Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Graduate Nursing Program
Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS

UCSF School of Nursing offers one of the top-ranked programs in psychiatric/mental health nursing in the United States. The curriculum reflects important advances in understanding mental disorders, including their prevention and treatment, and has developed advanced practice roles to respond to special needs of vulnerable populations in the community. Our Master of Science program prepares graduates to provide mental health services to individuals across the lifespan, as well as families and groups, across a spectrum of service settings.

Program Options
The Psychiatric Mental Health Program offers two options for achievement of your specific goals.

**Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)**
Students are prepared to provide primary mental health care, including both psychotherapeutic and pharmacological treatment for mental health disorders.

**Post-Master’s Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program**
If you are a MS-prepared APN and are interested in expanding your knowledge and skill in providing mental health care, or are seeking credentialing as a Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, please contact us.

Are you interested in our program, but you’re not a nurse?

**MEPN (Masters Entry Program in Nursing)**
UCSF School of Nursing offers this special three-year program for persons with a bachelor’s degree in any non-nursing field. During the first year you participate in classroom and clinical work that prepares you to take the RN licensing examination. The following years prepare you to practice as a PMHNP.

Are you interested in a career as a nurse researcher?

**PhD in Nursing Program**
In this program you will take coursework on research methods and theory development in preparation for developing an independent research project completed under the supervision of a faculty member.

Variety of Learning Opportunities
- Assessment and management of psychiatric disorders
- Individual, group, and family treatments
- Consultation and program development
- Case management and psycho-education

Career Pathways
As a graduate of our program, you will have opportunities to work in a variety of settings:
- Inpatient and community-based psychiatric treatment programs
- Substance abuse treatment
- Primary care
- School-based mental health services
- Research programs
- Nursing education
### Course Descriptions

**N227 Theories of Mental Illness**  
Examines major theories of mental illness and their implication for understanding the etiology and treatment of psychiatric conditions.

**N231A Substance Use and Mental Illness**  
Examines causes and consequences of substance use disorders among mentally ill individuals.

**N252B Psychotherapeutic Techniques with Children and Youth**  
Introduction to a variety of techniques for the assessment and treatment of emotional and behavioral problems with children & adolescents.

**N243A Family Treatment Modalities**  
Examines theories of family therapy and their application in the practice of psychiatric nursing.

**N243B Group Psychotherapies**  
Examines and discusses theories and practice of various group modalities in current use.

**N243C Adult Psychotherapeutic Techniques**  
Introduction to techniques used in individual treatment of psychiatric disorders in adults.

**N257 Assessment/Mgmt. of Common Psychiatric Symptoms**  
Analyzes common signs and symptoms of psychiatric illness from a bio-psycho-social perspective.

**N232.04C Management of Psychotropic Regimens**  
Develops clinical judgment about management of regimens for psychiatric symptoms.

**N244A Managing the Psychological Impacts of Traumatic Events**  
Examines theories from social, behavioral and neurosciences that explain psychobiological responses to different types of trauma.

**N244B Treatment Planning for Trauma-related Mental Health Conditions**  
Case-based seminar course focuses on patients with complex mental health problems related to trauma exposure.

### Program Faculty

- **Beth Phoenix, RN, Ph.D., FAAN**  
  Health Science Clinical Professor; Specialty Coordinator for Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing

- **Aaron Miller, RN, MS, PMHNP**  
  Asst. Health Science Clinical Professor

- **Adam Carrico, PhD**  
  Assistant Professor

- **Deborah Johnson, RN, MS, PMHNP**  
  Asst. Health Science Clinical Professor

- **Kathy Johnson, RN, MS, PMHNP**  
  Assoc. Health Science Clinical Professor

- **Rosalind DeLisser, RN, MS, PMHNP, FNP**  
  Asst. Health Science Clinical Professor

- **Sandra Weiss, RN, Ph.D., FAAN**  
  Professor

- **Kara Birch, RN, DNP, PMHNP, FNP**  
  Asst. Health Science Clinical Professor

### Additional Information

**Accreditation and Certification Information:**  
UCSF School of Nursing Masters of Science program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The Masters Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN) and our Nurse Practitioner Program are approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN). Graduates are eligible to take the ANCC Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner exam and may also take the Addictions Nursing advanced practice exam (CARN-AP) administered by the Intl. Nurses Society on Addictions. For more details about Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing programs at UCSF, please telephone (415) 476-1381 or contact by email sharon.solorio@nursing.ucsf.edu.

**Application and Program Information**  
For information about this and other specialties at UCSF School of Nursing, contact:  
UCSF Nursing Student Affairs  
2 Koret Way, #N-319X  
San Francisco, CA 94143-0602  
Telephone: (415) 476-1435

**Internet Resources**  
[http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/www/spec-psy.htm](http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/www/spec-psy.htm) and  
[http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/websites](http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/websites).  
An application is downloadable from  
[http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/gateway/download.html](http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/gateway/download.html).  
Attend a monthly evening information session; sign up through [http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/www/infosess.htm](http://nurseweb.ucsf.edu/www/infosess.htm).
The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner: Background and Expertise

The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) is an invaluable component of interdisciplinary health care teams. As the Affordable Care Act is implemented, a growing number of PMHNPs will be needed to respond to the increased number of insured in need of mental health care. The PMHNP shares a number of skill sets that overlap with those of other health care professions, including psychiatric assessment and diagnosis, psychotherapy, case management, and medication management. Their expertise in comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment and treatment of both acute and chronic mental health and medical conditions gives the PMHNP the ability to promote integrated functioning of health care teams and to provide care and service integration across health care settings, systems and health care teams.

