

Metacompetences for physician associates in mental health

Style of interaction

An ability to balance being 'oneself' in interactions with offering clinical expertise and holding professional boundaries

Adapting practice to the needs of the individual patient

An ability to adapt practice to the needs and presentation of the individual patient so as to maximise their active involvement in the process of assessment, planning and intervention

An ability to creatively and flexibly adapt the assessment and intervention to the patient's needs, capacities and abilities

An ability to adapt communication and interventions (e.g. to any neurodevelopmental issues or sensory difficulties)

Equality/diversity

An ability to integrate equality and diversity issues into clinical practice, such that different perspectives, practices and life styles are addressed respectfully and non-judgmentally

An ability for PAs to maintain an awareness of their own cultural values and assumptions, and to reflect on the ways that these impact (positively and negatively) on people with whom they are working

Where people discuss practices at variance with the norms and values of the practitioner, an ability to judge when this difference should be respected and when it represents a concern that should be responded to

Where there is evidence that social and cultural difference is likely to impact on the accessibility/acceptability of an intervention, an ability to make appropriate adjustments to the intervention and/or the manner in which it is delivered, with the aim of maximising its potential benefit

Capacity to implement interventions in a flexible but coherent manner

An ability to implement an intervention in a manner which is flexible and responsive to any issues patients raise, but which also ensures that the pertinent components of an intervention are included

An ability to judge when and how to balance adherence to a 'protocol' against the need to attend to any issues which arise in the therapeutic relationship

Capacity to adapt interventions in response to feedback

An ability to accommodate issues that patients raise explicitly or implicitly, or which become apparent as part of the process of the intervention:

an ability to respond to *explicit* feedback which expresses concerns about important aspects of the intervention

an ability to detect and respond to *implicit* feedback which indicate concerns about important aspects of the intervention (e.g. as indicated by non-verbal behaviour, verbal comments or significant shifts in responsiveness/ engagement)

an ability to identify when it seems difficult for patients to give feedback which is "authentic" (i.e. responding in accordance with what they think the PA wishes to hear, rather than expressing their own view) and discussing this with them

Team working

An ability to recognise the value of the opinions and perspectives of colleagues and to integrate different perspectives into the overall approach

When sharing information with team members, an ability to judge what information needs to be shared, and with whom, titrating the level of confidentiality against the need for colleagues to have sufficient information if they are to act in the interests of the patient

When undertaking work with other agencies, an ability to make a judgment about the potential impact of factors such as differences in statutory responsibilities and the operation of service constraints, and to take these into account when planning a shared intervention,

An ability to judge when there is evidence that the actions of a colleague (or colleagues) fall below appropriate professional standards or place users at risk of harm, and to draw on knowledge of relevant organisational procedures to identify the most appropriate way to alert others to these issues

Legal and ethical issues

An ability to interpret legal and ethical frameworks in relation to the individual case

Assessing risk

An ability to draw on knowledge of the difficulty of predicting risk in an individual person and so be able to:

synthesise information from multiple sources of information about the patient

integrate information from questionnaire-based sources with information from discussion-based assessment

Working with the evidence base

An ability to make informed use of the current evidence base to guide decision- making about the interventions that are indicated

Where a patient presents with multiple problems and conditions, an ability to adapt treatment plans so that they can be applied to the individual case

An ability to plan interventions in a manner consistent with the available evidence-base, but to judge when and how to move beyond this where there are indications that this is indicated, for example:

where the patient is finding it difficult to engage with the evidence-based approach

where there is evidence of a lack of progress with a competently-delivered evidence-based intervention

Safe practice, supervision and support

An ability for PAs to recognise the limits of their competence, and to judge when they should seek advice and/or supervision from more experienced colleagues

An ability to be aware of the inevitable personal feelings and responses elicited by challenging behaviours (such as hostility or aggression) and to judge when additional support or supervision is necessary in order:

to continue working effectively and compassionately

to ensure that decisions about the best way forward are taken on the basis of careful reflection (e.g. whether to persist with, adapt or stop an intervention)

An ability for the PA to judge when their work is placing unhelpful emotional demands on them, and to take steps to put in place appropriate levels of self-care