

# COUNTY OF SOLANO

## CRISIS SPECIALIST

Revised 10/02/00

Under administrative supervision and technical direction of licensed staff, assists in the provision and coordination of crisis intervention and short term support counseling services for people with urgent emotional, mental health, and substance abuse problems; within defined policy and practices performs assessment, evaluation, referral, hospitalization and initial casework management; maintains records related to patient or client services; and performs related duties as required.

### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

The Crisis Specialist is the journey level for para-professional classes performing mental health duties. Incumbents work under the supervision or direction of licensed professional staff and provide crisis intervention, initial support counseling, identifying client needs, assessing need for hospitalization, using community resources, assisting clients with problem solving/decision making, and in client advocacy. Final disposition of cases is subject to review and approval by licensed supervisory professional staff.

The work is characterized by the performance of para-professional crisis intervention, intake, assessment, and initial service plan development. Crisis Specialists are expected to work independently and demonstrate proficiency in the full range of duties assigned to the class. The Crisis Specialist class is distinguished from classes in the Mental Health Specialist II class series in that the latter class is assigned to primarily perform ongoing case management, symptoms management, support counseling, casework maintenance, and in the provision of rehabilitative services. The Crisis Specialist's cases are characterized by the frequent and sustained need to deal with clients in crisis situations.

### **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES**

1. In accordance with established procedures and format, conducts initial interviews with clients and relatives to obtain and record information concerning medical, social history, and client's current mental condition; establishes case files.
2. Determines potential for harm or grave disability to self and others; identifies initial level of services needed; recommends alternative treatment solutions including immediate hospitalization; observes and reports client's behavior.
3. Counsels clients and other affected parties to resolve immediate psychiatric crisis situation and other situational problems; orients new patients in program requirements including client rights and responsibilities; follows-up with clients to monitor status.
4. Participates in individual and group support counseling to enhance client's mental and emotional stability.
5. Provides information about the availability of education and other services to clients, families, and other affected parties.

**EXAMPLES OF DUTIES, Continued**

6. In accordance with established treatment plan, implements initial phases of plan; observes and records client behavior to assure effectiveness of initial plan.
7. Refers client to other available community services and, as needed, contacts these organizations on client's behalf.
8. Makes arrangements for care of clients and transportation of clients to other service providers.
9. On behalf of client, acts as liaison between relatives, guardians, employers, physicians, and other service providers
10. Participates in treatment team conferences to assist in the development of treatment plans and in the provision of services; provides recommendations on treatment plans and need for other services.
11. Assists in the preparation and revision of reports and correspondence and maintains a variety of documentation, such as charting observed behaviors, treatment plan objectives, case files, progress reports, discharge summaries, incident reports, financial and billing information and other data.
12. Attends and participates in a variety of internal and external meetings such as daily treatment team report, clinical meetings, interdisciplinary case conferences, inter-agency meetings, etc.
13. Coordinates service delivery with caseworkers, probation officers, community and support services, and appropriate referrals for patients upon discharge; works with other agencies to obtain information, coordinate services, determine appropriate venue for service, provide training about mental illness, and related matters.
14. Assists clients with paperwork and enrollment procedures for various treatment and social support programs.
15. Assists in physically containing violent and/or combative clients, assists in maintaining safety, security and sanitation of facilities.
16. May operate vehicles to transport clients between facilities or to perform field duties of monitoring service provision, working with patients or clients at other sites, and/or to coordinate with other agencies.
17. Conduct urinalysis and breath analyzer screens to detect alcohol and/or drug influence.

**TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand and walk; sufficient manual dexterity to perform repetitive motion in various duties such as: keyboarding, writing, filing, reaching and grasping above shoulder level; normal eye-hand coordination; body strength sufficient to lift and carry case files; corrected vision to normal range to read fine print and computer screen; corrected hearing to speak and hear sufficiently to communicate clearly over the telephone

**TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS, Continued**

and in person; ability to use office equipment including telephones, calculators, copiers, facsimile, computers, and other related peripheral equipment such as printers and scanners. Some assignments may require strength to lift and move clients with appropriate assistance and color vision to distinguish medications and laboratory results.

**TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS**

Work is performed in a variety of office, clinic and field environments and includes continuous contact with staff and the public; may be required to enter private homes to make family home visits for purpose of investigation; work involves stressful situations and includes dealing with erratic and sometimes threatening behavior; may travel to community areas that are potentially dangerous where there is exposure to potential bodily injury, infections which may cause chronic disease or death; offensive odors; high noise levels; insect bites; dust and pollens.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS****Knowledge of:**

- Social and psychological needs, problems, attitudes, behavior patterns, and treatment methods of mentally and socially disabled persons.
- Dynamics of human behavior.
- Federal, State and local laws pertaining to mental health treatment including legal requirements for involuntary treatment and detention.
- Availability of and procedures for obtaining a wide variety of community and governmental services and resources.
- Methods and techniques of interviewing and crisis intervention.
- Principles and concepts of counseling including group facilitator functions.
- Fundamental understanding of psychiatric and psychosocial client services plan development and implementation.
- Basic knowledge of medications and psychotropic drugs.
- Terminology of psychiatric social work including crisis intervention.
- Services and activities of public and private health and welfare agencies including referral sources and community resources.
- Basic techniques of supervision and training.
- Use of automated equipment and standard office support applications software related to the work.
- Strength based consumer/family focused and partnership service delivery models.

**Ability to:**

- Assess client immediate psychiatric and psychosocial needs and ensure client's receipt of needed services.
- Interview a variety of people with diverse culture and socio-economic backgrounds, temperaments, and mental capabilities.

**Ability to: (Continued)**

- Recognize factors causing reaction or changes in client's condition or behavior.
- Make referrals to other providers of mental health services.
- Assist in the development and implementation of client service plans and in the provision of rehabilitative services.
- Prepare appropriate case files, legal and clinical documentation.
- Work in stressful, emotional and confrontational situations; respond appropriately in crisis situations.
- Understand, interpret and apply complex mental health technical materials and applicable laws, codes and regulations.
- Prepare complex and detailed reports and records and maintain confidentiality of information.
- Communicate orally and in written format and interact in situations requiring instructional, persuasive, consultative, counseling and motivational skills.
- Assist in physically containing violent and/or combative clients.
- Deal effectively with clients of various ages and socio-economic and cultural groups including those with physical and/or emotional problems.
- Work collaboratively as a member of a multi-disciplinary mental health treatment team.
- Recognize and respect limits of authority and responsibility.
- Establish and maintain professional relationships with co-workers, clients, children, representatives or the community served, employees of County departments, outside professional staff, and other agencies and the public.

**EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

**Either I**

One year of experience equivalent to the Mental Health Specialist II in Solano County.

**Or II**

Two years of work experience in a private or governmental agency providing direct mental health related services to clients, which included crisis intake, screening, identifying client mental health needs, and participation in initial treatment plan development.

Completion of 60 semester units coursework from an accredited college or preferably in social work, rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or pastoral counseling may be substituted for up to one year of the required experience in pattern II.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

Driver's License: Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Class C Driver's License may be required at the time of appointment. Loss of the Class C Driver's License is