UCSF’s PMHNP Program and the Clinical Residency

UCSF’s PMHNP program attracts very high caliber students and has been ranked #1 in several successive US News and World Report rankings of graduate psychiatric nursing programs. Students are educated in current evidenced-based practice and have access to an abundance of online resources for enhancing patient care. Core NP coursework includes advanced health assessment, pharmacology, psychopharmacology and care for medical conditions. Specialty coursework includes psychiatric assessment; management of psychiatric emergencies; individual, group and family psychotherapy; and treatment approaches for co-existing substance abuse and mental illness.

UCSF PMHNP residency placements include a variety of public mental health settings where students gain experience with vulnerable and complex patient populations. Here students are able to hone their class and lab skills under preceptor supervision. Preceptors can be psychiatrists or PMHNPs, although PMHNP students can also work with other mental health professionals on the interdisciplinary team.

As students gain experience during their residency they can contribute to increasing productivity. PMHNP students are also able to spend more time with complex patients who require additional attention. By hosting PMHNP students, agencies have the advantage of being able to observe student performance and goodness of fit with their agency. This facilitates the recruitment of top PMHNP graduates, which likely will be increasingly competitive as more people are covered for mental health services when ACA is fully implemented.
**PMHNP Clinical Requirements**

UCSF is committed to ensuring excellence in clinical training experience through collaborations with mental health providers throughout the Bay Area. We take a graduated approach to ensuring competency by providing clinical experiences over the two year program.

**Year ONE:** The first year is typically 6-12 hours per week for approximately 90-160 hours, late fall to spring. During this time, students are placed in settings to learn psychiatric interviewing skills, building rapport, performing history and physical exams, and are introduced to case management. We place students in psychiatric emergency settings, urgent care centers, primary care settings, and public mental health settings. Students also begin group therapy facilitation focusing on health behavior change using cognitive and behavioral techniques.

**Year TWO:** In the second year residency students are placed in a setting for 16-24 hours per week from as early as July through the following June. We hope for students to gain experience in continuity management of a panel of patients. They are expected to evaluate, diagnose, and implement evidenced based treatment for patients across the lifespan. This includes initiation and management of psychotropic medications and short-term individual therapy.

These clinical experiences should focus on core entry-level competencies preparing students to provide a full range of psychiatric services across the lifespan. Since the range of services offered between organizations differ, students often split time between clinics to fulfill these requirements.

Outside of clinical hours and other classes, students are required to attend weekly clinical seminars with UCSF classmates and faculty. Moreover, they attend regular individual supervision with an assigned advanced practice psychiatric nurse to focus on role development. This ensures that students are well supported during their residency.

For further questions contact these UCSF PMHNP faculty members: Aaron Miller: aaron.miller@nursing.ucsf.edu

Rosalind De Lisser: rosalind.delisser@nursing.ucsf.edu  Beth Phoenix: beth.phoenix@nursing.ucsf.edu

Deborah Johnson: Deborah.johnson@ucsf.edu
UCSF Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program
Guidelines for Clinical Placements

**Preceptors:** Preceptors can be psychiatrists or PMHNPs, although PMHNP students can also work with other mental health professionals on the interdisciplinary team. Students may work with more than one preceptor in an agency. If possible, it is desirable to have an advanced practice psychiatric nurse (CNS or NP) actively involved in clinical training.

**Clinical experiences:** Types of clinical experience to be included in clinical training include:
- Psychiatric assessment and diagnosis utilizing DSM format
- Psychoeducation
- Psychotherapy with individuals and groups
- Work with couples or families
- Medication management of psychiatric disorders
- Additional advanced practice functions, such as crisis intervention, patient and staff education, and consultation may be included.

**Settings:** A variety of clinical venues may offer the clinical training opportunities listed above, including but not limited to those listed below:
- Outpatient mental health clinics
- Private psychiatric practices
- County mental health services
- Substance abuse treatment settings
- Residential mental health treatment facilities
- Psychiatric emergency services
- Inpatient psychiatric units
- Community based social service agencies

**Relationship with UCSF:** Student clinical placement sites must have a contract with UCSF that includes the School of Nursing. Many health care providers in the Bay Area have existing contracts with the campus, but placement contracts may need to be initiated with agencies where we have not previously placed students. Depending on the agency, it may take a variable amount of time for clinical sites to be evaluated and contracts to be approved.
UCSF Advanced Practice Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing Program Objectives for Psychopharmacology Experience

During the clinical placement, students should develop skills in diagnosis and medical management of psychiatric disorders including:

- Performing comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments;
- Identifying target symptoms for treatment with medication;
- Screening for medical problems, organicity, substance abuse, or drug interactions;
- Obtaining a detailed history of illness and past medications;
- Developing familiarity with 2-4 commonly used drugs in each class, including indications, dosages, and common side effects;
- Using strategies to monitor and improve compliance;
- Assessing side effects;
- Determining the adequacy of a medication trial;
- Applying appropriate safeguards when discontinuing or switching medications; and
- Utilizing consultation effectively.

Students should develop increasing initiative during this clinical experience, and be able to complete initial and follow-up assessments independently and present them for consultation by the end of the placement.