



PEDIATRIC NURSING
CERTIFICATION BOARD

Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist Certification Exam

*Improving Access to Care for Children and Adolescents with
Behavioral and Mental Health Concerns*

Detailed Content Outline

Description of the Speciality

The Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist builds upon the NP or CNS role to provide advanced assessment, evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of common behavioral and mental health problems in children and adolescents. Therapeutic services include early recognition, intervention and active monitoring as well as appropriate referral for complex individual and family mental health disorders. Health care services are evidence-based and include the use of behavioral and mental health screening tools, brief psychotherapeutic interventions and psychopharmacology. The Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist coordinates care and collaborates with others to enhance quality mental health services for children and families. Practice settings may include pediatric primary care, school-based clinics, and developmental or other specialty services.

Credential

Candidates successfully passing this exam will earn the certification credential Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist (PMHS).

Exam

The exam has a 125 scored and 25 unscored items (included to determine statistical performance). The 125 scored items are distributed among 4 content areas as follows:

Mental Health Assessment and Promotion	(40%) = 50 test questions
Diagnostic Decision Making	(27%) = 34 test questions
Management	(30%) = 37 test questions
Professional Issues	(3%) = 4 test questions

The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) will be used as a foundational reference for the PMHS exam effective November 2015.

****This content outline will not be revised in its entirety until the next practice analysis study, but terminology has been updated where possible (July 2015) to be consistent with the DSM-5.****



**PNCB Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist
Detailed Content Outline**

**Total
%**

I. Mental Health Assessment and Promotion

40%

A. Primary Behavioral and Mental Health Promotion

1. Promote positive parenting
2. Provide social risk education and reduction
3. Promote social and academic functioning
4. Provide guidance regarding individual temperament and social interactions
5. Provide guidance regarding resiliency and healthy coping

B. Assessment

1. Obtain a comprehensive health, behavioral, and developmental history with timelines
2. Obtain a comprehensive multigenerational family psychiatric history
3. Review information/data and complete an assessment of academic and social performance
4. Use and interpret evidence-based screening tools for assessment of:
 - a) *ADHD*
 - b) *Anxiety Disorders*
 - c) *Depressive or Disruptive Disorders (formerly Mood Disorders, DSM-IV)*
 - d) *Developmental variations to include physical differences, behavior and function*
 - e) *Autistic Spectrum Disorders*
 - f) *Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders*
 - g) *Suicidal ideation and Self-injurious Behavior*
5. Assess risks to health related to:
 - a) *Bullying and Victimization*
 - b) *Environmental factors*
 - c) *Risk-taking Behaviors*

II. Diagnostic Decision Making

27%

A. Interpret Assessment and Diagnostic Findings

1. Interpret findings of relevant history, diagnostic and laboratory tests
2. Interpret physical exam and behavioral observations
3. Seek information and corroboration from a variety of resources in the diagnostic process

B. Determine differential diagnoses derived from collection and synthesis of data

1. Use DSM-5 criteria and taxonomy in diagnostic reasoning
2. Recognize and differentiate the impact of:
 - a) *Typical pediatric developmental stages vs. developmental disorders*
 - b) *Genetic influences and syndromes*
 - c) *Psychosocial stressors*
 - d) *Medical, behavioral and/or psychiatric co-morbidity*
3. In the development of diagnoses, consider and differentiate:
 - a) *Mental health and/or behavioral presentation of medical disorders*
 - b) *Typical vs. atypical presentation of psychiatric disorders*
 - c) *Early signs and symptoms of complex psychiatric and behavioral disorders*
4. Diagnostic Validation
 - a) *Initiate appropriate referral and consultation in the diagnosis of behavioral, mental health and psychiatric problems*
 - b) *Discuss diagnostic impression with child/adolescent and family*



**PNCB Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist
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**Total
%**

