

SOCIAL WORK SPECIALIST

KIND OF WORK

Advanced, professional social work

NATURE AND PURPOSE

Under limited supervision, employees in this class provide a full range of professional, advanced social work services for clients within the state system, and/or their families, and other affected/interested parties. They are actively involved as members of the multi-disciplinary team and provide recommendations for complex treatment and/or discharge plans. They provide case liaison and consulting services to external community and governmental agencies. They serve as technical and programmatic resources within a highly complex social services program area such as mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependence, psychogeriatric disorders, severe behavior/personality disorders and traumatic brain injuries. Employees perform other related work as required.

The special needs of the client, the complicating treatment/program factors and the operating environment contribute to the differentiation between this classification and the Social Worker Senior classification. The range of services provided at this level require significant breadth and depth and are typified by unique state wide programs and distinguished by the severity of client conditions and challenges associated with treatment and discharge (such as limitation of placement resources or options). Discharge and aftercare planning are complicated and complex. Clients often have conflicting social/medical and emotional needs.

The Social Work Specialist and the Social Worker Senior classes may have leadership, administrative and/or admissions responsibilities; however, performance of these job duties does not, in and of itself, differentiate between the classifications.

A major differentiating factor between the Social Work Specialist and the Social Work Specialist Senior – Human Services is providing individual and/or group therapy according to the definition of the Social Work Practice Act. Social Work Specialist Seniors - Human Services are involved in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental and emotional disorders.

Incumbents must have a sufficient grasp of involved practices and precedents or of intermediate to advanced principles of the social work field of knowledge, needed to conduct and improve work processes. Incumbents may assume a high degree of direct client, administrative and program supervision and/or coordinating responsibility in a social work field or program for a facility or agency. Incumbents operate within clearly defined agency/facility policies and principles within the discipline and have significant technical latitude which is sufficient to ensure the dependable, regular use of professional skill.

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

Evaluates social service client needs for serious and complex cases to provide social service recommendations to the multi-disciplinary team for admissions, treatment and discharge by interviewing, collecting, reviewing and synthesizing divergent information and client data.

Collaborates with multi-disciplinary team members so that an appropriate care plan is developed by collecting and providing information and participating in team meetings.

Counsels clients so that they are better able to cope with problems by instructing, coaching, modeling, mediating, providing feedback and assisting with problem solving.

Develops and evaluates complex treatment interventions for specialized client so that information is available to the multi-disciplinary team for its analysis and decision making by synthesizing knowledge of characteristics of client population, counseling techniques, baseline data, analysis, intervention goals and client response to treatment.

Documents assessment, service recommendations, services rendered, client outcomes and service revision recommendations so that social service records are accurate and adequate.

Coordinates and arranges complex discharge planning and aftercare for clients so that appropriate client placements are implemented despite competing and conflict laden perspectives and limited options by collecting and disseminating information, advocating, mediating, negotiating and using knowledge of resource alternatives and legal parameters.

Negotiates and mediates among deeply opposed persons and groups so that client needs are met using advocacy and negotiation skills, diplomacy, knowledge of legal parameters, and community resource alternatives.

Furnishes testimony and/or reports to the Courts, Special Review Board, Supreme Court Appeal Panel and other administrative bodies regarding clients and client conditions so that informed decisions can be made.

Guides, counsels and mentors professionals within the social work discipline and inform and communicate the principles of social work practice to others so they are understood and/or accepted.

Consults, advises and educates staff, families, clients and/or community service providers to facilitate enhance system response to client care needs so that clients and families understand and/or use the options and services available to them by using clinical social work knowledge base, knowledge of client population needs, hospital and community resources.

Evaluates, formulates and recommends revisions and development of social services policies so that client care is maintained and improved by assessing, evaluating and/or reviewing current standards of practice, clinical care and regulatory standards.

Develops, implements, and monitors social service process improvement projects using professional knowledge base and knowledge of continuous quality improvements methodology and principles.

Oversees and supervises the professional development and performance of assigned social work practicum students, interns or others so that the work performed meets standards, learning opportunities are maximized and professional growth is enhanced by using academic and organizational protocols for orientation and/or review of activities, documents, policy, and procedure.

Represents the department, facility and/or program in leadership activities so that programs are developed and quality of programs and services are continuously improved by active involvement and participation in committees, initiatives or projects.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

Knowledge of:

The social work content area sufficient to develop, implement and administer complex social services programs for clients and their families.

The social work field sufficient to effectively communicate social work practice and theory to professionals within the discipline of social work and in other disciplines.

The client population(s) and corresponding service delivery systems and available community resources associated with the field or program for the specific position.

Individual, family and group process intervention techniques sufficient to develop and evaluate complex treatment interventions for specialized client populations.

Crisis intervention theories and techniques sufficient to meet the needs of the client populations within the specialized program or discipline.

Local, state, and federal laws and regulations affecting social and health services relating to the position sufficient to thoroughly understand how they affect the client and other internal and external stakeholders.

Ethical standards and practices of professional social work.

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Class Specification

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Theories and methods of psycho-social assessment in order to evaluate the social service needs of the client and provide recommendations to the treatment team.

Skill in:

Social work assessments sufficient to evaluate social service client needs for serious and complex cases.

Ability to:

Determine differential treatment objectives for clients with complex needs and to provide treatment to overcome major problems involving social dysfunction and/or behaviors which cause severe risk to the client or others.

Establish and maintain effective working relationships with other staff, clients and community groups.

Effectively communicate the principles of social work practice or of a specific discipline within the practice of social work.

Negotiate and mediate among deeply opposed persons and groups such as individual members of treatment teams, client family members and external service providers or resources.

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Former Title(s): Social Worker Specialist