

Common Terms in the Hospital



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Advanced Practice Nurse: This is a type of nurse that can figure out what kind of illness a person has. They can prescribe medication.

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA): They help with basic care, such as eating, dressing, and showering. They can also help the patient when they need to leave for walks, tests, or therapy. They work under the direction of doctors and nurses. Sometimes on a psychiatric unit they are called **psychiatric aides**.

Chaplain: A person who helps with the spiritual or emotional needs of a patient. They are not medical professionals. Often, they are church ministers. Patients do not have to see the chaplain if they don't want to.

Dietician: They figure out what kind of food a person should be eating. They track how well a person is doing with their special diet.

Health Unit Coordinator/Unit Secretary/Unit Health Care Worker: They work at the main desk of the psychiatric unit. They give patients and families information. This is often the person who answers the phone.

Occupational Therapist/Recreational Therapist: This person does tests to see how well a person can live on their own. For children, they see if they need more help than most children their age. They look at a person's social skills and how well they take care of themselves. They also look at work or school skills, how they think, and any special needs a person has.

Patient Advocate: This person listens to the patient and family if they're having a problem with the hospital. They help the patient and family get what they need. They help a patient get the best care possible.

Physician Assistant: They work with doctors and can prescribe medication.

Psychiatrist: A medical doctor that works on the brain and the mind. They can prescribe medications. When someone is in the hospital for a mental health problem, they will have an **attending physician** or **attending psychiatrist** who sees them every day and makes decisions about their care.

Psychologist: This person **cannot** prescribe medication. They give therapy. They help the patient find ways to deal with their feelings. They might do a **psychological evaluation** by asking the patient questions about their thoughts and feelings. They then help the patient better understand their emotions, behavior, and personality.

Registered Nurse (RN): They can't prescribe medication. However, they can give medication. They watch how a patient is doing and help with their care. They help support the patient and help the patient feel better. The **charge nurse** is the RN on the unit who is in charge of the other nurses during that shift.

Social Worker: This person helps with planning for resources and services after a patient leaves the hospital. They provide support to patients and families during the hospitalization.

Therapist: Therapists help people talk about their problems and learn new ways of thinking. They can be a Psychologist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, or a Marriage and Family Therapist. People often do both group and individual therapy in the hospital.