

Comprehensive 6-Week PMHNP Certification Exam Study Plan

Preparing for the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner certification exam requires a strategic approach that balances content review with practice testing. This 6-week study plan is designed to maximize your preparation time with a structured progression from content mastery to application through practice questions.

The study plan is divided into two distinct phases: **core content mastery** (Weeks 1-4) followed by **intensive practice and review** (Weeks 5-6). This approach ensures you first build a solid foundation of knowledge before testing your understanding and identifying areas that need further review.

Study Tips for Success

Remember that this plan is flexible and should be adapted to your specific strengths and weaknesses. If you identify areas of significant weakness during your review, be prepared to adjust your schedule to allocate more time to these topics. The key to success is consistency, active engagement with the material, and regular self-assessment through practice questions to ensure you're truly mastering the content rather than simply reviewing it.

By following this structured approach, you'll build both the knowledge base and test-taking confidence needed to succeed on your PMHNP certification exam. Trust in your preparation, maintain healthy habits during your study period, and approach the exam with the calm assurance that comes from thorough preparation.



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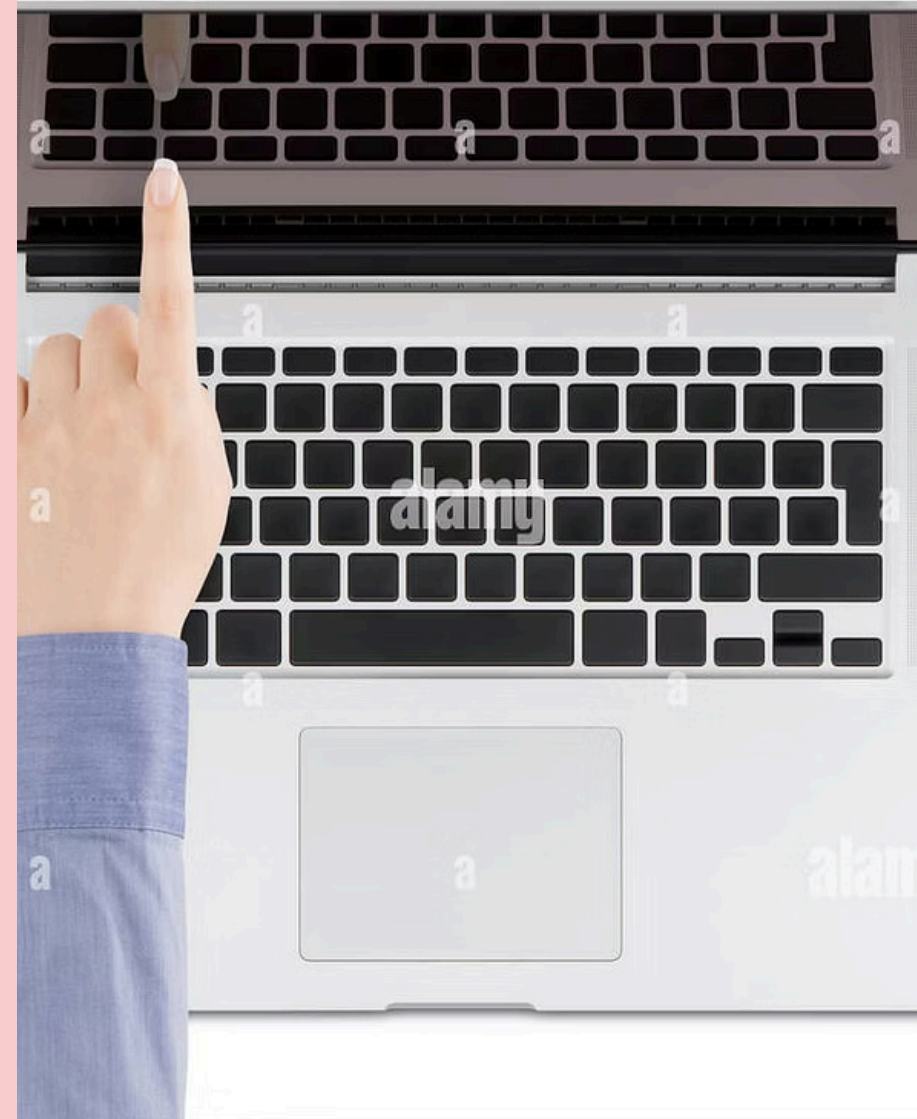
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Week 1: Scientific Foundations

Week 1 focuses on building your neurobiological foundation – the cornerstone of psychiatric practice.

