Psychiatric Nursing and the Inpatient Unit

- Psychiatric Nursing Workforce
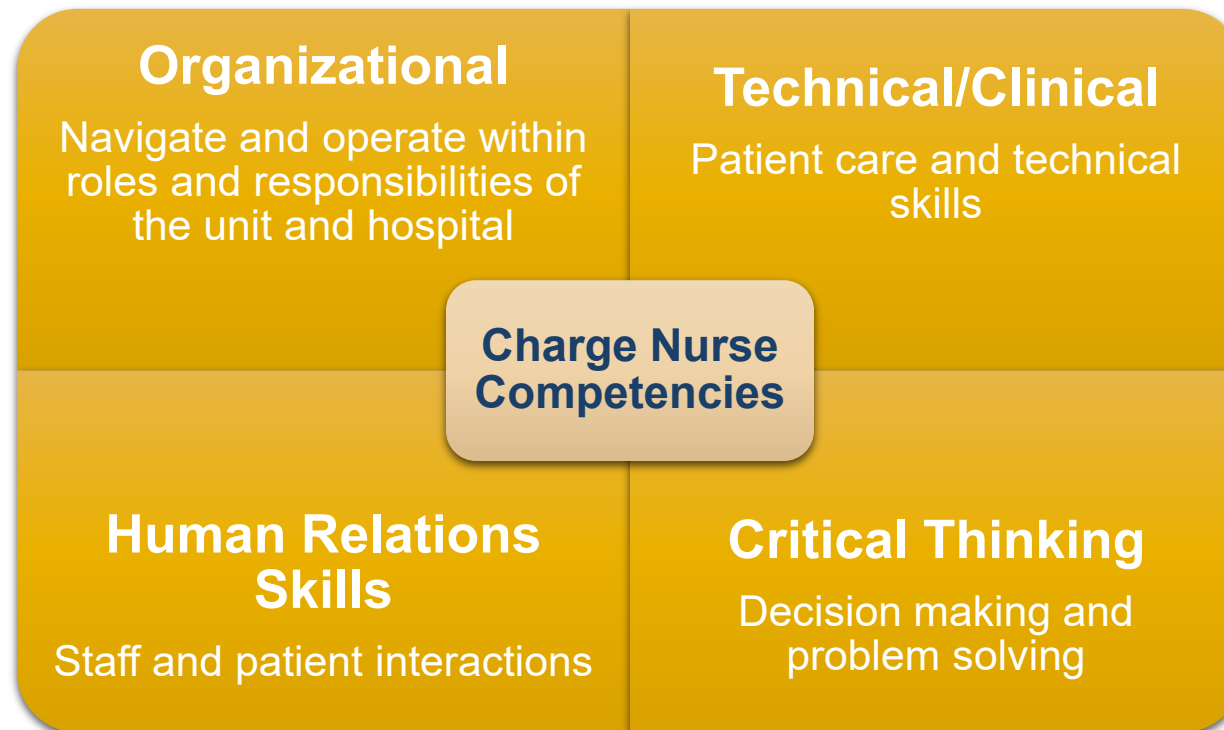 - Largest group of mental and behavioral health care providers in the US (APNA, 2019)

- Inpatient Psychiatric Units
  - Violence and unpredictability (Iozzino et al., 2015)
  - Role conflicts and perceived lack of support/resources (Shattell et al., 2008; Kindy et al., 2005; Privitera et al., 2005)
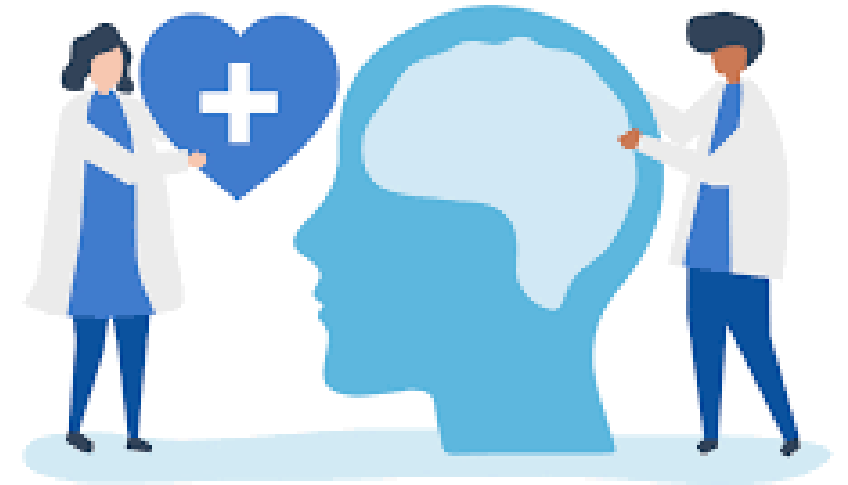
A closer look at the frontline leadership on the patient-unit level

