

**FUNCTIONAL STATEMENT
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH LAB
SOCIAL WORKER
GS-0185-11**

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This fulltime position will work within the Behavioral Health Laboratory (BHL) to assist in the delivery of evidence based care for primary care patients identified with a variety of emotional and psychiatric problems including depression, anxiety disorders, and alcohol misuse. The identified role is a Behavioral Health Specialists (BHS) or care manager. Incumbent will be responsible for monitoring patients, providing education and support, influencing adherence to guidelines by providing "on-time, on-target" information to primary care physicians, and collaboratively making appropriate care decisions. The BHS/Care Manager should be an MSW with at least 2 years of experience in research or clinical settings. Moreover, incumbent must be of U.S. Citizenship, meet physical standards, and be proficient in English. The BHS is an integral part of the health care team at the site(s) to which incumbent is assigned.

Since the BHS will be responsible for interacting clinically with primary care clinicians, the patients, and their families, the BH specialists will be selected in part for their experience with, and sensitivity to, the kinds of patients and providers participating in the BHL.

Individuals assigned as GS-11 Social Workers are considered to be at the full performance level. A GS-11 Social Worker has a Masters Degree in Social Work granted by a graduate program fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

FUNCTIONS OF THE POSITION

The individual works in the Behavioral Health Lab but may be required to work an irregular tour of duty, weekends, depending on the needs of the service and participate in social work coverage to the medical center off tour.

- A. The incumbent is responsible for completing the following duties/responsibilities: Completes structured diagnostic and clinical assessments for participants. This requires knowledge of medical terminology, diagnostic categories, and chart review.
- B. Reviews assessments completed by others, and obtains missing information from providers, patients, and medical records.

- C. The incumbent will learn the Behavioral Health Laboratory software program for interviewing participants. This includes determining the appropriate level of care need for patients not in treatment and the ability to understand the variety of clinical options available through the medical center and local community.
- D. The incumbent must have a thorough working knowledge of VISTA/CPRS. Must keep abreast of the various changes made within these programs and is responsible for maintaining the integrity of access to these clinical records.
- E. Contacts patients through written correspondence and telephone calls, and conducts follow up interviews. This requires substantial communication skills and the ability to remain organized.
- F. Creates and maintains forms, surveys, instruments, and materials for proper coordination of the different treatment modules available through the BHL.
- G. Provides psycho-education and direct advice regarding symptoms of depression, anxiety and alcohol misuse to patients. This includes the development of an appropriate treatment plan for patients and the ability to communicate that plan to the patient's provider.
- H. Provides social work consultation to Primary Care providers, other Behavioral Health clinicians and team members in the development of individual treatment plans. This includes coordinating treatment and communicating with other services to facilitate continuity of care for Veterans.
- I. The incumbent communicates evaluations & recommendations to PCP & BH team members.
- J. The incumbent develops community resources & coordinates these resources in the interest of the Veteran & his/her family.
- K. The incumbent specializes in staff development & patient education in the area of mental health treatment.
- L. The incumbent will participate in on-going research and program evaluations.
- M. Presents reports to Associate Chief of Staff, BH as required.
- N. The incumbent will assist in the development & implementation of policies & procedures pertinent to the program, including quality assurance & program evaluation activities as required by MIRECC, VACO, PVAMC & Joint Commission.

- O. The incumbent will, as appropriate, supervise the practice of social work students, or a less experienced social worker.
- P. The incumbent will participate in committee assignments, as deemed necessary by the service manager.
- Q. The incumbent will be responsible for maintaining accurate record of relevant trainings and participate in continuing education in accordance with VA policies and state licensure. The Social Worker has the ability to evaluate his/her own practice through professional peer review, case conferences and other organizational means. The Social Worker will complete all mandatory VA trainings in a timely manner.
- R. The incumbent will fulfill ethical responsibilities to Veterans, colleagues and VA in accordance with NASW Code of Ethics, VHA Code of Ethics, and local Ethics policies, which includes but is not limited to compliance with all laws and regulations related to confidentiality and release of information, and protecting Veterans' personal identifying information.
- S. The incumbent documents in the patient's medical record in accordance with Social Work and medical center policies, and the requirements of The Joint Commission. This may include a Social Work screening and/or development of a biopsychosocial assessment and treatment plan within the time frame required by Social Work service standards. Progress notes are timely and reflect progress toward treatment goals. Outcomes are evaluated and documented. The incumbent will ensure appropriate hand off when transferring of patient care.
- T. Accepts other assignments as delegated by the Supervisory Social Worker.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

- A. Extensive familiarity with clinical settings; skill with computers; skill in organizing and maintaining records and record summaries; and excellent English language skills. Knowledge and skill in the use of computer software applications for drafting documents, data management, and tracking, especially those programs in use by VHA.
- B. Ability to provide psycho-education and counseling to patients and the ability to function independently in assessment and diagnosis of mental health disorders.
- C. Familiarity with a variety of treatments for depression, PTSD, alcohol misuse and anxiety. Basic knowledge of psychosocial treatment modalities and, under supervision, ability to implement treatment modalities in working with individuals,

families, and groups to achieve treatment goals. This requires judgment and skill in utilizing supportive, problem solving, or crisis intervention techniques.

