Standards of Practice

[Name]

[Institution]

Author Note

**Week 6 | Part 6: Finalizing the Plan**

I have considered various options for my nursing specialty, including taking a close look at my selected (or currently preferred) specialty and second-preferred specialty. I have also developed a justification for my selected (or preferred) specialty. Lastly, I have examined one professional organization related to my selected or preferred specialty and considered how I can become a member of this organization.

The results of my efforts are below.

*Directions: Complete Step 1 by writing 2-3 paragraphs in the space below comparing the nursing specialty you have selected – or the one you prefer if your choice is still under consideration - to your second preference. Identify each specialty and describe the focus and the role that graduates are prepared for. Identify any other differentiators you feel are significant, especially those that helped or may help you reach a decision.*

*Complete Step 2 by writing a paragraph identifying and justifying your reasons for choosing your MSN specialization. Be sure to incorporate any feedback you received from colleagues in this week’s Discussion Forum.*

*Complete Step 3 by examining and identifying one professional organization related to your selected or preferred specialty. Explain how you can become a member of this organization.*

**Step 1: Comparison of Nursing Specialties**

*Use the space below to write 2-3 paragraphs comparing the nursing specialty you have selected – or the one you prefer if your choice is still under consideration - to your second preference. Identify each specialty and describe the focus and the role that graduates are prepared for. Identify any other differentiators you feel are significant, especially those that helped or may help you reach a decision.*

Ever since I started my training as a nursing practitioner, there are two specialties that I have been toying with. The first among them is to train as an Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (AGNP). It is an advanced practice nursing program that focuses on clinically treating patients from an adolescent, to adulthood, right into advanced age. This sort of nurse needs to obtain further specialized education following the certification as a registered nurse. While this is a demanding job, I know I am cut for the job and can handle the responsibilities with ease. It is also accompanied with more independence as a practitioner, and also gives people the opportunity to work outside of physician’s supervision in private practice. While the fact that it pays more than most jobs, the reason I am attracted to this field that it allows a nurse to work across a broad patient population. It is filled with opportunities and additional training it offers will simply enhance this specialization even further (Blackwell & Neff, 2015). These include further specialization in the form of health policy, Diabetes, HIV/AIDS and palliative care.

An AGNP working in acute care is primarily focused on the treatment of illnesses. Thus, most AGNPs working in a hospital setting usually deal with acutely ill patients. This includes working in an ICU i.e. the intensive care unit or the emergency department. Their job also extends towards specialty clinics and labs (Budd, Wolf, & Haas, 2015). On the basis of the AGNP competencies, the primary role of an AGNP is to stabilize the patient, keep complications at bay and do everything necessary to restore the patient to maximum health. The various specific tasks that are usually associated with these goals include diagnosis, monitoring, prescription of the right medication as well as a referral to a specialist if necessary(Budd et al., 2015).

On the other hand, my second priority, in terms of specialties that I believe I will choose to specialize in, in the future is a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP). This type of nursing practitioner is tasked with a diagnosis of symptoms related to mental health and development of a viable treatment plan that is specific to that patient. Furthermore, PMHNPs can also prescribe medication, much like a psychiatrist. They can also evaluate the patient’s condition as well as assess the quality of improvement being rendered (Chapman, Phoenix, Hahn, & Strod, 2018).

In terms of employment, only 3.2% of NPs i.e. nurse practitioners choose to work in the field of mental health and psychiatry. Moreover, 48.9%, choose to work in family care and another 18.9% pursue adult care (Phoenix, Hurd, & Chapman, 2016). This occupation is also regarded as one of the highest-paying jobs in the field of nursing. Nurses that specialize in this field are usually the ones that are willing to work with patients for the span of their lifetime (Chapman et al., 2018). This certification was formerly known as the Family Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, with nurses also having the opportunity to be regarded as an Adult Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner while working with patients age 13 and above. However, both these field come under the common umbrella of the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) at present.

**Step 2: Justification of Nursing Specialty**

*Use the space below to write a paragraph identifying and justifying your reasons for choosing your MSN specialization. Be sure to incorporate any feedback you received from colleagues in this week’s Discussion Forum.*

 My primary choice to specialize in the field of Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (AGNP) stems from the fact that it is capable of providing me with a range of skills I might not be able to adopt otherwise. As opposed to an acute care nurse practitioner, the main focus of an AGNP is on the practice of primary care which deals with prevention of illness along with the promotion of health (Kennedy-Malone, Martin-Plank, & Duffy, 2018). AGNPs serve as an integral part of the community and are more than capable of working in both community clinics as well as private practices. They aid underserved populations, however, their focus usually remains on nurse practitioner baseline and providing patient-centered quality care. The care they provide is aimed to improve lifelong outcomes of the population they work with (Budd et al., 2015). They also take care of rather critical tasks which require taking detailed histories and making health assessments, promoting healthy lifestyle changes among the masses and aid patients in managing chronic diseases like diabetes. I happen to be detail-oriented and have a passion for making sure that I provide the very best care for all those involved.

