**Practicum Objectives Related to the Practicum Course (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound)**

[Student name]

[Department, College/ Institution]

[Course Name]

[Instructor Name]

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As a nursing student looking forward to graduating and becoming an independent professional, the practicum course offers a good opportunity to observe what happens in the real world of the nursing profession. The practicum experience offers experiential learning by allowing the student to observe what happens between the nurse and a real patient and documenting the experience. It also gives an opportunity to assist in a limited way in some of the procedures, under supervision of the preceptors and mentors (Best Counseling degrees, 2020). But like in any academic activity, the practicum experience requires the putting down of objectives to be achieved that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. This paper outlines seven of these objectives related to the practicum course. I am in a psychiatry hospital for this practicum experience and I am expected to learn as much as I can on examining, investigating, diagnosing, and treating patients with mental health disorders.

**The Objectives**

1. To observe and participate in a psychiatric interview, history taking, and mental status examination (MSE)

I will observe two patients with any psychiatric illness undergoing the first psychiatric interview on admission. I will also observe the same patients’ psychiatric and other history being taken as well as a mental status examination or MSE being performed on them. I will achieve this within two weeks of my practicum experience. I will also assist the preceptor perform the same psychiatric interview, history taking and mental status examination on another two patients with mental health conditions coming for voluntary or involuntary commitment. I will need to learn the actual interviewing techniques used for psychiatric assessment and history taking. I will also need to understand the logical progression of a mental status assessment which is usually methodical with distinct steps and stages. For these two patients, I will assist in these activities and procedures within the first two weeks of my practicum attachment.

1. To observe the physical examination of the psychiatric patient

I will observe within the first three weeks of my practicum attachment the physical examination of at least five psychiatric patients in the psychiatric hospital. The physical examinations will be carried out by the employed registered nurses as well as the preceptor I am assigned to. I recognize that it will be upon me to find out which new patient has been admitted and about to undergo a complete physical examination. It will also be upon me to request the examining RN to request the patient to allow me witness their examination as a student. This is because the patient’s consent must be given without which the patient cannot be forced with a student’s presence. Patient privacy is an ethical and legal obligation that must be adhered to regardless of the fact that as students on practicum attachment we need to learn.

1. To participate in the interpretation of neuroimaging results

I will participate in the identification of abnormalities present in seven neuroimaging results within the first four weeks of my practicum attachment. This will mean being with the qualified nurses (psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioners or PMHNPs) as they interpret results from neuroimaging tests such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computed tomography or CT scans (Sadock et al., 2015). I will need to note the techniques used to perform this task and arrive at a diagnosis. I will also note down what to look for in specific neuroimaging tests and procedures.

1. To observe and participate in the psychiatric assessment and evaluation of a patient with schizophrenia

Within four weeks of my practicum attachment, I will observe at least one psychiatric patient with schizophrenia undergoing psychiatric assessment and evaluation (Sadock et al., 2015; APA, 2013). I will need to note down what is done because in the same period of time I will need to perform myself (under the supervision of my preceptor) at least one psychiatric assessment and evaluation of a psychiatric patient.

1. To observe and participate in the psychiatric assessment and evaluation of a patient with a mood disorder

I will observe at least one patient with a mood disorder undergoing psychiatric assessment and evaluation before treatment (Sadock et al., 2015; APA, 2013). I will do this within four weeks of my practicum attachment and will need the consent of the patient (Greenberg et al., 2015). Then I will also assist my preceptor in assessing and evaluating at least one other psychiatric patient with a mood disorder within the same period of time.

1. To observe and participate in the psychiatric assessment and evaluation of a patient with an anxiety disorder

I will observe my preceptor perform at least one psychiatric evaluation and evaluation of a patient with an anxiety disorder within four weeks. I will also assist in the same for at least one patient within the same period of time.

1. To observe and participate in the psychiatric assessment and evaluation of a patient with posttraumatic stress disorder or PTSD

I will observe the preceptor or any other qualified employee perform assessment and evaluation of a patient with PTSD within any four weeks of my practicum. I will also assist in doing the same on another PTSD patient within the same period of time.

**References**

American Psychological Association [APA] (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), 5th ed*. Author.

Best Counseling Degrees (July 31, 2020). *What is the difference between a practicum and an internship?* <https://www.bestcounselingdegrees.net/faq/what-is-the-difference-between-a-practicum-and-an-internship/>

Greenberg, P.E., Fournier, A-A., Sisitsky, T., Pike, C.T., & Kessler, R.C. (2015). The economic burden of adults with major depressive disorder in the United States (2005-2010). *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, 76*(2), 155-162. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2011.11.005>

Sadock, B.J., Sadock, V.A., & Ruiz, P. (2015). *Synopsis of psychiatry: Behavioral sciences clinical psychiatry, 11th ed*. Wolters Kluwer.