- D. Ability to work with and communicate with a variety of clinicians including primary care providers and mental health providers. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with clients, staff, and representatives of community agencies. Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with people from varied backgrounds.
- E. Knowledge of medical and mental health diagnoses, disabilities, and treatment procedures. This includes acute, chronic, and traumatic illnesses/injuries; common medications and their effects/side effects; and medical terminology.
- F. Knowledge of community resources, how to make appropriate referrals to community and other governmental agencies for services, and ability to coordinate services.
- G. Ability to independently assess the psychosocial functioning and needs of patients and their family members and to formulate and implement a treatment plan, identifying the patient's problems, strengths, weaknesses, coping skills and assistance needed, in collaboration with the patient, family and interdisciplinary treatment team.
- H. Ability to independently conduct psychosocial assessments and provide psychosocial treatment to a wide variety of individuals from various socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, educational and other diversified backgrounds. This requires knowledge of human development and behavior (physical and psychological) and the differential influences of the environment, society, and culture.
- I. Ability to independently provide counseling and/or psychotherapy services to individuals, groups and families. Social workers must practice within the bounds of their license or certification. For example, some states may require social workers providing psychotherapy to have a clinical level of licensure.
- J. Ability to provide consultation services to other staff about the psychosocial needs of patients and the impact of psychosocial problems on health care and compliance with treatment. Ability to provide orientation and coaching to new social workers and social work graduate students. Ability to serve as a field instructor for social work graduate students who are completing VHA field placements.
- K. Ability to independently evaluate his/her own practice through participation in professional peer review case conferences, research studies, or other organized means.

- L. The position requires general knowledge of regulations, policies and procedures of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

The GS-11 Social Worker performs duties independently and is assigned to a supervisory Social Worker who provides clinical supervision and consultation as requested by the incumbent on an as-needed basis, or at least monthly. Incumbent is administratively responsible to the Supervisory Social Worker. Programmatic supervision will be provided by the Director of the BHL.

The Social Worker's clinical work is randomly reviewed by the assigned supervisor for the purpose of evaluating effectiveness.

QUALIFICATIONS

Meets the qualification standard for the GS 11 Social Worker as defined in See VA Handbook 5005, Part II Appendix G39, Social Worker Qualification Standard GS-185 Veterans Health Administration.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Incumbent meets the needs of customers while supporting VA missions. Consistently communicates and treats customers (Veterans, their representatives, visitors, and all VA staff) in a courteous, tactful, and respectful manner. Incumbent provides the customer with consistent information according to established policies and procedures. Handles conflict and problems in dealing with the consumer constructively and appropriately.

AGE, DEVELOPMENT, AND CULTURAL NEEDS OF PATIENTS REQUIREMENTS

Age-specific care that is appropriate to the cognitive, emotional, cultural, and chronological maturation needs of the patient. Demonstrates knowledge of changes associated with aging and principles of growth and development relevant to the adult and geriatric age groups; ability to assess and interpret data about the patient's status; and ability to identify age-specific needs and provide the appropriate care based upon the age related factors. Demonstrates knowledge of young, middle, young-old and middle-old adult's age-related needs and assists them in adjusting, coping and maintaining a healthy and productive level of functioning. Also demonstrates sensitivity to and knowledge of the needs of adult and older Veterans as those needs appear in family relationships, physical, and emotional changes.

COMPUTER SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

Incumbent protects printed and electronic files containing sensitive data in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable laws, Federal regulations, VA statutes and policy, and VHA policy. Incumbent protects the data from unauthorized release or from loss, alteration, or unauthorized deletion. Incumbent follows applicable regulations and instructions regarding access to computerized files, release of access codes, etc.

The employee uses word processing software to execute several office automation functions such as storing and retrieving electronic documents and files; activating printers; inserting and deleting text, formatting letters, reports, and memoranda; and transmitting and receiving e-mail. The employee uses the Veterans Health Information and Technology Architecture (Vista) to access information in the Medical Center Computer System.

SAFETY

- a. Appropriate use of equipment, supplies.
- b. Maintain safe, orderly work areas.
- c. Report any accident to self, patient, fill out appropriate form.
- d. Follows Life Safety Management (fire protection) procedures. Reports safety hazards, accidents and injuries. Reviews hazardous materials/Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/waste management. Follows Emergency Preparedness plan. Follows security policies/procedures. Complies with federal, state and local environmental and other requirements preventing pollution, minimizing waste, and conserving cultural and natural resources.
- e. Demonstrates infection control practices for disease prevention (i.e. hand washing, universal precautions/isolation procedures, including TB requirement/precautions).

ENVIRONMENT OF CARE

Implements and monitors OSHA goals for Life Safety Management, health and the environment procedures. Reports safety hazards, accidents and injuries. Implements, monitors and reviews hazardous materials/Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/waste management, fire protection. Implements and monitors Emergency Preparedness plan. Implements and monitors security policies/procedures. Implements and monitors compliance with federal, state and local environmental and other requirements preventing pollution, minimizing waste, and conserving cultural and natural resources.

INFECTION CONTROL

Implements and monitors infection control practices for disease prevention (i.e. hand washing, universal precautions/isolation procedures, including TB requirement/precautions).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Fosters a high profile of the VA Occupational Safety and Health Program by assuring employee awareness of potential safety hazards, promptly reporting all injuries and effecting corrective actions necessary to eliminate safety and health hazards in the work area.

Supervisor Signature

Date