 Above all, nurse practitioners, primarily AGNPs, should be compassionate at their core. They need to be willing to work in close quarters with the patients and come up with the best care possible for them. I believe I have the empathy and the patient necessary to take care of patients in a way that is unique to them. No matter what clinical settings these patients may be subjected to, AGNPs need to be ready to take on all kinds of tasks. They need to work through challenging scenarios in a patient manner, with due diligence and without suffering through burnout. While this is a hard job, I believe that it is just as necessary and given the important nature of the job, I believe I can handle the task with relative ease (Kennedy-Malone et al., 2018). AGNPs also need to be emotionally stable, since they are working with patients for the entirety of their life-spans. It is a trying professional, but at the same time it is incredibly rewarding and they should have the ability to whether any and all kinds of storms (Miller, 2019).

AGNPs also need to pay attention to details. This is another reason why I believe that I am perfect for this job, because this job requires me to be diligent enough not to make a single mistake, and my perfectionist nature will certainly ensure that. Strong communication, in a clear tenor with precise use of words, is also essential to effectively communicate with patients. Another thing that makes me perfect for the job is my organizational skills. I can be incredibly organized when I want to be and hence have the capability to be incredibly helpful in my role as AGNP (Evans et al., 2018).

My secondary choice is rather straight forward in this regard. In this role, you can help families, groups, and individuals with various mental issues, and help put them on the road to recovery. This job is intrinsically involved in assessing, diagnosing, and treating individuals with psychiatric disorders. This also includes screening high-risk patients for the potential of psychiatric disorders in the future (Phoenix et al., 2016). Since

As the American Psychiatric Nurses Association notes, an advanced practice psychiatric mental health nurse may prescribe medications and perform psychotherapy, contribute to policy development, and assist in healthcare reform. He or she may own practice or work within communities, hospitals or corporations. Some psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners may function as consultants or liaisons to patients and families with complex issues and concerns.

Psychiatric medicine is always growing and advancing. The reason behind this unprecedented growth can be attributed to the recent rise in mental health awareness in the country. Couple it with access to new forms of treatments and access to new medicine along with advanced screening process, and the entire process has simply become a whole lot more accessible. However, when compared to other sectors of healthcare, mental health still lags far behind. Within the niche of psychiatry alone, nurses have the option to choose from a number of other specializations, which enables them to focus on one thing at a time. Working as a PMHNP requires you to be detail-oriented and pay specific attention to patient care. Thus, there is a good chance that I may have to pore over patient history and story over and over again, but it is definitely worth it (Manning, 2018).

**Step 3: Professional Organizations**

*Use the space below to identify and examine one professional organization related to your selected or preferred specialty. Explain how you can become a member of this organization.*

 Since I already hold a bachelor’s degree in nursing, in order to pursue my primary goal of working as an Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner (AGNP), I would preferably apply in the MSN program. There are a number of programs in the US that I can join to specialize as an AGNP, however, most institutes prefers to break the field down into acute care and primary care. This gives students ample opportunities to pursue what they would like to. Upon completion of the accredited program, nurses can go ahead and get approved through a simple board certification to work as an AGNPs. In the US alone, there are a number of different credentials available to pursue this field, but I think I would prefer to go through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). It happens to offer AGPCNP-BC board certification for AGNP, along with an AGACNP-BC for the acute care specialty. It requires me to get basic education as AGNP and then I have to pass an exam. This is followed by a continuation of education requirements, which allows us to maintain certification. This is just the first step, following this I would go-ahead to get more than one professional certification according to my field and professional needs.

On the other hand, there are a number of options available to become a mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNP). However, since I already have a bachelor’s degree in nursing. I would prefer to go through the psychiatric mental health nursing practitioner care available through Ohio State University, in Columbus. It allows students to attend both the core courses as well as the specialty courses in the field to complete this degree. It would also require me to complete 16 clinical hours per week in the last 2 semesters of study. This program is affiliated to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), thus it fulfills the requirement for advance placement programs necessary.

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