Core competencies for non-specialized prescribers and specialized providers to help ensure the effective delivery of services for depression, psychosis, epilepsy and alcohol use disorders

Source: S[*trengthening human resources through development of candidate core competencies for mental, neurological, and substance use disorders in sub-Saharan Africa: workshop summary*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press (US); 2013.](https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18348/strengthening-human-resources-through-development-of-candidate-core-competencies-for-mental-neurological-and-substance-use-disorders-in-sub-saharan-africa)

**Screening/Identification**

* Demonstrates awareness of common signs and symptoms
* Recognizes the potential for risk to self and others
* Demonstrates basic knowledge of causes
* Provides the patient and community with awareness and/or education
* Demonstrates cultural competence
* Demonstrates knowledge of other mental, neurological, and substance use disorders
* Demonstrates the ability to screen for and use screening tools
* Demonstrates knowledge and skills in taking patient history
* Demonstrates the ability to conduct a mental status exam
* Recognises patients who are relapsing and require inpatient care

**Formal diagnosis/Referral**

* Demonstrates knowledge of when to refer to next level of care/other provider/Specialist
* Demonstrates knowledge of providers for specialized care within the community
* Demonstrates skills in assessment of relative levels of social, cognitive, and physical functioning
* Demonstrates knowledge of required information for effective referral
* Demonstrates skills in using various functional assessment tools
* Demonstrates an understanding of and ability to apply contextually appropriate diagnostic systems (e.g. DSM, ICD)
* Demonstrates knowledge and skills to make a formal diagnosis and formulation of differential diagnosis
* Demonstrates ability to determine severity level
* Demonstrates ability to make a diagnosis according to an algorithm (not considered a clinical diagnosis)

**Treatment/Care**

* Provides support for patients and families while in treatment and care
* Identifies and assists patients and families in overcoming barriers to successful treatment and recovery (e.g. adherence, stigma, finances, accessibility, access to social support)
* Demonstrates ability to monitor mental status
* Demonstrates knowledge of how to offer emergency first aid
* Initiates and/or participates in community-based treatment, care, and/or prevention programs
* Demonstrates knowledge of treatment and care resources in the community
* Promotes mental health literacy (e.g. to minimize impact of stigma and discrimination)
* Communicates to the public about MNS disorders
* Monitors for adherence to and/or side effects of medication
* Practices good therapeutic patient interactions (e.g. communication, relationship, attitude)
* Provides links between patients and community resources
* Identifies available resources to support patients (e.g. rehabilitation, medication supplies)
* Promotes activities that aim to raise awareness and improve the uptake of interventions and the use of services
* Protects patients and identifies vulnerabilities (e.g. human rights)
* Demonstrates respect, compassion, and responsiveness to patient needs
* Demonstrates knowledge and skills to use information technology to improve treatment and care
* Demonstrates ability in general counselling skills
* Demonstrates ability to select appropriate treatment based on an understanding of diagnosis
* Provides brief advice on symptom management
* Demonstrates knowledge of and ability to apply relevant legislation and policies and access to appropriate services
* Reports information to relevant health management systems
* Assists patients with access to other providers and helps coordinate efforts
* Documents medical records
* Demonstrates knowledge and skills to consult with other providers in the treatment/care team
* Demonstrates knowledge and skills to provide proactive follow-up and monitors outcomes of care
* Demonstrates knowledge of standard drug regimens
* Provides mentoring and support to other health care providers