ASSIGNMENT

Unity Center for Behavioral Health
Assignment is a complementary relationship between nurse and BHTs and BHAs that results in safe and efficient patient care if it is used appropriately. It is a critical step in the delivery of nursing care.
OBJECTIVES

1) Define assignment and how it relates to nursing practice.

2) Explain the difference between assignment and delegation.

3) Define the roles and responsibilities within assignments of BHTs and BHAs.

4) Review the correct steps when assigning tasks to BHTs and BHAs.

5) Review assignments, ethics and standards specific to the psychiatric mental health nurse.
Assignment has a specific meaning in the Nurse Practice Act. OAR 851-06 defines the term assign as “...directing and distributing, within a given work period, the work that each staff member is already authorized by license or certification and organizational position description to perform.”

Unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) are unlicensed health care providers trained to function in a supportive role by providing patient/client care activities. When the activity to be performed is within the UAP’s position description, and there is documented education and current competency validation of the UAP having been done by the organization employing both the RN and the UAP staff member. The UAP is held accountable for the performance of their role.

- **KEY POINT:** The RN determines the appropriate match between the patient and BHT or BHA, and assigns a task to the BHT or BHA based on their competency and job description. If a BHT or BHA does not perform their assigned task, the RN is NOT held responsible. The RN should validate understanding of the assignment, reassign, or complete the task if/when they become aware an assignment is not being performed by the BHT or BHA.
### ASSIGNMENT
- Assignment occurs when the required task falls within the UAP role description and training, as defined by the employer/supervisor.
- The employer/supervisor is responsible and accountable for deciding which tasks are included in the role description and for the ongoing supervision to assess the ability of the UAP to perform tasks within the role description.
- The UAP is accountable to her/his supervisor for the performance of tasks within the role description.
- The registered nurse has ongoing responsibility and accountability for the overall assessment, determination of client status, care planning, interventions and care evaluation.

### DELEGATION
- Delegation occurs in the community based care setting where nursing services are intermittently required.
- Delegation occurs when the required task is performed primarily by registered nurses and is outside the role description and training of an UAP.
- The delegated task is client-specific, and the delegation is determined to be in that client’s best interests.
- The delegating registered nurse is responsible and accountable for the decision to delegate and the process of delegation including the ongoing supervision to assess the ability of the UAP to perform the delegated task.
- The UAP is accountable to the delegating registered nurse for the performance of the delegated task.
How Assignment Applies to Unity

- Unity is a 24/7 nursing unit, therefore, in the State of Oregon, UAP’s (BHTs and BHAs) are assigned tasks within their job description based upon their validated competencies.

- Delegation is only used in a community setting when there is not 24/7 nursing care.

- Delegation is not done at Unity.
THE RIGHT TASK

• Tasks can be assigned

• What tasks can be assigned to a UAP (BHT/BHA)?

• What tasks cannot be assigned to a UAP (BHT/BHA)?

★ A BHT/BHA is assigned to a nurse, the nurse makes the appropriate match between the BHT/BHA and a patient, the nurse assigns the BHT/BHA a tasks, the BHT/BHA is to complete the task and document.
BHT'S AND BHA'S VALIDATED COMPETENCIES

- Environmental safety checks and rounding
- Vital signs
- Notes that include data and/or observations with specific mental health needs/disease processes
- Patient education: BHTs and BHAs can reinforce or support educational needs as established by the RN
- Patient observation including 1:1, q15minutes, and hourly
- Restraint and/or seclusion patient observation including 1:1 or q15 minute checks
- Application of restraints
- Adolescent BHTs: CPS documentation (program documentation)

*The organization must supply nurses with a list of competencies the BHTs and BHAs are able to safely perform.*

(as of 01/2020)
Assess and determine client status.

Develop the nursing care plan.

Determine if task is within UAP's role description & they have the validated competencies to perform task.

Assign tasks within the role description.

Evaluate and revise the nursing care plan and assign tasks as needed.
COMMUNICATION AND FOLLOW UP

- UAPs & RNs need to be working in tandem and communicating with one another.

- The RN needs to clearly communicate to the BHT/BHA the patient’s condition and current orders.

- It is the RNs responsibility to notify the BHT/BHA if patient orders change during the shift for the BHT/BHA to correctly perform their task.

- If a BHT/BHA does not perform their assigned task, the RN is NOT held responsible. The RN should validate understanding of the assignment, reassign, or complete the task if/when they become aware an assignment is not being performed by the BHT/BHA.
BEST PRACTICE OF THE RN

- Start each shift with a brief in-person assessment of patient to determine patient condition and document findings (i.e. awake in milieu, sleeping, respirations, etc.)
- Review orders for clarity.
- Determine if assignment of BHT/BHA is appropriate and notify CRN or House Supervisor if assignment needs to be changed.
- Communicate with BHT/BHA current orders, plan of care, and assign appropriate tasks.
- Communicate new orders to BHT/BHA throughout the shift.
- Validate that rounding board of other tasks of BHT/BHA were completed at the end of shift.
PRINCIPLES TO WALK AWAY WITH

✓ RN’s role is a social contract to keep patients safe.

✓ Nursing Leadership’s role is to provide for a safe environment with the appropriate resources so that nurses can safely care for their patients.

✓ BHT/BHA’s role is to correctly perform the tasks that they hold competence of determined by the organization.
REFERENCES

- Oregon State Board of Nursing (2017) Division 45, Standards and scope of practice for the registered nurse 851-045-0060, retrieved at https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/displayDivisionRules.action?selectedDivision=3929
