nursing interventions produce significant improvements in clinical and psychosocial outcomes. Effective nursing care contributes to:

- Reduction in psychiatric symptoms.
 - Improved medication adherence.
 - Enhanced coping abilities.
 - Better social and occupational functioning.
 - Reduced relapse rates.
 - Fewer psychiatric hospitalizations.
 - Improved quality of life.
 - Increased patient and family satisfaction.
 - Greater recovery and community participation.
- Holistic, evidence-based nursing interventions address biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of health, resulting in comprehensive patient-centered care.

Challenges in Implementing Evidence-Based Mental Health Nursing

Despite growing evidence supporting psychiatric nursing interventions, several barriers continue to affect implementation:

- Shortage of trained mental health professionals.
- Limited psychiatric services in rural areas.
- Mental health stigma and discrimination.
- Poor health literacy.
- Inadequate financial resources.
- Heavy nursing workload.
- Limited access to continuing professional education.
- Insufficient integration of evidence-based guidelines into routine practice.
- Cultural misconceptions regarding mental illness.

Addressing these barriers requires policy support, workforce development, improved infrastructure, and ongoing education for healthcare professionals.

Future Perspectives

The future of mental health nursing is expected to focus on precision mental healthcare, artificial intelligence-assisted assessment, digital therapeutics, telepsychiatry, trauma-informed care, culturally competent practice, and recovery-oriented community services. Continued research and implementation of evidence-based nursing interventions will strengthen psychiatric care and improve patient outcomes worldwide.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Author Contributions

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