

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Sensory Therapy Coordinator

Class Code: 051159

Pay Grade: GJ

A. Purpose:

Coordinates and monitors the sensory program at the Human Services Center by developing and conducting therapeutic treatment and providing guidance, training, and program support to unit staff regarding the treatment of patients with behavioral and emotional problems to ensure the implementation of effective sensory coping skills and techniques needed to decrease agitation and aggressive behavior.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The Sensory Therapy Coordinator coordinates and monitors the sensory program at the Human Services Center by developing and conducting therapeutic treatment and providing guidance, training, and program support to unit staff.

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

The Human Services Counselor conducts individual and group counseling sessions for patients who have mental health needs under the direction of professional staff.

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 that may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Develops and provides therapeutic sensory treatment to teach sensory coping skills and techniques needed to decrease agitation, increase emotional regulation, and reduce the use of seclusions and restraints.
 - a. Meets with new admittances and conducts an individualized sensory assessment.
 - b. Designs specific sensory treatment plans to meet the individual needs of each patient. This includes, but is not limited to, educating patients on the benefits of the sensory room, sensory boxes, weighted blankets, biofeedback, dialectical behavior skills, and individual coping strategies.
 - c. Follows up with the sensory plans to determine adequacy, proper implementation, and positive results.
 - d. Conducts one-on-one treatment sessions and skills training.
 - e. Conducts daily assessment rounds on each unit to help prevent disruptive behaviors and support staff in the utilization of sensory activities.
 - f. Develops and conducts sensory and relaxation groups for patients.
 - g. Creates and maintains sensory rooms that the patients utilize to decrease agitation and increase emotional regulation.
2. Monitors the implementation of the sensory program and coordinates all sensory activities to continue enhancing patient care and advance sensory therapeutic trends and programming.
 - a. Develops policy, procedure, and protocol for the implementation of the sensory program.
 - b. Conducts research of the latest sensory materials and techniques.
 - i. Utilizes outside stakeholders and educational literature to research information on sensory programs.
 - ii. Makes recommendations based on research for improvements in the program or purchasing of sensory items.

- c. Recommends the purchase of various items for the patient to utilize to decrease agitation and increase emotional regulation.
 - d. Develops and maintains a tracking system and reporting tools to ensure the effective implementation of the sensory program.
3. Provides guidance, training, and program support to unit staff regarding sensory coping skills and techniques to help de-escalate patients, prevent escalations, and avoid the use of maladaptive coping strategies.
 - a. Serves as primary sensory trainer for new employees.
 - b. Coaches and follows up with staff on a daily basis to increase understanding of the benefits of sensory work, teach the importance of giving patients the opportunity to utilize sensory skills daily, and show the benefits of restraint/seclusion reduction through the use of sensory and mindfulness techniques.
 - c. Meets with unit supervisors and staff to assess the unit and patients' needs for sensory equipment.
 - d. Develops, coordinates, and instructs training seminars and groups.
 4. Serves as a member of a treatment team which designs the treatment program for each patient to ensure the most effective methods of behavior and treatment are used.
 - a. Actively participates in treatment team meetings.
 - b. Reviews case histories, biographies, and other data pertaining to patients in order to determine problems, their causes, and possible remedies.
 - c. Evaluates, monitors, and provides input regarding the patient's individualized treatment and progress with behavioral interventions.
 - d. Makes recommendations for changes and additions to the treatment plan direction.
 - e. Collaborates with the treatment team on plan development and to discuss patients' progress and implementation of treatment methods.
 - f. Communicates treatment team decisions to community supports, families, and administration.
 - g. Serves as a patient advocate.
 5. Serves as a dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) trainer and front-line code responder.
 6. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

The Sensory Therapy Coordinator typically reports to a Program Director. Provides work direction to Youth Counselors, Human Services Counselors, Mental Health Aides, and nurses regarding the implementation of sensory techniques.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenged to assist patients to identify and recognize his or her mental illness and behavioral issues and accept and practice the sensory and mindfulness techniques prescribed. It is often difficult to motivate patients, who are resistive to change, make a personal investment into resolving personal problems and develop healthy communication and coping skills that will allow them to reintegrate successfully into a lesser restrictive environment. The number of patients that need sensory education is often unlimited, and it is challenging to adequately meet the needs of each patient. Additionally challenged to meet the needs of staff on the units and to effectively train staff members who have limited knowledge of sensory techniques and rooms.

Problems include complying with hospital policies and working within budgetary constraints when creating sensory rooms.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include the therapeutic interventions that are appropriate for each patient regarding their sensory treatment, prioritizing the workload, recommending the purchase of sensory items, recommending program improvement and development, determining how to implement policy changes, and determining training protocol and the implementation of training areas.

Decisions referred to a supervisor include approval of sensory item purchases and the completion of sensory rooms; final approval on all policies, procedures, and protocol; overall training schedules, protocol, and staff requirements.

G. Contact with Others:

Regular contact with patients to provide treatment; treatment team and psychiatrists to discuss assessments, address treatment planning, obtain referrals, and evaluate progress; and unit staff to provide guidance, training, and program support. Contact with program directors and administrative staff to discuss program implementation and changes.

H. Working Conditions:

Works in a human services facility and is at risk for verbal abuse and physical harm.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- sensory techniques, methods, and practices that are utilized with patients who are struggling emotionally and behaviorally;
- de-escalation methods and techniques used to maintain a therapeutic environment;
- severe and persistent mental illness;
- emotionally, socially, and behaviorally challenged patients
- residential treatment program structures, policies, and protocols;
- therapeutic communication skills;
- CPR and first aid;
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NCI);
- Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI);
- medication administration;
- patient's rights;
- treatment planning, charting, and report writing;
- co-occurring disorders;
- bio-feedback;
- sensory assessment tools and screening devices.

Ability to:

- utilize verbal de-escalation techniques and sensory methods to maintain a therapeutic environment;
- deal effectively with patients from diverse ethnic and sociological backgrounds;
- maintain safety and security in an in-patient psychiatric setting;
- communicate in a professional manner;
- lift 75 pounds;

- maintain thorough and timely documentation of behaviors including progress and outcomes;
- coach, train, mentor, and redirect unit staff;
- interpret and follow established policies, operations memoranda, procedures, and guidelines;
- work independently and meet deadlines.