

JOB DESCRIPTION – MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR

Title: Mental Health Counselor

Responsible to: Program Manager/Clinical Supervisor/Clinical Manager/
Program Director/Senior Director

Employment Status: Non-exempt – Full or Part-Time

Job Summary:

The Mental Health Counselor is responsible for providing high quality, trauma-informed therapeutic services and care coordination to a diverse population of at-risk youth or young adults experiencing mental health symptoms, and their families. These developmentally appropriate, individualized services occur under the supervision of a licensed clinician in residential and community locations including homes, schools, program offices, psychiatric emergency settings, clinics, crisis residential programs, and/or shelters.

Competencies (Essential Functions):

- **Assesses Strengths and Needs:**
 - Gathers, organizes, and summarizes behavioral health and biopsychosocial information, including identifying participant/family/community values, goals, and priorities, along with strengths, resources, natural supports, stressors, deficits, disparities, problems, and needs, using a culturally grounded approach.
 - Evaluates clinical situations proficiently, including risk screening, and gathers information for assessments. with oversight of a licensed clinician.
 - Detects warning signs and anticipates needs; reassesses routinely by conducting a thorough review of goals and priorities.
 - Demonstrates knowledge of the individual and family assessment process and involves family and collateral contacts, with participant consent.
 - Conducts assessment of behavioral health conditions in the context of diverse identities drawing on race, ethnicity, culture, social economic status, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status and other socially constructed factors; is familiar with within-group differences and across-group similarities.
- **Provides Services:**
 - Establishes trust, builds rapport, and is empathetic and compassionate to participants and families.
 - Engages and activates participants in their treatment planning and care
 - Plans and implements treatment and discharge plans.

- Demonstrates awareness of a variety of therapeutic and skills-building interventions, including intensive case management.
 - Selects and utilizes culturally grounded interventions to ameliorate behavioral health conditions and promote health equity, culturally adapting evidence-based practices as needed.
 - Provides developmentally appropriate therapeutic, emotional, and biopsychosocial health support and treatment, including but not limited to rehabilitation services, individual/family/group rehabilitation or therapy (dependent on scope of practice), consistent with program model, and involving multiple systems planning and coordination.
 - Educates participants/families about services, supports, resources and treatment options that are available and appropriate for their situation.
 - Works collaboratively with collateral resources such as residence or housing staff, therapeutic behavioral service providers, medical providers, educators, and/or psychiatric providers.
 - Applies assessment and evaluation tools to measure progress and outcomes; communicates progress and outcomes to participants/families.
 - Meets service delivery goals (up to 65% of work schedule with participants, depending upon program) in response to participant needs.
- **Individualizes Care in accordance with FF Values:**
 - Delivers services in a manner consistent with FF core values of participant/family-centered, culturally responsive, strength-based, complexity capable, trauma-informed, and needs-driven practice.
 - Assesses the influence of key individual, family, and community characteristics; tailors services to individual/family/community characteristics; modifies plans and services based on participant/family experience.
 - Delivers services to participants with an awareness and integration of the developmental milestones of children, youth, or young adults, including those impacted by trauma.
 - Demonstrates Cultural Responsiveness: works with the “whole person;” is welcoming, inclusive and respectful; embodies cultural humility; appreciates diversity.
 - Embodies trauma-informed principles: Manages stress, maintains health; is self-aware and regulates emotions in order to be present for and responsive to others; is reflective and thoughtful when faced with complex, uncertain or ambiguous situations; maintains openness and approaches situations with an appreciation for multiple perspectives and a spirit of inquiry; promotes participant/family “voice and choice” about services.
- **Crisis Prevention and Intervention:**
 - Participates on a rotating basis in providing clinical 24 hour on-call coverage in accordance with agency policy as needed and/or as program requires.
 - Collaborate with team and/or supervisor to screen for risk of danger to self or others on a regular basis and in response to indication of changing risk based on participant’s internal condition or external situation; creates and implements safety plans accordingly.
 - Demonstrates knowledge of clinical risk management including risk assessment for danger

- to self or others; uses clinical judgement and interviewing to assess an individual's current level of risk and associated risk factors; engages participant/family in safety planning.
- Utilizes de-escalation techniques, including but not limited to: attentiveness to potential triggers/stressors and early indicators of distress; motivational interviewing; reflective listening; providing responses that rely on engagement and empathy; modeling composure through use of calm voice and neutral facial expressions; remaining self-aware of verbal and non-verbal communication, demonstrated ability to adjust verbal and non-verbal communication, prompting for use of known coping skills; etc., to defuse distress and ensure safety in a manner that aligns with the trauma informed care model.
- **Case Management/Care Coordination:**
 - Coordinates care collaboratively with treatment team and collateral contacts throughout the assessment, reassessment, treatment planning, service delivery, and discharge planning process.
 - Links participants to resources by identifying recommended resources; supporting individual's and family's decision-making in selecting resources; and connecting individuals and families to community resources.
 - Assesses participants' health and behavioral health service delivery systems and community resources for strengths, limitations, cultural relevance and impact, and modifies referral process accordingly.
 - Advocates on behalf of participants and families by supporting and coaching participants in self-advocacy.
 - **Working with Others/Teamwork:**
 - Communicates collaboratively and regularly with essential team members to keep them informed and to facilitate continuous open lines of communication and to integrate care across systems.
 - Considers the mode, timing, frequency, method, context, and amount of information to offer to others.
 - Communicates clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing, with co-workers, supervisors, participants, and other providers.
 - Comprehends, follows, and clearly conveys instructions to others.
 - Builds positive relationships; maintains appropriate boundaries.
 - Collaborates as part of an integrated team that may include clinicians, peer specialists, psychiatric providers, and/or paraprofessional staff. Understands, values, and adapts to the diverse professional cultures of an integrated care team.
 - Participates on agency Continuous Quality Improvement Committees, if assigned.
 - **Documentation:**
 - Writes concise, clear, and cohesive progress notes and reports in a timely manner.
 - Utilizes the Electronic Health Record system(s) or other technology effectively to

