



Essay Structure Tips

Thanks to Dr Lillian Ng and Dr Mark Burns

- Recommend reading Sid Bloch's Psychiatric Ethics.
- Know the College Code of Ethics. After all, these qualities are what the College wants you to have. You can use one of the points in any essay; e.g. psychiatrists shall respect essential humanity and dignity of every patient (with regard to culture, language, religion, autonomy, compulsory treatment, psychotherapy etc.).
- Know College ethical guidelines or at least demonstrate an awareness of them.
- Spend the reading time planning your essay. Once you have reached 40 minutes, you must stop. Define the terms.
- You can use the mnemonic **CREAM SPACES HIT**.

1. Clinician

Aspects of clinical experience, your own experience as a trainee is valid here (write in the third person)

2. Research

Should be able to name drop significant authors e.g. for psychotherapy essay, Shedler in American Psychologist re evidence base for psychodynamic psychotherapy

3. Education (of public)

4. Advocacy (e.g. for the vulnerable)

5. Manager

What would you do if you were the clinical director of a service? How would you view this issue more broadly? Think about the media as well

6. Spaces

Include gaps in the essay

7. Political

8. Assets

Allocation of resources

9. Culture

10. Ethics

Hippocratic oath, code of ethics Stigma/sexuality

11. Historical

Helpful to name drop historical names. I recommend Wikipedia for a shallow but concise picture of famous names such as **Pinel** for classification/manie sans delire, **Tuke** for deinstitutionalisation, **Foucault** for power and discourse, **Voltaire** for civil rights, **Parson** for sick role, **RD Laing** for practice of psychiatry, **Szasz** against categorising human problems in living, **Karl Popper** for scientific method, **Carl Rogers** for unconditional positive regard in psychotherapy, **Yalom** for group therapy, **Patricia Deegan** for recovery... have a quote in your mind that you can use for the purpose of an essay.

E.g. **RD Laing**, influenced by existential philosophy challenged the core values of a practice of psychiatry that considers mental illness as a biological phenomenon without regard for social, intellectual and cultural dimensions. He rejected the medical model of mental illness, with the view that psychiatry was founded on false epistemology, essentially an illness diagnosed by conduct but treated biologically.

It is essential to show some understanding of the history of psychiatry for any essay topic. Even if it doesn't flow like the above quote, the reader will get the general gist.

Literature is also helpful to quote - **Kay Redfield Jamieson's** experience of bipolar disorder in "An Unquiet Mind.", depiction of institutionalisation in Shutter Island and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's nest, Janet Frame, Virginia Woolf, Mike Leigh's directing of film which depict Eriksonian life crises etc. Who is **Nancy Andreason**?

Kraepelin and Bleuler? (with regard to phenomenology)

Keep philosophers foremost in your mind - **Socrates** - **what is truth?** - The examined life is not worth living, **Nietzsche** on hardship and suffering "build your home on the slope of Vesuvius, **Montaigne on self esteem** "go travelling" and see diversity to learn wisdom, humility and your own limitations. These are like small nuggets for an exam.

12. Information Technology

Use of social media, internet, self help programs.

General Tips

You can use this structure to answer any topic. Content of the essay must be related to the topic. Do not waste time being tangential. Every paragraph should make a point, keep to the point, score a tick for each paragraph. You must be able to argue the topic from different perspectives but be able to sum up your own view in an analytical fashion.

Consider the marks

a) Logical critical reasoning

b) Flexibility ability to communicate: particularly consider the standard of a case history or formal written report; you must be able to write with reasonable grammar. Marks may be deducted for excessive crossing out which indicates poor flow. Be aware of vocabulary, some sophisticated terms and quotes will have high value for an essay e.g. anathema = detested person/thing for discourse on stigma, Illich's view of the medicalisation of life's vicissitudes, Deegan has described recovery as "the urge, the wrestle, the resurrection etc.

c) Judgement, maturity, ethical awareness

a) Breadth: Do not did down too deep into one theme, but rather show the examiner your breadth of knowledge combining different perspectives.

Key topics

1. Classification of illness eg PTSD, DSM V Biological vs other treatment Role of medications & pharmaceutical companies Recovery vs medical model. (See http://www.ctfcourse.com/psychiatry_education.html under the essay section)
2. Show the examiner that you have thought about the practice of psychiatry, particularly from an ethical point of view and that you can pen a written report about it
3. If essay writing does not come naturally, write under pressure, set a topic, brainstorm 5 minutes and write.
4. If it does come naturally, make bullet points around a topic and keep the quotes foremost in your head, it is a little like regurgitation but it indicates you have read widely even if your source is google or wikipedia at the late stage of study.

Good Luck from the CTF Team!