Day	Topic	Key Tasks
Monday	Neuroanatomy & Neurotransmitters	Study limbic system, neural pathways, dopamine, serotonin, and GABA functions
Tuesday	Brain Imaging & Pharmacology	Review MRI/CT/PET scans, drug metabolism, receptor actions
Wednesday	Developmental Theories	Master Piaget, Erikson, Mahler, and Freud's developmental frameworks
Thursday	Genetics in Mental Health	Explore twin studies, heritability patterns, SNPs
Friday	Review & Flashcards	Create on Anki/Quizlet cards for pathways and neurotransmitter functions
Weekend	Practice & Rest	Complete 30–50 practice questions; create brain system mind maps

Week 2: Psychiatric Disorders & DSM-5

Week 2 transitions from neurobiological foundations to clinical applications with a comprehensive review of psychiatric disorders and DSM-5 diagnostic criteria.

Day	Topic	Key Tasks
Monday	Mood Disorders	Master diagnostic criteria for MDD, Bipolar I/II, and Cyclothymia
Tuesday	Anxiety, OCD & Trauma	Compare GAD, Panic, PTSD, OCD, and Phobias
Wednesday	Psychotic Disorders	Differentiate Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective, and Delusional disorder
Thursday	Neurodevelopmental	Study Autism, ADHD, ODD, and Conduct Disorder
Friday	Personality/Eating/SUD	Review Clusters A-C, eating disorders, and substance withdrawal
Weekend	Review & Practice	Create diagnostic flashcards; complete 40 questions; memorize mnemonics

Focus on differential diagnosis and symptom patterns. Memorize clinical mnemonics like "SIGECAPS" for depression and "DIGFAST" for mania.

Week 3: Treatments – Psychopharm + Therapy

Week 3 focuses on mastering therapeutic interventions, combining medication management with evidence-based psychotherapies.

Day	Topic	Key Tasks
Monday	Antidepressants + Mood Stabilizers	SSRI, SNRI, TCA, MAOI, Lithium, Lamotrigine
Tuesday	Antipsychotics	First vs second gen, side effects (EPS, TD, NMS)
Wednesday	ADHD meds + SUD Tx	Stimulants, non-stimulants, MAT (Suboxone, Methadone)
Thursday	Psychotherapies	CBT, DBT, MI, trauma-focused, structural family therapy
Friday	Lifespan Considerations	Child, adolescent, geriatric dosing and red flags
Weekend	Practice & Algorithms	50 questions,

Memorize common drug-drug interactions and black box warnings. Create medication charts comparing onset, half-life, and therapeutic index.

Week 4: Professional Role, Legal & Ethics

Week 4 shifts focus to professional responsibilities, ethical principles, and legal frameworks essential for PMHNP practice.

Day	Topic	Key Tasks
Monday	Scope of Practice + APRN Roles	State laws, supervision requirements, delegation authority
Tuesday	Informed Consent & HIPAA	Duty to warn, minor consent, documentation standards
Wednesday	Quality Improvement & Research	EBP models, research evaluation, statistical significance
Thursday	Risk & Case Management	Suicide assessment, trauma-informed care, cultural competency
Friday	Landmark Legal Cases	Donaldson v. O'Connor, Rennie, ethics principles
Weekend	Practice & Assessment	50 questions, case studies, one-page topic summaries

Focus on memorizing specific legal requirements and decision-making frameworks. Create ethical dilemma flashcards with appropriate responses.

Week 5: Full-Length Practice & Remediation

Week 5 intensifies exam preparation with full simulations and targeted remediation of weak areas.

Day	Task	Focus
Monday	Full-length timed practice (150 Qs)	Stamina building, time management
Tuesday	Review answers	Gap analysis, weak domain identification
Wednesday	Targeted remediation	Flashcards, charts, mini-quizzes on missed topics
Thursday	Topic drill (50 Qs)	Rotating through all categories
Friday	Full mock exam (untimed)	Deep understanding with rationale review
Saturday	Pharmacology review	Side effects, black box warnings, lifespan dosing
Sunday	Light review or break	Self-care and mental reset

Use practice exams to identify knowledge gaps. Focus remediation on consistently missed topics rather than random studying.

Week 6: Final Mock Exam & Exam-Day Prep

The final week polishes your skills, boosts confidence, and prepares you mentally for exam day.

Day	Task	Focus
Monday	Practice exam #3	Full-length timed assessment
Tuesday	Focused review	Intensive work on missed questions
Wednesday	Mnemonics day	Memory aids and study partner review
Thursday	Exam strategy	Test-taking techniques and time management
Friday	Quick mixed review	75 practice questions across domains
Saturday	Confidence boost	Review cheat sheets and self-affirmation
Sunday	Self-care prep	Light review, early bedtime, hydration

Prioritize mental readiness alongside content mastery. Focus on eliminating test anxiety through visualization and breathing techniques.

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