

## Skills for mentally disabled clients

Assessment techniques

- ♦ Emotional
- ♦ Mental
- ♦ Physical

Interviewing techniques

Observation Techniques

Activities of daily living

Recreational activities

Socialization techniques

Therapy techniques

- ♦ Group
- ♦ Psycho
- ♦ Milieu

Developing care plans

Charting, recording, reporting

Crisis intervention techniques

Suicidal client

Behavioral modification techniques

Intervention techniques

Management of assaultive or combative client:

- ♦ Seclusion and restraint techniques
- ♦ Anger reduction

Goal-setting techniques Legal aspects

- ♦ Client rights
- ♦ Confidentiality
- ♦ Commitment procedures

Medication for MD clients

Treatments

Admission procedures

Escorting clients

Discharge procedures

Safety procedures



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# PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIAN



# SCOPE OF PRACTICE

## **Scope of Practice issues in the Psychiatric Technicians Law**

*This law starts with Business  
and Professions Code Section 4500*

**4502.** As used in this chapter, “psychiatric technician” means any person who, for compensation or personal profit, implements procedures and techniques which involve understanding of cause and effect and which are used in the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, or mentally retarded persons and who has one or more of the following:

**(a)** Direct responsibility for administering or implementing specific therapeutic procedures, techniques, treatments, or medications with the aim of enabling recipients or patients to make optimal use of their therapeutic regime, their social and personal resources, and their residential care.

**(b)** Direct responsibility for the application of interpersonal and technical skills in the observation and recognition of symptoms and reactions of recipients or patients, for the accurate recording of such symptoms and reactions, and for the carrying out of treatments and medications as prescribed by a licensed physician and surgeon or a psychiatrist.

As the professional association for Psychiatric Technicians in California, CAPT is often asked for a list of functions that Psychiatric Technicians are allowed to perform under their state license. There is no such list, aside from some basic language in the Psychiatric Technicians Law as described below. Essentially, the scope includes everything that is taught in the Psych Tech education program that must be completed before taking the licensing examination.

The state Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT) is often asked whether a certain procedure is included in the scope of practice. If you have such questions, you may contact the BVNPT's Nursing Education Unit at (916) 263-7843.

From time to time, the BVNPT issues written decisions on scope of practice issues. CAPT publishes them in our *Outreach* magazine and includes them on our website: [www.psychtechs.net](http://www.psychtechs.net).

The psychiatric technician in the performance of such procedures and techniques is responsible to the director of the service in which his duties are performed. The director may be a licensed physician and surgeon, psychiatrist, psychologist, rehabilitation therapist, social worker, registered nurse, or other professional personnel.

Nothing herein shall authorize a licensed psychiatric technician to practice medicine or surgery or to undertake the prevention, treatment or cure of disease, pain, injury, deformity, or mental or physical condition in violation of the law.

**4502.1.** A psychiatric technician, working in a mental health facility or developmental disability facility, when prescribed by a physician and surgeon, may administer medications by hypodermic injection.

**4502.2.** A psychiatric technician, when prescribed by a physician and surgeon, may withdraw blood from a patient with a mental illness or developmental disability if the psychiatric technician has received certification from the board that the psychiatric technician has completed a prescribed course of instruction approved by the board or has demonstrated competence to the satisfaction of the board.

**4502.3.** (a) A psychiatric technician, when prescribed by a physician and surgeon, may perform the following activities on a patient with a mental illness or developmental disability:

(1) Tuberculin, coccidioidin, and histoplasmin skin tests, providing the administration is within the course of a tuberculosis control program.

(2) Immunization techniques, providing the administration is upon the standing orders of a supervising physician and surgeon or pursuant to written guidelines adopted by a

hospital or medical group with whom the supervising physician and surgeon is associated.

(b) In performing activities pursuant to subdivision (a), the psychiatric technician shall satisfactorily demonstrate competence in all of the following:

(1) Administering the testing or immunization agents, including knowledge of all indications and contraindications for the administration of the agents.

(2) Recognizing any emergency reactions to the agent that constitute a danger to the health or life of the patient.

(3) Treating those emergency reactions by using procedures, medication, and equipment within the scope of practice of the psychiatric technician.

#### Psychiatric Technicians education

The state requires that a graduate from a Psych Tech program must have completed at least 1,530 hours of instruction in both classroom and clinical settings.

