

Psychiatry

Cheat Sheets for Clinical Rotations

Must-Complete Resources	UWorld/Amboss	Psychiatry, fortunately, has a relatively smaller number of questions to work through, so there is not as much pressure to start these questions early. Aim to finish these questions 1-2 weeks prior to your shelf.
	NBME Practice Tests	We recommend completing these in the last 1-2 weeks prior to your exam, ideally after you have completed all of UWorld/Amboss.
High Yield Resources	First Aid for Step 1	Believe it or not, the section on Psychiatry in First-Aid is a great place to review the top diagnoses and medications you will encounter during your clerkship. It will not teach you clinical skills; rather, it will provide you with the foundational knowledge to succeed on your rotation.
	Case Files Psychiatry	If you are looking for a book to walk you through some of the high-yield content in case formats, then this is a great book for you. In all honesty, it is probably overkill and, unless you are going into psychiatry, you are better off completing practice questions in your question bank.
	DSM-5	The DSM-5 is the handbook for all psychiatry. It is a valuable resource because it provides clear, structured criteria for diagnosing mental health disorders. However, this should not be your go-to resource in the hospital as it is too dense (although pocket versions exist). Use this as a reference to look up specific conditions, rather than read this cover to cover.
	UpToDate	The best online resource for all things psychiatry. Use this to help you treat your patients, but we recommend staying away from this as a study tool as it is too dense for your shelf/USMLE.
	Online MedEd	A great resource with videos and text that summarize the high yield topics in psychiatry.
	Emma Holliday Lecture	Watch Dr. Emma Holliday's review lecture on psychiatry prior to your shelf as this is a final great reminder on the highest yield pediatric topics.
	Psych Pretest	Another great resource for USMLE style questions.
Clinical Tips	Succeed on Rounds	The most important thing you can do as a medical student is to know your patient. Understand their entire medical history, examine them, learn their most important psychiatric problem, know the social barriers impacting their illness, and come up with structured and succinct assessments and plans for rounds.
	Write your notes	A big portion of psychiatry is the note. It is important to accurately document your interview with the patient as this is often critical to the diagnostic/therapeutic process for psychiatrists.
	Mental Status Exam	Performing a mental status exam is a fundamental skill for any clinician, especially during your psychiatry clerkship. The exam provides a structured way to assess a patient's cognitive, emotional, and psychological functioning at a specific point in time. Through it, you will learn how to evaluate aspects such as appearance, mood, thought processes, insight, and cognitive abilities, which are crucial for accurate diagnosis and treatment planning in psychiatry.
	Know your medication	Knowing psychiatric medications is essential for you during your psychiatry rotation, as medications are a cornerstone of treating many mental health conditions. Understanding key drug classes, their mechanisms, common side effects, and important interactions enables students to engage meaningfully in patient care discussions, anticipate potential adverse effects, and contribute to safe prescribing practices.
	Make use of the lighter workload	Use this rotation and its often lighter workload as an opportunity to learn about common toxidromes that may also appear on future medicine shelf exams. Overarching topics such as anticholinergics, opioids, Sympathomimetics, and GABA agonists are best learned here, as well as unique toxidromes such as salicylates, Acetaminophen, TCAs, heavy metals, serotonin syndrome, malignant hyperthermia, etc.
Top Diagnoses / Topics To Learn	Major Depressive Disorder • Bipolar I Disorder • Generalized Anxiety Disorder • Schizophrenia • Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder • Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder • Alcohol Use Disorder • Opioid Use Disorder • Borderline Personality Disorder • Delirium • Dementia • Anorexia Nervosa/Bulimia • Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	