

**Master of Science (MS) in Nursing  
Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist Concentration**

**Program Description**

Advanced practice psychiatric/mental health nurses work as either *clinical nurse specialists* or *nurse practitioners* in settings that include inpatient and emergency psychiatric services, outpatient mental health and primary care clinics, psychiatric home care and substance abuse treatment.

Both the clinical specialist and nurse practitioner assess, diagnose health and psychiatric disorders, and provide individual, group and family psychotherapy. Typically the nurse practitioner has a greater focus on psychiatric diagnosis, including the differential diagnosis of medical disorders with psychiatric symptoms, and on medication treatment for psychiatric disorders. In contrast, the clinical nurse specialist may focus on providing leadership to others in the mental health workforce, including functions such as staff education and training, and program development and quality improvement.

The University of Illinois College of Nursing offers one of the most respected programs in psychiatric/mental health nursing in the United States. The curriculum has a biopsychosocial orientation, addressing mental illness as a biological event, as a personal experience, and as a social and cultural phenomenon. Students can tailor their program to work with adults or children and prepare to deliver primary care to the mentally ill or focus on student or staff education.

All students in adult psychiatric/mental health nursing complete a series of core mental health specialty courses that focus on:

- current theories of psychiatric illness
- advanced physical and psychiatric assessment
- psychopharmacology
- psychosocial and psychotherapeutic treatment modalities, including techniques for problem resolution, symptom management, relapse prevention, and psychiatric rehabilitation.

Clinical experiences allow students to meet highly individualized learning objectives in a variety of mental health settings. These span the range of community mental health and substance abuse treatment services for children and adults. Recent graduates are practicing in institutions of higher education, hospital settings, community mental health centers, psychiatric home-care programs, forensic mental health programs or with community based intensive case management teams.

Students who complete the Psychiatric-Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist program with either the adult or child focus are qualified to sit for the Adult Psychiatric and Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist or the Child/Adolescent Psychiatric & Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist certification examination from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).

## Degree Requirements

Course #	Course Title	SH
<b>Core Courses</b>		
NURS 525	Intermediate Statistics	3
NURS 526	Nursing Inquiry I	2
NURS 527	Nursing Inquiry II	2
NURS 528	Health, Environment, and Systems	2
NURS 529	Issues in Advanced Practice in Nursing	1
NURS 531	Pharmacotherapeutics in Advanced Practice in Nursing	3
NURS 532	Comprehensive Health Assessment for Advanced Practice	2
NURS 533	Applied Pharmacotherapeutics in Advanced Practice in Nursing	1
NURS 550	Evidence-Based Practice <b>or</b>	3
NURS 597	Master's Project <b>or</b>	3
NURS 598	Master's Thesis	5
<b>Concentration Specialty Courses</b>		
NUSP 525	Group Dynamics, Behavior and Intervention	3
NUSP 526	Development, Behavioral Health and Interventions with Youth	3
NUSP 527	Behavioral Health Care I	3
NUSP 528	Behavioral Health Care II	3
NUSP 529	Family Behavioral Health	2
NUPR 531	Clinical Practicum in Behavioral Health I	7
NUPR 532	Clinical Practicum in Behavioral Health II	8
	<b>Total Degree Hours</b>	<b>48-50</b>

**Clinical credit hrs: 15**  
**Didactic credit hrs: 32**  
**Lab credit hrs: 1**

**Clinical clock hrs: 675**  
**Didactic clock hrs: 525**  
**Lab clock hrs: 30**