

# REGISTERED PSYCHIATRIC NURSES OF CANADA EXAMINATION (RPNCE) PRACTICE TEST (SAMPLE)

STUDY GUIDE



## SAMPLE STUDY GUIDE WITH LIMITED QUESTIONS

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# Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

# How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

## 1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

## 2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

## 3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

## 4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

## 5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

## 6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

## Questions

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- 1. What is a significant risk for a malnourished child, such as one diagnosed with severe malnutrition?**
  - A. Refeeding syndrome
  - B. Bulimia
  - C. Developmental delay
  - D. Stunted growth
  
- 2. What emotional response might a registered psychiatric nurse experience while providing care to a patient with a history of suicide attempts?**
  - A. Moral distress
  - B. Moral uncertainty
  - C. Moral dissonance
  - D. Moral fatigue
  
- 3. What is the most likely diagnosis for Ms. Kozac, who reports a migraine, vertigo, nausea, and slurred speech?**
  - A. Alcohol intoxication
  - B. Cerebrovascular accident
  - C. Transient ischemic attack
  - D. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome
  
- 4. Which of the following is NOT a stage of the recovery model in mental health?**
  - A. Hope
  - B. Maintenance
  - C. Employment
  - D. Education
  
- 5. What is a practical approach an RPN should take when engaging a non-communicative patient?**
  - A. Use open-ended questions
  - B. Provide multiple choices
  - C. Encourage writing responses
  - D. Maintain silence



- 6. What does the term "diagnostic overshadowing" mean?**
- A. When a patient excels in their treatment
  - B. When a patient's mental illness is overlooked
  - C. When patients refuse to divulge information
  - D. When there is a clear diagnosis
- 7. How can psychiatric nurses utilize clear boundaries?**
- A. To confuse the patient about treatment goals
  - B. To establish a consistent and safe care environment
  - C. To push their own agenda
  - D. To create an imaginary relationship with the patient
- 8. What is the purpose of setting measurable outcomes in psychiatric care plans?**
- A. To limit the responsibilities of the nursing team
  - B. To evaluate patient progress and effectiveness of interventions
  - C. To maintain paperwork for insurance purposes
  - D. To ensure all patients receive the same treatment
- 9. What emotional response is crucial for the RPN to validate during the conversation with Mrs. Peterson?**
- A. Fear of isolation
  - B. Sadness over loss
  - C. Anger towards the deceased
  - D. Guilt for being happy
- 10. What is the purpose of a mental status examination?**
- A. To diagnose physical illnesses
  - B. To evaluate cognitive function and emotional state of a patient
  - C. To prescribe medications based on appearance
  - D. To measure a patient's physical health only



## **Answers**

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1. A
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. B
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. B

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What is a significant risk for a malnourished child, such as one diagnosed with severe malnutrition?**

- A. Refeeding syndrome**
- B. Bulimia
- C. Developmental delay
- D. Stunted growth

*Refeeding syndrome is a significant risk for a malnourished child, particularly one diagnosed with severe malnutrition. This syndrome can occur when feeding is restarted in individuals who have been severely malnourished. During periods of malnutrition, the body adapts by reducing the metabolism of carbohydrates and shifting to fat and protein stores for energy. When feeding resumes, particularly with carbohydrates, there is an increase in insulin secretion, which can lead to rapid shifts of electrolytes such as phosphate, potassium, and magnesium from the extracellular space into the cells. These shifts can result in serious complications, including cardiac issues, respiratory failure, and neurological problems. Therefore, careful management and gradual reintroduction of nutrition are critical in these cases to prevent refeeding syndrome and its associated risks. While bulimia, developmental delay, and stunted growth are important considerations in malnourished children, they do not specifically represent the immediate and acute risks posed by the process of refeeding after a period of malnutrition. Hence, refeeding syndrome stands out as the most critical concern in the context of managing a child recovering from severe malnutrition.*

**2. What emotional response might a registered psychiatric nurse experience while providing care to a patient with a history of suicide attempts?**

- A. Moral distress**
- B. Moral uncertainty
- C. Moral dissonance
- D. Moral fatigue

