



**Cayuga County Department of Human Resources
and Civil Service Commission**

JOB SPECIFICATION

Civil Service Title: **Mental Health Therapy Aide**
Jurisdictional Class: Non-Competitive
Civil Division: Community Mental Health Center
Adoption: CSM
Revised: CSM 11/10/83, 5/10/95, 1/9/14

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This position exists in the County Mental Health Department and involves responsibility for carrying out routine therapeutic elements of a treatment plan designed by professional interdisciplinary team members to encourage and guide patients in developing good daily living habits and skills. Employees in this class have continuous contact with patients making the position critical to the success of individual treatment plans. An incumbent's work with particular patients is performed under the general supervision of mental health professionals assigned overall responsibility for the patient's treatment plan. Supervision over the work of others is not a responsibility of employees in this class. The incumbent does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: (Illustrative Only)

Organizes, with patient participation, social activities such as dances, picnics, shopping trips, field trips, etc., and/to cultural and athletic events in order to develop patients' social and individual awareness and develop body and mind coordination;

Listens to patients in a receptive manner assisting them in expressing their problems verbally;

Plans recreational programs under direction of a staff professional and distributes materials for use in program events and activities;

Observes patient behavior and reports either by recording in writing or orally to a professional staff member;

Prepares concise written summaries of activities performed with patients;

Guides and interests patients in participating in games which increase their alertness of numbers, words, and concepts of money and property such as card games, board games, etc.;

Assures clean, safe, and comfortable environments for patients reporting any problem areas relative to location that might affect the treatment program negatively;

Participates at team meetings by communicating observations concerning patients' progress and reactions to various therapy programs;

May suggest at team meetings alternative programs or procedures based on the incumbent's experience to revise a patient's treatment plan;

Records all significant behavioral responses in prescribed format;

Escorts patients to therapy sessions, recreational activities, cultural events, shopping trips, etc., to ensure their safety and enjoyment and to provide personal guidance;

May order supplies necessary to care for the personal and treatment needs of patients.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES, PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Working knowledge of basic principles, practices, and terminology involved in the treatment of the mentally ill, developmentally disabled or handicapped, including arts, crafts, games, sports, hobbies, and similar activities which might be employed in the treatment process;
Ability to work with patients in a receptive and sensitive manner;
Ability to stimulate and maintain patient interest in various basic therapeutic techniques;
Ability to recognize important developments expressed by patients through behavior or conversation that should be brought to the attention of appropriate professional staff;
Ability to follow oral and written instructions;
Ability to walk, stand, bend, and stretch for long periods of time;
Ability to complete written forms and simple reports in an accurate manner;
Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma plus one year of paid (or equivalent volunteer and/or lifetime) experience working with individuals with mental or developmental disabilities or with clients in a mental health setting.

NOTE: Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered 4-year college or university with a Bachelor's Degree in psychology, sociology, counseling, social work, or social welfare may be substituted for the one year of experience outlined above.