- complete documentation.
 - Demonstrates knowledge of and capacity to meet documentation standards in accordance with agency deadlines.
 - Participates in quality assurance activities as assigned.
 - Verifies all aspects of documentation meet or exceed county, state and federal guidelines.
 - Meets all HIPAA standards including but not limited to in exchanging information, keeping Protected Health Information (PHI) secure, and following procedures to protect electronic transmission/access to PHI at the agency and in the community.
- **Behaving Professionally and Ethically:**
 - Fulfills responsibilities and commitments.
 - Maintains clear and healthy interpersonal boundaries, complies with laws and regulations, and adheres to all professional ethical standards including abuse reporting and maintenance of participant confidentiality.
 - Adheres to all agency and program policies including Boundary Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Employee Handbook and state and federal regulations.
 - Participates in supervision and training, and provides training as assigned.
 - Manages work relationships and workload and adapts to organizational change.
 - Seeks opportunities to improve knowledge, skills, and abilities.
 - Strives for excellence, has positive attitude, accepts changes flexibly, is collaborative, is relationship-oriented, shows initiative, attends to detail, is accurate, and is responsible.
 - Represents FF with integrity in every community situation, including participation in community committees and presentations as assigned.
- **Additional Duties:**
 - Other related duties as assigned by Supervisor.
 - Drives on agency business as required.

Qualifications

Required

1. Enrollment in a M.A. Degree in Social Work or Counseling from an accredited college or university; OR Master's Degree with two or more years of work experience in a mental health setting, but not waived or registered with the board; OR A.A. Degree with six or more years of work experience; OR B.A. Degree with four or more years of work experience.
2. Certified to conduct a CANS/ANSA assessment within 90 days of employment if CANS/ANSA utilized by program.
3. Supervised experience in providing counseling services.
4. Demonstrated knowledge of risk assessment, including danger to self or others, and effective community-based interventions for those with high risk.
5. Demonstrated cultural responsiveness in working with diverse families and communities.
6. Must be able to respond quickly to emergencies, and to learn and implement Pro-ACT (or other agency approved crisis de-escalation training).

7. Clean driving record: current CA Driver's License or ability to obtain within 10 days after hired.
8. Must have access to dependable transportation; personal car insurance meeting minimum liability coverage required if position requires driving for work or transporting participants.
9. Basic computer and keyboarding competence with the ability to use Microsoft Office Suite and/or competency with electronic clinical documentation systems.

Preferred

1. Demonstrated knowledge in the areas of diagnostic assessment, crisis management, and individual/family/group behavioral treatment methods for target population of program.
2. One (1) year experience with program target population (Example: intellectually disabled, homeless, teens or young adults, seriously emotionally disturbed).
3. One (1) year experience with program modality (example: school-based, residential, mobile/community-based, wraparound, etc).
4. Demonstrated ability to assess, triage and organize work.
5. Applies a strength-based, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and flexible approach to supervision, participant and community service, in order to support participant recovery, health, and wellness.
6. Familiarity, training, certification, or experience with recovery-model orientation, public mental health and child welfare systems, and/or trauma-informed interventions.
7. Fluency in prevailing language(s) of the community.
8. Experience with or knowledge of designing, supervising, monitoring, changing, and discontinuing individualized behavioral interventions for staff delivering behavioral services (e.g., TBS).

Physical Demands:

The physical demands and work environment described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals to perform the essential functions. The position is sedentary 75% of the time. The noise level in the work environment is usually quiet and, at all times, maintained within safe California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CAL/OSHA) standards.

Communication

1. Must be able to express or exchange ideas by means of the spoken word to impart oral information or detailed spoken instructions accurately, loudly, or quickly.
2. Must be able to hear, understand and distinguish speech and/or other sounds (i.e., alarms, etc.).

Physical Activities

1. Must have visual acuity to view a computer terminal; to perform activities such as preparing reports, analyzing data; and to determine accuracy, neatness and thoroughness of work assigned.
2. Must be able to work on a computer for up to 20 hours per week.
3. Must be able to move in and out of offices, participant's homes or other community settings, and on the Coolidge Campus if based in Northern CA.
4. Possesses the ability to actively participate in and supervise participants' recreational activities, including noncompetitive sports.
5. Must be able to bend, lift as much as 25 lbs., and walk up to a mile at one time.
6. Must be able to operate office equipment requiring repetitive hand movement and fine coordination including use of a computer keyboard.
7. Must be licensed and have the ability and skill to drive cars, vans, or other vehicles.
8. Must be able to drive locally 30% of the workday.
9. Must be able to physically monitor youths to ensure they do not hurt themselves or others.
10. The job has potential for injury or harm, and the ability to assess and avoid threats posed by participants and the community is necessary to maintain safety.

I have read and understand the duties and responsibilities of my position as a Mental Health Counselor. I understand that this job description should in no way be construed as a contract for employment, but rather is intended to indicate the general nature and level of work to be performed. Nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to or from this job at any time. It is not designed to contain nor be interpreted as a comprehensive account of all the responsibilities and/or qualifications required of an employee assigned to this job. These job duties may be subject to change at any time due to reasonable accommodation or other reasons. Further, I understand that if I have any physical limitations or require any accommodations to perform the essential functions of my job, I must immediately inform my manager and/or Human Resources.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____