III. Management

30%

A. Early Management

1. Incorporate psychoeducation in the discussion of:
 - a) *Etiology*
 - b) *Diagnosis and treatment plan options*
 - c) *Indications, benefits and risks of pharmacological therapies*
 - d) *Indications, benefits and risks of nonpharmacological therapies*
 - e) *Benefits and risks of complementary alternative therapies*
 - f) *Appropriate crisis management plan*
2. Establish treatment goals and objectives with the child/adolescent and family
3. Obtain and document informed consent and assent for treatment
4. Provide counseling for:
 - a) *Effective behavioral and cognitive strategies*
 - b) *Effective coping and parenting strategies*
 - c) *Effective symptom self-monitoring*
5. Provide evidence-based management of behavioral, mental health, and psychiatric problems through:
 - a) *Psychotherapeutic or behavioral interventions and techniques*
 - b) *Pharmacological therapies*
 - c) *Nonpharmacological therapies*
6. Initiate care while awaiting intensive mental health services
7. Initiate referrals to specialty providers of service e.g. OT, PT
8. Refer complex psychiatric disorders to appropriate provider
9. Consult and collaborate with a multidisciplinary team regarding treatment and management

B. Ongoing Management

1. Provide monitoring for children and adolescents with acute and chronic behavioral mental health and psychiatric illness:
 - a) *To decrease the risk of long term complications related to medications*
 - b) *To support self-monitoring and use of assessment tools*
 - c) *For suicidal and homicidal ideations, self-injurious behavior and/or environmental stressors*
 - d) *Related to family interactions, and social/ academic functioning*
2. Evaluate treatment outcomes related to the following interventions:
 - a) *Pharmacological*
 - b) *Non-pharmacological*
 - c) *Psychotherapeutic or behavioral interventions and techniques*
3. Provide continued collaboration and care coordination
4. Support transition of services from adolescence to adulthood

IV. Professional Issues

3%

A. Maintain confidentiality and privacy according to current policies

B. Maintain current knowledge of health policy and advocate for the child and family in behavioral and mental health care

C. Demonstrate accuracy in documentation and billing for reimbursement of services

Exam Content: Diagnoses

Exam content will include but not be limited to, a focus on the following prioritized list of behavioral and mental health disorders:

Diagnosed	Managed	Co-Managed	Referred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADHD • Elimination Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encopresis ○ Enuresis • Mood Disorders • Disruptive Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aggression/Irritability ○ Oppositional Behavior • Anxiety Disorders • Relational Problems – Parent/Child/Sibling • Depressive Disorder, Mild 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADHD • Elimination Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enuresis ○ Encopresis • Depressive Disorder, Mild • Aggression/Irritability • Oppositional Defiant Disorder • Relational Problems - Parent/Child/Sibling • Generalized Anxiety Disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADHD • Autism Spectrum Disorder • Oppositional Defiant Disorder • Conduct Disorder • Aggression/Irritability • Relational Problems - Parent/Child/Sibling • Generalized Anxiety Disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance-induced Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dependence ○ Withdrawal ○ Intoxication • Sleep-Wake Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Obstructive Sleep Apnea Hypopnea • Major Depressive Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Moderate ○ Severe • Bipolar and Related Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bipolar I Disorder with Psychotic Features • Feeding and Eating Disorders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anorexia Nervosa ○ Bulimia Nervosa ○ Binge-Eating Disorder • Genetic Syndromes • Tic Disorders • Specific Learning Disorder

Exam Content: Pharmacologic and Non-Pharmacologic

Exam content will include, but not be limited to, a focus on the following Pharmacologic and Non-Pharmacologic interventions:

Pharmacologic Agent
Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI)
Non-stimulant ADHD treatment
Stimulants
Anti-anxiety medications
Mood stabilizers
Atypical anti-psychotic medications
Alpha Adrenergic antagonist medications

Non-pharmacologic Management
Collaborative Problem Solving
Motivational Interviewing
Behavioral Interventions
Relaxation Therapy
Solution Focused Therapy
Social Skills Training
Educational Support Services
Parent Management Training
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Family Therapy