

Effective June 30, 2026, the Nova Scotia Nursing and Midwifery Regulator (NSNMR) was formed as a multi-profession regulator, replacing the former Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) and the Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia (MRCNS). NSNMR will regulate licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs), registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs), nurse practitioners (NPs) and registered midwives (RMs) on behalf of the public.

While this document contains current information about this topic, some content references NSCN and previous legislation before June 30, 2026. We appreciate your patience as we continue updating our documents to align with our new name and legislation.

The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs), registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by our registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs, RPNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

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Our practice support tools are developed using current reference material. The source of this material is available upon request.

The Code of Ethics articulates ethical principles, values and standards to guide Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) in Nova Scotia. The Code defines accepted behaviors and establishes a framework for professional responsibility and accountability. The Code promotes high standards of practice and provides a benchmark for psychiatric nurses to use for self-evaluation. The Code of Ethics identifies the obligations of the profession and the obligations of individual psychiatric nurses to society.

1. PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

1. Differentiate between professional and personal relationships.
2. Establish therapeutic relationships.
3. Recognize potential vulnerability of all persons.
4. Practice within their level of competence.
5. Use evidence-based practice.
6. Maintain their continuing competence throughout their professional career.
7. Maintain a personal level of health and mental health.
8. Provide competent, safe and ethical care.
9. Protect the confidentiality of all information obtained as a result of professional relationships.
10. Demonstrate professional practice that reflects honesty, integrity, reliability, impartiality and diligence.
11. Demonstrate professional judgment when accepting and delegating responsibilities.
12. Report incompetent or unethical behaviors of others.
13. Accept responsibility for own practice and minimize harm arising from adverse events.
14. Does not use professional designation for personal gain.
15. Promote the psychiatric nursing profession.
16. Practice according to provincial and federal legislation, the NSCN Standards of Psychiatric Nursing Practice and the NSCN Sexual Misconduct Standard for Registrants.
17. Understand, promote and uphold the ethical values of the profession.

2. UNCONDITIONAL RESPECT

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

1. Promote respect, autonomy, rights, diversity and choice of all people.
2. Demonstrate advocacy.
3. Respect the diversity and unique beliefs of all people
4. Know, apply and uphold the elements of informed consent.

3. HOLISTIC HEALTH

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

1. Respect the rights, needs and values of each person.
2. Recognize that health and mental health are an interconnected and dynamic process.
3. Comprehend that unique lifestyles and expectations influence health and mental health.
4. Endorse collaborative and wholistic approaches to health and mental health from promotion, prevention, intervention, rehabilitation to recovery.
5. Promote research and evidence -based psychiatric nursing practice.
6. Respect and value collaborative and client-centred decision making and care.

4. QUALITY PRACTICE

Registered Psychiatric Nurses:

1. Recognize that community, socio-economic and political system environments influence health and mental health.
2. Contribute to quality practice settings by modeling positive, healthy and ethical conduct.
3. Contribute to and maintain safe practice environments.
4. Advocate for sufficient resources to provide safe and competent psychiatric nursing practice.
5. Advocate for fair and equitable access to benefits and treatment for all people.

NSCN gratefully acknowledges the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Saskatchewan (CRPNS) for permission to use the CRPNS Code of Ethics to develop the NSCN document.