Charge Nurse (CN) is a registered nurse (RN) of an acute-care unit responsible for the management and supervision of the unit activities and care provided (Eggenberger, 2012).

Organizational
Navigate and operate within roles and responsibilities of the unit and hospital

Technical/Clinical
Patient care and technical skills

Charge Nurse Competencies

Human Relations Skills
Staff and patient interactions

Critical Thinking
Decision making and problem solving

(Connelly et al., 2003)

What will this thesis contribute?

Gap
- Little focus on CN role in the inpatient psychiatric setting across national and international studies

Purpose
- To explore the experiences of being a CN on an inpatient psychiatric care

Aim
- To bring forth what it means to be and how one manages an inpatient psychiatric unit as a CN

How the research was conducted

Qualitative, descriptive

Purposive sampling (n=7)

Telephone or WebEx

Semi-structured interviews transcribed

Directed thematic coding

Data trustworthiness

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Theme 1: Social-Cognitive Preparedness for the Ever-Present Threat of Crisis

Administrative / Organizational

- "… you should be able to have a quick grasp of what's going on in the unit and being able to quickly, promptly, immediately step up to the plate if you're needed to, by rearranging the tasks that has already been delegated to the nursing staff are needed to assign them or direct them to do emergent care." (Participant 5)

Patient Care and Advocacy

- "…by taking that extra time to deescalate this patient and try to get to the point where they don't have to be held down to get medications, where they can try and utilize some coping skills and be cooperative with taking medications orally, just to help bring them at a level where they can manage it a little better and use those coping skills that we're trying to teach." (Participant 1)

Establishing a connection with staff

- "… but when you work with the same team repeatedly—like we've been fortunate to do on our shift—you get to know each other's facial expressions. So, you know when to do certain moves. If I give somebody a cue with my eyes, they know what to do." (Participant 6)

Providing guidance and mentorship to staff

Theme 2: Effectively Responding to Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Conflicts

Interpersonal conflict

- "…If someone is really frustrated with something—because it seems like frustrations are a lot of the times that people might end up being less safe, because they're frustrated and so then they try to disassociate themselves from what's going on, 'Well, I don't care then I'm just not going to—', and that kind of attitude ends up being unsafe. If you're not—if you don't care, then that's not safe." (Participant 7)

Intrapersonal conflict

- "But in a psych facility, there's a problem you really don't know. Everything is still experimental; everything is still more of a 'let's wait and see' kind of thing. Still, not one intervention is not at all in general with a cure or help the patient right away…" (Participant 6)

Coping with interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict

- "…As a leader you should be able to recognize [conflict] and be able to address right away. Otherwise, the situation can escalate… if one staff does not follow the guideline but the other staff is following the guideline, then there will be inconsistency of care and therefore, it creates a challenge as well…" (Participant 5)

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Where do we go from here?

Workforce Planning	Funding	Education
• Standardization of CN role • Specific leadership skills to be effective • Ways to decrease workload of CNs to increase time for patient care and staff support	• CN training programs • Conflict management and resolution programs	• Raising awareness • Innovative ways to prepare new graduates for mental health roles (Phoenix 2019) • Mentorship with CNs (Connelly et al., 2003b)

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