

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Direct Support Professional/Counselor

Class Code: 50591

Pay Grade: GG

A. Purpose:

Provides individualized training, which includes individual and group counseling, crisis intervention services, behavior management, and other specialized treatment services to people in all environments.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The Direct Support Professional/Counselor focuses on increasing a person's understanding of how their behaviors affect them and others and assists people in understanding the boundaries of appropriate behavior and accepting responsibility for their own behavior by intervening with their behavior in an expedient manner.

The Youth Counselor conducts individual and group counseling sessions for adjudicated juveniles or adolescents who have mental health or developmental disability needs.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Serves as a member of the Interdisciplinary Team, which designs the support plan for each person served to ensure the most effective methods of behavior modification or treatment.
 - a. Attends meetings with interdisciplinary team members to formulate the support plan, evaluate progress, discuss alternatives, and determine discharge dates and placement options; and to ensure each person is provided the best services possible to facilitate the modification of the behavior that led to admission.
 - b. Provides information regarding each person's strengths and needs to the interdisciplinary team in order to assist in the transition to a less restrictive environment.
 - c. Familiarizes themselves with individualized support plan interventions and strategies specific to each person's behavioral needs.
 - d. Provides individualized professional services to people served and acts as the lead or primary person in diffusing potentially explosive behavioral situations.
2. Reviews case histories, biographies, and other data pertaining to people served in order to determine problems, their causes, and possible remedies.
3. Conducts crisis counseling to enhance people's insight into his/her own problems, ability to get along with others, problem-solving techniques, and behavior control.
 - a. Records each person's progress by documenting individual and group counseling sessions, behavioral observations, and completion of assignments.
 - b. Serves as a responder in crises to ensure adequate and immediate response and to protect both the people served and staff.
4. Provides services, supervision, and accountability of services and activities for assigned people to ensure each person is protected from physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse or mistreatment.

- a. Assists with planning and supervises recreational, social, spiritual, and daily living activities.
 - b. Promotes positive interactions.
 - c. Intervenes in disputes between people served, stops physical and verbal confrontations, and intervenes and deescalates crises.
5. Observes, records, and reports behavior and intervenes with behavior modification techniques as needed to ensure safety of the people served and staff and provides supporting documentation for treatment plans and programs.
- a. Reads and discusses treatment plan goals with people served.
 - b. Provides support and motivation by talking with people served.
 - c. Reports unusual behavior to medical staff.
 - d. Participates in close observation of people as assigned.
 - e. Redirects unacceptable behavior if possible and applies physical restraint in emergency situations.
 - f. Searches for missing people.
 - g. Initiates emergency procedures.
6. Provides direct personal care for people served and implements Activities of Daily Living (ADL) programs to ensure good health and hygiene.
- a. Wakes people.
 - b. Escorts people to meals and assists with feeding when necessary.
 - c. Assists or instructs with personal hygiene such as shaving, bathing, and dressing.
 - d. Assists with toileting and changing people served.
 - e. Helps people do their laundry.
 - f. Obtains and records vital signs.
 - g. Ambulates people served and escorts them to appointments and activities.
 - h. Observes people served for unusual symptoms and reports to medical staff.
 - i. Assists people served with personal telephone calls and letters.
7. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Typically reports to the Direct Support Professional Supervisor II, a Developmental Disability Program Supervisor, or the Program Manager. This position does not supervise other staff but may provide work direction to Direct Support Professional staff.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include helping people served identify and recognize what is contributing to their problems and anti-social behavior and accept the corrective actions prescribed. Other challenges include helping people who are resistive to change and resolve their issues and develop healthy communication and coping skills that will allow them to reintegrate successfully into a less-restrictive environment.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include the content and format of processing group sessions and when they are scheduled, the implementation of behavior intervention strategies and plans as written, and when to intervene and de-escalate or diffuse a potentially crises.

Decisions referred include final discharge dates, placement after discharge, medical needs or concerns, and interpretation of policies and procedures.

G. Contact with Others:

Frequent contact with mental health staff, other direct support professionals, case managers, and other interdisciplinary team members to gather and relay information regarding a person's behavior and progress.

H. Working Conditions:

Works in a developmental disability facility and is subject to the risk of verbal abuse and physical harm.

I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- counseling methods;
- principles of basic human behavior;
- problems experienced by and methods of supervising people with developmental disabilities;
- CPR and first aid;
- Crisis Prevention Intervention techniques;
- medication administration;
- patient's rights;
- serious emotional disturbances.

Ability to:

- deal effectively with people from diverse ethnic and sociological backgrounds;
- be a positive role model;
- observe and understand adolescent and adult behavior;
- listen to and be empathetic with adolescents and adults;
- accurately recall information;
- maintain safety and security in a developmental center;
- counsel adolescents and adults;
- provide individual and/or group crisis and de-escalation counseling;
- direct adolescents and adults in assigned tasks;
- effectively diffuse potentially explosive confrontations between adolescents and/or adults;
- plan and organize work by effective time management;
- communicate effectively to relay information regarding adolescents and adult behaviors and needs;
- understand adolescents and adult behavior and help them formulate more acceptable responses to situations or problems they encounter;
- maintain records and prepare reports;
- coordinate and conduct planned treatment programs;
- interpret and follow established policies, procedures, operations memoranda, and guidelines.