*The emotional response a registered psychiatric nurse might experience while providing care to a patient with a history of suicide attempts is often moral distress. This feeling arises when healthcare professionals are faced with situations where they believe they cannot act in accordance with their ethical beliefs due to various constraints, such as institutional policies or lack of resources. In the context of providing care to such vulnerable patients, a nurse may feel a conflict between the desire to ensure the patient's safety and well-being and the limitations placed on them by their work environment or external factors. Moral distress can lead to feelings of frustration, helplessness, and anxiety, especially when the nurse knows that the best course of action might not be possible. For instance, if a patient is reluctant to accept treatment or if there are insufficient resources to provide the level of care needed, the nurse may struggle with feelings of inadequacy and sadness over their inability to fully protect the patient. Understanding moral distress is crucial for mental health professionals, as it can impact their well-being and the quality of care they provide. Consequently, finding ways to address or mitigate moral distress is an important part of supporting healthcare providers in their practice.*

**3. What is the most likely diagnosis for Ms. Kozac, who reports a migraine, vertigo, nausea, and slurred speech?**

- A. Alcohol intoxication
- B. Cerebrovascular accident**
- C. Transient ischemic attack
- D. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome

*The symptoms of migraine, vertigo, nausea, and slurred speech collectively point towards a significant neurological event, such as a cerebrovascular accident (CVA), commonly known as a stroke. In this case, the presence of slurred speech is particularly alarming as it may indicate an impairment in the ability to articulate words, which can be a direct result of disruption in blood flow to the regions of the brain that control speech. Migraine can sometimes mimic stroke symptoms, especially if accompanied by neurological signs like vertigo and slurred speech. However, when these symptoms are acute and present concurrently, they heighten the suspicion for a CVA. Nausea can also occur in strokes due to increased intracranial pressure or other brain-related causes. Thus, the combination of these symptoms makes a cerebrovascular accident the most likely diagnosis for Ms. Kozac. While other conditions could explain aspects of her presentation, such as transient ischemic attack or neuroleptic malignant syndrome, these would not account for the full spectrum of Ms. Kozac's symptoms with the same urgency and severity. Alcohol intoxication might lead to slurred speech and nausea but would not typically involve vertigo or migraines as part of its symptomatology. Therefore, the constellation of*

**4. Which of the following is NOT a stage of the recovery model in mental health?**

- A. Hope
- B. Maintenance
- C. Employment**
- D. Education

*The recovery model in mental health is centered around the individual's journey towards improved well-being and quality of life. It typically involves several key stages that emphasize personal growth, empowerment, and the importance of supportive relationships. Hope is a fundamental element of the recovery model, serving as a vital catalyst for change and encouraging individuals to envision a better future. Similarly, maintenance is acknowledged as a phase where individuals work on sustaining the progress they've made in their recovery. Education also plays a critical role, as gaining knowledge about mental health can empower individuals to manage their symptoms and navigate challenges effectively. Employment, while an important aspect of overall well-being and societal engagement, is not formally recognized as a defined stage within the recovery model itself. Instead, it may be a goal or outcome associated with recovery, reflecting the importance of social integration and financial independence. Thus, the inclusion of employment does not align with the established stages that are primarily focused on internal processes and individual experiences.*

**5. What is a practical approach an RPN should take when engaging a non-communicative patient?**

- A. Use open-ended questions
- B. Provide multiple choices**
- C. Encourage writing responses
- D. Maintain silence

*Providing multiple choices is a practical approach when engaging a non-communicative patient because it offers a structured way for the patient to express themselves without the pressure of having to come up with an answer spontaneously. Many patients may feel overwhelmed when faced with open-ended questions or may struggle to articulate thoughts and feelings verbally. By offering specific options, the RPN can facilitate communication, encouraging the patient to select a response that resonates with them. This method can help build trust and break down barriers, making it easier for the patient to engage in the conversation. In contrast, open-ended questions may lead to frustration if the patient struggles to articulate their thoughts. Encouraging writing responses can be effective, but not all patients have the ability or desire to write, and maintaining silence, while sometimes valuable in therapeutic settings, does not actively promote engagement and may lead to further withdrawal. Thus, providing multiple choices strikes a balance between facilitating communication and respecting the patient's current communicative capacity.*

**6. What does the term "diagnostic overshadowing" mean?**

- A. When a patient excels in their treatment
- B. When a patient's mental illness is overlooked**
- C. When patients refuse to divulge information
- D. When there is a clear diagnosis

