

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM ASSISTANT

KIND OF WORK

Paraprofessional psychiatric therapy or lead work.

NATURE AND PURPOSE

Under general supervision, develops, implements and evaluates mental health care program plans designed to improve the functional skills of patients/residents with psychiatric disorders through individual counseling services or through direction of other paraprofessional employees; performs related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF WORK (A position may not include all the work examples given, nor does the list include all that may be assigned.)

Develops a profile of patient/resident characteristics to provide information necessary for evaluation, admission and treatment planning through intake interviews, administration of psychological test instruments and information requests to other treatment facilities, physicians, law enforcement agencies.

Interacts with patients/residents to observe the nature of their problems and to explore possible steps to overcome these obstacles through informal and structured therapy sessions provided on an individual or group basis.

Writes individual program plans to specify the goals and objectives of treatment, the means for their accomplishment and the staff persons responsible for services using biographic and psychological data collected on the patient/resident and conclusions reached by the interdisciplinary treatment team.

Designs behavior management components of program plans to reinforce acceptable behavior and extinguish inappropriate behavior through collection and reduction of behavioral data and development of behavior modification programs, behavioral contracts.

Implements and/or assigns the implementation of the comprehensive treatment plans to assist patients/residents in developing skills necessary for return to the community by teaching, securing specialized services (medical, vocational), serving as a role model, applying behavior management tools.

Provides health care to patients/residents so that response to psychiatric treatment is not impeded by physical illness through administration of medications/treatments, taking and monitoring vital signs, intervening when patient/resident behavior is threatening to others or himself/herself.

Assigns, monitors, reports on work of paraprofessional staff and trains them to complete new or unique tasks to assure timely work flow, conformity to established standards and maximum worker capability by assessing the needs of patients and the operational routines of the unit.

Plans for extension of treatment goals and objectives subsequent to discharge to support progress achieved through after-care planning and assessment with community resources, families and patients themselves.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

Knowledge of:

Kinds and manifestations of mental illness sufficient to design and carry out provisions of treatment plans individually or through assigned staff.

Psychiatric counseling techniques sufficient to advance therapeutic dialogue with patients/residents as a group or in one-to-one situations.

Basic nursing procedures sufficient to carry out doctors' orders and to respond in emergency situations.

Behavior management techniques sufficient to author formalized systems for teaching social, motor, communications and self-care skills.

Therapeutic intervention techniques sufficient to control aggressive or violent behavior.

The laws, rules, regulations and policies governing treatment of mental illness sufficient to protect the rights of patients/residents.

Recreation programming techniques sufficient to teach recreation skills, to develop therapeutic activities and to demonstrate effective use of leisure time.

Medications and their side-effects sufficient to understand their impact on the functional capabilities of patients/residents.

Ability to:

Plan and evaluate the work of paraprofessional staff assigned to provide residential care and counseling support to mentally ill patients/ residents.

Observe and document behavioral and physical progress of patients/residents in medical charts and to summarize such data for use in evaluating effectiveness of treatment.

Mental Health Program Assistant

Class Specification

Page 3

Communicate in order to furnish counseling to patients/residents, to direct treatment staff and to coordinate services with community resources.

Interviewing skills sufficient to elicit information necessary for treatment from patients/residents, families, significant others and so on.

SPECIAL WORK CONDITIONS

Jobs in this class may require the employee to regularly lift, transfer and position patients/residents. In addition, the employee may be subject to unpredictable and hazardous patient/resident behaviors.

Est.: 11/83

Rev.: 1/97

T.C.: 04/84

Former Title(s): Institution Mental Illness
Program Assistant
Mental Illness Program
Assistant