



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

2026 | GradConnect

Mental Health Nursing



What is Mental Health Nursing?

- **Definition:** Mental health nursing involves caring for individuals with mental health conditions, offering support with physical, mental and emotional challenges.
- **Settings:** Work settings can include hospitals, clinics, community health services, and outpatient care.
- **Purpose:** Aims to help patients manage symptoms, improve quality of life, foster recovery from mental health conditions, and promote sustained wellness.

How Common is Mental Health?

A national study conducted by the Australia Bureau of Statistics between 2020 and 2022 on Australians aged 16-85 found:

- **More than two in five** (42.9%) have experienced a mental disorder in their lifetime.
- **One in six** (16.6%) had experienced suicidal thoughts or behaviours.
- **More than one in six** (17.4%) saw a health professional for their mental health in the 12 months prior to interview.
- **Two in seven** (8.5%) of patients have cooccurring mental health and long-term physical health condition

What Do You Do?

- **Assessment & Diagnosis Support:** Conducting mental health assessments and supporting diagnosis through observation and communication.
- **Treatment Plans:** Collaborating with Consumers, Doctors, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Peer Practitioners to create individualised treatment plans.
- **Therapeutic Communication:** Building trust through active listening and empathetic responses.
- **Medication Management:** Administering medications, monitoring side effects and compliance, and educating patients about their treatment.
- **Crisis Intervention:** Providing immediate care during mental health crises and managing high-risk situations (e.g. suicidal thoughts, aggression).



What Are We Looking For?

- **Empathy and Compassion:** Ability to understand and share the feelings of patients as well as connect with others.
- **Critical Thinking:** Analysing patient behaviours and symptoms to make informed decisions.
- **Resilience:** Handling emotionally intense situations and challenging behaviours.
- **Communication & Relational Skills:** Clear communication with patients, families, and multidisciplinary teams.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding and respecting diverse backgrounds and beliefs.
- **Person Centred Approach:** Help others make connections, find meaning and foster empowerment.





Is It Rewarding?

- **Making a Difference:** Helping individuals improve their mental health and live more fulfilling lives is deeply rewarding.
 - **71.8%** patients aged between 18-64 years saw significant improvement in their mental health after an acute inpatient admission.
- **Personal Growth:** Mental health nursing can offer opportunities for personal growth, as it requires patience, understanding, and emotional intelligence.
- **Building Strong Team Relationships:** Many Mental Health Nurses develop strong team bonds with their colleagues, which is a key element of workplace culture and job satisfaction.
- **Advocacy:** Being a voice for vulnerable individuals and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health.

What Are The Opportunities?

- **Specialisations:** Options to specialise in areas like forensic nursing, child and adolescent mental health, Co-Response, Homeless Healthcare, Virtual Health and more.
- **Further Education:** Many mental health nurses pursue further training or academic qualifications (e.g., Masters in Mental Health, Nurse Practitioner, AMHP and more).
- **Leadership Roles:** Mental Health Services are expanding resulting in current and future opportunities to take on numerous leadership positions.
- **Transferable Skills:** Mental Health issues are present in every health workplace. The skills you learn as a Mental Health Nurse are relevant and transferable to other workplaces.
- **Collaboration:** Working with multidisciplinary teams within and outside hospital boundaries.



Hear It From Us



Summary

- **A Unique and Rewarding Career:** Being a mental health nurse offers both challenges and rewards, but the chance to make a meaningful impact on people's lives is significant.
- **Continuous Learning:** Mental health nursing is a dynamic and evolving field, enabling ongoing education and self-reflection.
- **Key Takeaway:** The role is complex but ultimately a deeply fulfilling profession that helps individuals regain their mental health and well-being.