*The term "diagnostic overshadowing" refers to the phenomenon where a person's mental health condition obscures or overshadows the recognition and understanding of their physical health concerns. In practice, this often means that healthcare providers may attribute all of a patient's symptoms or complaints to their diagnosed mental illness, leading to under-diagnosis or misdiagnosis of other medical conditions. For instance, if a patient with a known mental health disorder presents physical symptoms, healthcare providers may rush to interpret those symptoms as related to the mental health issue rather than conducting a thorough investigation to rule out other possible conditions. This can result in inadequate treatment and care for physical ailments, as the mental illness takes precedence in the provider's focus. Recognizing and understanding diagnostic overshadowing is crucial for providing holistic care to patients, ensuring that both mental and physical health needs are addressed appropriately.*

## 7. How can psychiatric nurses utilize clear boundaries?

- A. To confuse the patient about treatment goals
- B. To establish a consistent and safe care environment**
- C. To push their own agenda
- D. To create an imaginary relationship with the patient

*Utilizing clear boundaries is essential for psychiatric nurses as it plays a crucial role in establishing a consistent and safe care environment. Boundaries help define the professional relationship between the nurse and the patient, ensuring that both parties understand their roles and responsibilities. This clarity fosters trust, promotes patient dignity, and reinforces the therapeutic alliance. When boundaries are well-defined, psychiatric nurses can facilitate effective communication and provide a sense of safety for patients, who may often feel vulnerable and confused due to their mental health conditions. A structured environment allows patients to engage in the therapeutic process more openly and helps prevent misunderstandings that could arise from ambiguous interactions. In contrast, when boundaries are unclear or improperly managed, it can lead to confusion around treatment goals, misinterpretations of the relationship, and may even impede the patient's progress. Thus, the establishment of clear boundaries is fundamental in providing effective and ethical psychiatric care.*

## 8. What is the purpose of setting measurable outcomes in psychiatric care plans?

- A. To limit the responsibilities of the nursing team
- B. To evaluate patient progress and effectiveness of interventions**
- C. To maintain paperwork for insurance purposes
- D. To ensure all patients receive the same treatment

*Setting measurable outcomes in psychiatric care plans serves the crucial function of evaluating patient progress and the effectiveness of interventions. Measurable outcomes provide clear, specific criteria that healthcare professionals can utilize to monitor changes in a patient's mental health status over time. By defining these outcomes, practitioners can objectively assess whether treatment strategies are working and make adjustments as necessary based on the patient's individual responses. This process of evaluation is essential not only for understanding the patient's progress but also for informing future treatment decisions, ensuring that the care provided is personalized and responsive to the patient's needs. Effective measurement can lead to better patient outcomes and facilitate communication among the healthcare team regarding the patient's condition and treatment effectiveness.*



**9. What emotional response is crucial for the RPN to validate during the conversation with Mrs. Peterson?**

- A. Fear of isolation
- B. Sadness over loss**
- C. Anger towards the deceased
- D. Guilt for being happy

*Validating sadness over loss is crucial during conversations with individuals experiencing grief, such as Mrs. Peterson. This emotional response reflects the profound sense of sadness that often accompanies the death of a loved one. Recognizing and validating this feeling can provide Mrs. Peterson with the necessary support and understanding during a difficult time, helping her process her emotions more fully. Sadness is a natural reaction to loss and inviting the individual to express and explore this feeling acknowledges the depth of their experience. It offers a space where they feel heard and understood, reinforcing the therapeutic relationship. By validating sadness, the RPN can help Mrs. Peterson navigate through her grief in a constructive way, facilitating coping mechanisms and emotional healing. The other emotional responses mentioned, while significant in their own right, may not be as central to validating the immediate grief experience presented in this context.*

**10. What is the purpose of a mental status examination?**

- A. To diagnose physical illnesses
- B. To evaluate cognitive function and emotional state of a patient**
- C. To prescribe medications based on appearance
- D. To measure a patient's physical health only

*The purpose of a mental status examination (MSE) is to evaluate the cognitive function and emotional state of a patient. This examination provides healthcare professionals with a structured way to assess various aspects of a person's mental functioning, including their appearance, behavior, mood, thought processes, cognitive abilities, perception, insight, and judgment. Through the use of an MSE, professionals can gather crucial information that helps in identifying mental health disorders, understanding the severity of a condition, and determining appropriate interventions or treatment plans. The focus on cognitive and emotional assessment is essential because mental health conditions can manifest through changes in thought processes and emotional regulation. This understanding of a patient's mental state is vital for creating effective support strategies and tailoring interventions to improve their overall mental health and well-being.*

## Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at [hello@examzify.com](mailto:hello@examzify.com).

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://rpnce.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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