

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Lifespan Specialist

Class Code: 050591

Pay Grade: GH

A. Purpose:

Provides active treatment supports and services, crisis intervention services, skills training, and behavior management to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the South Dakota Developmental Center (SDDC) to assist clients to work toward establishing a vision for their future, discover their supports, promote self-determination, and enhance their skills and abilities.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The Direct Support Professional provides direct care services and conducts daily individual teaching plans for the people served.

The Lifespan Specialist focuses on providing supports and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through crisis intervention, skills training, and behavior management to assist clients to work toward establishing a vision for their future, discover their supports, promote self-determination, and enhance their skills and abilities.

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. Provides active treatment supports and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to ensure the most effective methods of behavior modification and treatment are implemented.
 - a. Serves as a member of the Interdisciplinary Team, which designs support plans in the areas of daily/life employment, community living, social/spirituality, healthy living, safety/security, citizenship/advocacy, services supports, coping skills, and life choices for each person supported to ensure the most effective methods of behavior modification or treatment.
 - b. Reviews case histories, biographies, and other data pertaining to people supported in order to determine problems, their causes, and possible remedies.
 - c. Completes assessments and author evaluations utilizing person-centered practices and integrated services and supports domains for inclusion in the comprehensive functional assessment.
 - d. Develops individualized teaching service plans in the lifespan areas for persons on caseload and submits for approval.
 - e. Plans and conducts individual and group sessions as specified in the Individual Support Plan (ISP).
 - f. Provides monthly progress narratives based on the plans, observations, and attendance.
 - g. Initiates requisitions and maintains inventory for supplies, program materials, and reinforcement.
 - h. Participates in transition and discharge planning.

2. Assesses and intervenes in emergency and crisis incidents and events by following individualized behavior treatment strategies or facility procedures to ensure the safety of people receiving services and staff.
 - a. Responds to calls to process and provide support to people in crisis.
 - b. Assists with crisis prevention and intervention utilizing non-violent crisis intervention techniques and SDDC policies and procedures.
 - c. Approves, observes, and assists in the application of certain devices and restraint techniques.
 - d. Documents the use of restraints.
 - e. Makes entries in the responder log of qualifying events when acting in the responder role.
 - f. Executes approved behavior treatment strategies to ensure an effective outcome during crisis.
 - g. Reports unusual behavior to medical staff.
 - h. Initiates emergency procedures.
 - i. Searches for missing people.
 - j. Provides support and guidance to staff and people supported after an incident occurs.
3. Provides support to develop skills and decrease the barriers that prevent opportunities for community living.
 - a. Teaches skills, both formally and informally, in the active treatment schedule of the ISP.
 - b. Documents progress and learning opportunities.
 - c. Reviews records in the active treatment services binder and the communication and accountability book.
 - d. Performs basic personal care, homemaking skills, and other tasks stated in the ISP.
 - e. Promotes and models social skills and positive interactions with others.
 - f. Provides the level of supervision directed by the risk assessment during appointments, activities, or meetings.
 - g. Assists with planning and supervises recreational, social, spiritual, and daily living activities.
 - h. Promotes positive interactions.
4. Provides direct personal care for people supported 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 supported.
 - e. Helps people do their laundry.
 - f. Obtains and records vital signs.
 - g. Ambulates people supported and escorts them to appointments and activities.
 - h. Observes people supported for unusual symptoms and reports to medical staff.
 - i. Assists people supported with personal telephone calls and letters.
5. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Typically reports to a Program Manager. This position does not supervise other staff, but may provide work direction to Direct Support Professionals.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include developing and selecting appropriate learning curriculum based on the various abilities, limitations, emotional fluctuations, goals, and needs of each client. This is difficult because each Lifespan Specialist works with several clients simultaneously who have different abilities, disabilities, and emotional needs. Additionally, the Lifespan Specialist must effectively address and intervene during behavior and crisis situations while remaining calm, professional, and positive. The Lifespan Specialist must be aware of each client's ISP and address crisis interventions according to the plan. Other challenges include learning about each client in order to teach and motivate them, recognizing changes in behavior, and helping clients who may be resistive to change develop healthy communication and coping skills that will allow them to reintegrate successfully into a less-restrictive environment.

Problems include complying with facility policies in regards to completing written paperwork while being actively involved in unit programming and maintaining individual contact with each client; recognizing manipulative and maladaptive behavior; caring for resistive people; determining the appropriate level of intervention; dealing with equipment malfunctions and adaptations; and maintaining communication between units, treatment team, supportive services, the patient, and the patient's guardian/family.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include the appropriate assessment tools to use, the content and format of processing group sessions and when they are scheduled, the implementation of behavior intervention strategies and plans as written, extending usage of crisis procedures and restraints, removing people from physical or mechanical restraints, removing restraints from commission due to safety concerns, choosing curriculum and adjusting curriculum to match learning styles, selection of appropriate reinforcement, and when to intervene and de-escalate or diffuse a potential crisis.

Decisions referred include final discharge dates, placement after discharge, medical needs or concerns, safety and risk management issues not covered by policies or guidelines, and interpretation of policies and procedures.

G. Contact with Others:

Contact with the family/guardian of each person supported to discuss progress in treatment. Contact with agencies, schools, and other community resources on an as needed basis. Frequent contact with direct support professionals, case managers, medical staff, 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:

- principles of basic human behavior;
- problems experienced by and methods of supervising people with developmental disabilities;
- CPR and first aid;

- Crisis Prevention Intervention techniques;
- people's rights;
- serious emotional disturbances.

Ability to:

- complete assessments and detailed and understandable plans;
- utilize CPI's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention;
- 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;
- provide individual and/or group crisis and de-escalation techniques;
- 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.