

COUNTY OF SOLANO

MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST II

Rev. 10/00

Under administrative supervision and technical direction of licensed staff, assists in the provision and coordination of mental health support counseling and rehabilitative treatment services for people with acute emotional, mental health, and substance abuse problems; performs ongoing case management support for cases with established treatment and service plans; maintains records related to patient or client services; and performs related duties as required. Assists in development of treatment plans.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The Mental Health Specialist II is a full journey level in this class series. Incumbents work under the supervision or direction of professional staff and assist in the performance of casework duties in providing supportive counseling, rehabilitative services, including training in activities of daily living, identifying client needs, using community resources, assisting clients with immediate problems, and in client advocacy. Final disposition of cases is subject to review and approval by licensed supervisory and professional staff.

The work is characterized by the performance of para-professional casework within parameters established by licensed professional staff. Incumbents are expected to work independently, perform the full range of duties, and participate in multi-disciplinary evaluation team client assessments. The Mental Health Specialist II class is distinguished from the Mental Health Specialist I class in that the latter class exercises less discretion in decision-making, performs a limited range of duties within clearly established parameters and plays a limited role in the treatment team consultations. The Mental Health Specialist II class is further distinguished from the Crisis Specialist class in that the latter class primary assignment involves sustained and continuous crisis intervention in a crisis or institutional setting.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

1. Evaluates client's emotional, behavioral, and bio-psycho-social functioning to determine severity of problem, immediacy of need, and type of treatment required.
2. 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
3. Identifies need for and recommends modifications in treatment plans.
4. Assists in the development of treatment plans and/or alternative services.
5. Conducts individual and group support counseling to enhance mental and emotional stability, level of social functioning and independent living utilizing a variety of support counseling modalities and social rehabilitation techniques.
6. Provides self-help information, education and services and performs peer counseling and self-help services to mental health consumers.
7. Plans and implements client recreational, educational and socialization activities, cares for client safety, and orients new clients in program requirements.
8. Implements established treatment plans; observes and records client's behavior to assure effectiveness of plan.
9. Refers and informs client of community services available and contacts these organizations on client's behalf.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES, Continued

10. Teaches clients independent living skills in such areas as public transportation, shopping, and appointment making.
11. Makes arrangements for care of clients and transportation of clients to other service providers.
12. On behalf of client, acts as liaison between relatives, guardians, employers, physicians, and other service providers
13. Based on pre-determined guidelines, assesses and reports adequacy of services provided by other entities.
14. Participates in treatment team conferences to assist in the development of treatment plans and in the provision of services.
15. Assists in the preparation and revision of reports and correspondence and maintains a variety of documentation, such as charting observed behaviors, treatment plan objectives, progress reports, discharge summaries, incident reports, and other data.
16. 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.
17. Coordinates with caseworkers, probation officers, community and support services, and appropriate referrals for clients upon discharge; works with other agencies to obtain information, coordinate services, determine appropriate venue for service, provide training about mental illness and related matters.
18. Assists clients with paperwork and enrollment procedures for various treatment and social support programs.
19. When certified through a “Management of Assaultive Behavior” course, may assist with physically controlling violent and/or combative clients, assists in maintaining safety, and security of facilities.
20. 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.
21. Provide outreach mental health services in field, community based and program settings.
22. Develop and maintain professional relationships with other providers; develop and maintain referral sources for use in crisis and case management programs.

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 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 community settings, client's residence and 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 basic counseling methods for children, adults and other clients with emotional disorders or psychiatric disabilities.
- Dynamics of human behavior.
- Availability of and procedures for obtaining a wide variety of community and governmental services and resources.
- Methods and techniques of interviewing.
- Principles of counseling including group facilitator functions.
- Fundamental understanding of psychiatric and psycho-social treatment plan development and implementation.
- Basic knowledge of medications and psychotropic drugs.
- Terminology of mental health services.
- Services and activities of public and private health and welfare agencies including referral sources and community resources.
- Basic techniques of rehabilitative counseling.
- Use of automated equipment and standard office support applications software related to the work.
- Drug and alcohol use/dependence and impact on psychiatric conditions.
- Strength based, client/family focused partnership services delivery model.
- Impact of cultural, gender or socio-economical status on manifestations of emotional distress and mental illness.
- Methods and techniques of interviewing and crisis intervention.

Ability to:

- Assess client immediate needs and ensure client's receipt of needed services.
- Interview a variety of people with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, temperaments, and mental capabilities.
- Recognize factors causing reaction or changes in client's condition or behavior.
- Make referrals to other providers of mental health services.
- 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.

Ability to: (Continued)

- 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.
- Provide training, guidance and consultation to other staff and family members.
- 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 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 clients, children, representatives or the community served, employees of County departments and other agencies and the public.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Either I

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

OR II

Four years of experience in a private or governmental agency providing direct mental health related services to clients, which included identifying client mental health and/or substance dependence needs, using community resources, and client advocacy.

Completion of all coursework from an accredited college or university required for an Associates degree or higher in a mental health related field preferably in social work, rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or pastoral counseling or a closely related field may be substituted for up to two years of the required experience on a year-for-year basis under 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 a cause for discipline. Individuals who do not meet this driver's license requirement due to a physical disability will be considered for accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

Assignment Requirements: Some positions in these classes may require work in an out-station location or in a setting with other professionals integrated as a team. Some positions may require first hand experience as a mental health consumer and the ability to provide peer self-help counseling.

