

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR III

DEFINITION

Under general direction, the Mental Health Counselor III provides coordination and oversight of school-based mental health and wellness services within Santa Cruz County's continuum of care. The primary duties include improving student outcomes by integrating mental health supports into schools, reducing stigma around mental illness, increasing trauma-responsive supports, assisting students in accessing mental health services, and fostering collaboration between schools and community partners. This position also involves providing direct mental health services and case management to students and families, as well as developing and delivering school-wide interventions, programs, and training.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

May exercise leadership responsibilities over other staff; may exercise technical and functional leadership of other staff.

EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL DUTIES

School-Based Mental Health and Wellness Services:

Provides mental health and wellness services and programs that foster pro-social skills and appropriate behavior, in consultation with a licensed clinician.

Identifies mental health and behavioral needs of students.

Develops and implements treatment plans.

Conducts clinical interviews, assessments, observations, and prepares clinical reports.

Delivers individual, group, and family therapy services.

Reviews student referrals for intensive mental health services and makes recommendations for behavioral health therapy.

Supports the development of behavior support plans.

Maintains and facilitates communication with families, mental health staff, and providers.

Implements a universal screening aligned with the school-wide social-emotional support systems for early identification of at-risk students.

Conducts crisis and/or risk assessments and responses.

Provides specialty mental health and wellness services, including rehabilitation and case management.

Maintains documentation of students served and services provided.

Delivers training to students, parents, and staff in behavioral and social-emotional prevention, and intervention strategies.

Collaborates with the school team and participates in various school-site meetings.

EXAMPLES OF IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL DUTIES (CONTINUED)

Prepares formal statistical reports, case histories, assessments, and intervention records.

Fosters an inclusive, respectful environment that welcomes and supports the individuality of all clients and partners.

Advocates for the communities served by implementing supportive strategies.

Demonstrates cultural humility when interacting with families, caregivers, and students; assists and engages clients in overcoming barriers to services.

Maintains confidentiality of student, family, caregiver, and provider information.

Program Support:

Serve as a member of the school team, integrating within the school-wide culture and systems.

Provides behavioral health support within a multi-tiered intervention framework, engaging in prevention and intervention activities.

Offers mental health and wellness support services to district staff and educational teams, including case consultation and advice on student status, diagnosis, and treatment.

Provide oversight and clinical supervision of pre-licensed social workers and therapists, including Marriage and Family Therapist Masters in Social Work (MSW) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) interns.

Acts as a technical resource for school staff on mental health services.

Assesses and delivers training to educational teams, parents, caregivers, and community agencies as appropriate.

Serves as a liaison between the County Office of Education, County Children's Behavioral Health, district schools, and community organizations.

Develops and maintains collaborative and effective working relationships with students, families, district staff, County Office staff, and community partners.

Attends and participates in assigned meetings, committees, conferences, in-services, and special events.

Collects data and prepares reports, including grant deliverables and evaluations.

Perform related duties and responsibilities as assigned.

JOB-RELATED AND ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

Experience in collaboration between public schools and mental health, including child welfare, probation, community-based organizations, managed care plans, and/or federally qualified health centers.

Knowledge of (continued):

Advanced training in MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) with applications in behavioral health interventions.

Tools and strategies related to mental health, truancy prevention, family systems, positive behavior interventions, and public health-inspired prevention models.

Principles and practices used in dealing with staff, students, families and outside agencies.

Proper English usage, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation.

Modern office practices, methods, computer equipment and software.

Public health-inspired prevention models, implementation research and effective mental health practices.

Regulations and ethics, including Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), related to school-based mental health services.

Organizing work and providing services within time-sensitive frameworks.

Familiarity with mental health, truancy prevention, and family systems and positive behavior intervention strategies

Skill and Ability to:

Demonstrate cultural competence and a deep understanding of the issues facing urban and suburban youth and their families.

Conduct assessments, crisis intervention, and counseling.

Develop, coordinate and deliver relevant training to students, parents, and staff.

Interpret, apply, and explain rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Evaluate situations and adopt appropriate courses of action.

Maintain confidentiality and discretion.

Work independently with minimal direction.

Communicate effectively orally and in writing

Operate a computer and use standard software applications.

Develop and deliver professional development.

Be courteous and maintain a neat and clean appearance, and demeanor at all times.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Any combination equivalent to experience and training that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities would be qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities would be:

Education:

Master's degree in counseling, social work, psychology, or a related field from an accredited college or university.

Experience:

Two (2) years of experience in direct counseling with diverse populations of students and families, including: collaborative experience in child welfare, mental health, and probation services is preferred; experience in supporting the implementation of complex programs; experience supporting students in need of mental health services in a school setting.

License or certificate:

Possession of a valid California Board of Behavioral Sciences Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) license, Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC), or Clinical Psychologist certification.

Possession of, or ability to obtain, an appropriate, valid California driver's license and appropriate vehicle operation insurance.

Qualification Requirements

To perform a job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed in the job description are representative of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions. Essential duties require the following physical skills and work environment:

Ability to work in a classroom and office environment with the ability to sit, stand, walk, kneel, crouch, stoop, squat, twist, reach, and lift 25 pounds; exposure to volatile and assaultive behavior; exposure to outdoors.

Ability to speak in both English and Spanish or a target language is highly preferred.

Ability to travel to different sites and locations in personal automobile.

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