#### Minimum number of hours for Psychiatric Technician education (Business & Professions Code Section 2586)

Subject Area	Classroom Theory	Supervised Clinical	Total Hours
Pharmacology	54	0	54
Nursing Science	126	270	396
Mental Disorders	108	270	378
Developmental Disabilities	108	270	378
Additional Courses	180	144	324

To expand on those general requirements, the BVNPT has adopted regulations further defining the Psych Tech curriculum. These are in Section 2587, Title 16, California Code of Regulations.

all Psych Tech programs, but are "desirable" for teaching to Psych Tech students. The interpretation is that if a Psych Tech has training in these procedures, it is within that Psych Tech's scope of practice:

Colostomy dressings

Communicable diseases

Eye and ear irrigations

Gastrostomy feeding

Insertion of nasogastric tube

Isolation and reverse isolation (Standard Precautions & Universal Precautions)

Lavage

Orthopedic tractions

Preparation for diagnostic tests

Steam inhalations

Stoma care

Tidal drainage

T-tube care

Taking and recording verbal orders

Tracheostomy care

Removal of fecal impactions

Vaginal irrigations

#### Behavioral science skills to be taught

##### Communications skills common to all areas

- ◆ Verbal
- ◆ Non-verbal
- ◆ Role-playing
- ◆ Problem-solving
- ◆ Speech therapy - language development

#### Skills for developmentally disabled clients

Self-care techniques

- ◆ Motor
- ◆ Eating
- ◆ Toileting
- ◆ Dressing / Grooming

Activities of daily living  
Assessment techniques

- ◆ Emotional
- ◆ Physical
- ◆ Mental

Observation techniques  
Behavior modification

- ◆ Positive reinforcement
- ◆ Reward techniques
- ◆ Intervention techniques
- ◆ Contracting
- ◆ Establishing baseline data
- ◆ Sequencing techniques

Group therapy techniques

- ◆ Supportive
- ◆ Corrective
- ◆ Confrontation

Play Therapy techniques  
Socialization techniques  
Normalization techniques  
Sensory motor training techniques  
Speech development techniques  
Charting, recording, reporting  
Developing care plans

- ◆ Legal aspects
- ◆ Client rights
- ◆ Commitment procedures
- ◆ Confidentiality

Management of assaultive and combative behavior (MAB)

- ◆ Seclusion and restraint techniques

Sheltered workshops  
Medications for DD clients  
Treatments  
Admission procedures  
Discharge procedures  
Safety procedures

Charting	Observation of significant changes in body systems
Colostomy irrigation	Oral medication
Crutch walking	Oxygen administration
Decubitus care	Pain assessment
Dosage computation, including pediatric	Parenteral medication
Ear, eye and nose drops	Positioning and draping
Emergency first aid	Positive pressure equipment
Enemas	Post-operative care
Finger sticks for blood glucose monitoring	Pre-operative care
Gavage	Providing comfort, safety, privacy
Gloving	Range of motion
Hair care	Restraints
Hand washing	Shaving male patient
Intake and output	Sitz bath
Irrigation of indwelling catheter	Skin care
Measures to stimulate voiding	Skin testing and immunization
Meeting elimination needs	Specimen collection: feces, sputum, urine, urine for diabetic testing
Meeting spiritual needs	Suppositories
Mouth care, including dentures	Telephone manners
Nail care	Topical application of medication
Nasogastric tube feeding	Turn, cough, deep breathe
Neurological check	Vital signs
Non-verbal and verbal communications	Wound dressings
Nutritional needs	
Observation of response to treatment and medications	Following are procedures that the BVNPT said "may not be available" in

This regulation specifies that the curriculum "shall develop the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to care for patients of all ages in current health care settings." It requires the content of the curriculum to include the following:

1. Pharmacology, including knowledge of commonly used drugs and their action, computation of dosages, preparation of medications and principles of administration.
2. Nursing science, which shall include nursing fundamentals and basic medical/surgical nursing.
3. Classifications, treatment programs and interventions for developmental disabilities.
4. Classifications, treatment programs and interventions for mental disorders.
5. Anatomy and physiology.
6. Nutrition.
7. Normal growth and development.
8. Psychology.
9. The nursing process.
10. Communication.
11. Gerontological nursing.
12. Patient education
13. Leadership.
14. Supervision.
15. Treatment programs for addictive behaviors and eating disorders.

Although the scope of practice is whatever a Psych Tech has been taught

in the Psych Tech program, it also includes any procedure that's related to basic functions, such as a new procedure or use of new equipment. This is within the scope if the person has appropriate in-service training.

The BVNPT once developed a "skills list" that specified all the skills that Psych Tech students should be taught. But in the early 1990s, the BVNPT dropped the use of that list for its evaluation of a program's curriculum content. However, CAPT believes that the skills list can still be of use as a general reference point, since most of the skills are still taught in the Psych Tech programs. For that reason, we offer the following list. Please note that, since the list was developed, the education curriculum and scope of practice has been modified in some areas:

**Nursing science skills to be taught**

- Admission and discharge of patient
- Ambulation
- Application of heat and cold
- Assisting with medical examination
- Bathing
- Bladder instillation
- Bladder irrigation
- Body alignment
- Body mechanics
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- Care planning
- Cast care
- Catheterization

# PSYCH TECHS IN ACTION



Psychiatric Technicians in the  
Department of Developmental Services  
Department of Mental Health  
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation



To uphold the integrity and human dignity of those entrusted in my care, and protect them against humiliation, insult or injury without regard to race, color or creed;

To inspire hope and confidence and give assistance, with understanding and friendliness, in finding realistic and meaningful living;

To continue my development of professional competence by complementing scientific study, improving therapeutic techniques, and maintaining high standards of leadership in the field of Psychiatric Technology.

-- The Psychiatric Technician Pledge