



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

JOB SPECIFICATION

Civil Service Title: **Social Work Assistant (Mental Health)**
Jurisdictional Class: Competitive
Civil Division: Community Mental Health Center
Adoption: CSM 2/26/83
Revised: CSM 5/10/95, 2/14/01, 10/9/13

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This position exists in the County Mental Health Department and involves responsibility to provide sub-professional social work services as a member of an interdisciplinary team in helping patients with social, emotional and related difficulties associated with their emotional disturbances and placement in community environments or identified as potentially appropriate for placement. An incumbent is also expected to meet and coordinate with other staff members both in and outside the agency to obtain assistance and guidance for patients. The work is performed under general supervision of a Staff Social Worker or other comparable professional. Supervision may be exercised over the work of non-professional subordinates. The incumbent does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: (Illustrative Only)

Provides limited social work services to help patients adjust to their illness or disabilities;
Maintains information on community and health resources which can be utilized during the patient's care and subsequent to his discharge from the program;
Converses with patients, listening to their fears and concerns in an understanding and empathetic manner;
Collects and maintains appropriate data from various sources such as professional staff and patients' families to aid in establishing an overall approach to solution of psychological, medical and social problems;
Develops safety plans when needed and responds to crisis situations;
Initiates and conducts team meetings to coordinate care, problem solve issues, share information and monitor/evaluate consumer status and service needs;
Participates in evaluation, selection and matching processes leading to formal assignment of prospective patients to a caseload;
Develops a helping and supportive relationship with patients and their families to encourage them to function in an independent manner;
Reports on adequacy of various support service elements so their effect and appropriateness relative to the patient may be determined;
Participates in the process of transfer of patients to other levels of care as appropriate;
Attends staff meetings and conferences to discuss patient progress and care plans;
Interviews patients and their families and consults with personnel of other agencies in making social and developmental studies;
Assures proper patient utilization of necessary life support services in the community such as transitional housing, financial entitlements, medical and mental health care, vocational and psychosocial rehabilitation, recreation, transportation and family counseling services;

Meets and confers with supervisors and patient's treatment staff involved in discharge planning to discuss community placement;
Mediates problems that patients are unable to deal with such as landlord/tenant, customer/vendor issues, etc.
Prepares a variety of records and reports related to the work.
May be required to perform other related duties and tasks as required.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES, PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Good knowledge of the practices and procedures of social work and of the social factors affecting mental disturbances;
Working knowledge of community resources available to meet patient needs;
Ability to establish trust and induce patient cooperation;
Ability to organize work effectively and interpret federal, state and local laws affecting medical and health programs;
Ability to interview patients and family members;
Ability to differentiate between medical and psychological factors affecting mental illness or disability;
Ability to establish therapeutic relationships to effect social work skills;
Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing;
Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with patients, their families and others;
Ability to plan and implement community service and placement plans for patients;
Ability to prepare records and reports;
Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- (A) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered four-year college or university with a Bachelor's Degree which includes 30 credit hours in psychology, sociology, counseling, social work or social welfare; **OR**
- (B) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered two-year college with an Associate's Degree which includes 15 credit hours in psychology, sociology, counseling, social work or social welfare; **PLUS** two years of experience providing social work, case work or counseling to mentally ill, emotionally disturbed or developmentally disabled patients; **OR**
- (C) Four years of experience as outlined in (B) above; **OR**
- (D) An equivalent combination of training and experience as defined by the limits of (A), (B) and (C) above.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT(S):

These positions require extensive field work. Appointees must demonstrate their capacity to meet the transportation needs involved in carrying out work responsibilities which will include travel to areas not served by public transportation. Operation of county-owned vehicles requires employees to possess a current valid NYS Motor Vehicle Operators License.