

SENIOR PSYCHOLOGIST I

This class recognizes the responsibility for providing direct psychological services at a high level of clinical expertise. Employees serve as experts in performing advanced testing, assessment, and treatment of complex behavioral, emotional, and learning disorders independently. This level also recognizes expert consultative work within the area of psychological services. Duties may include providing quality control monitoring, clinical training, and applied research. Duties may also include coordinating or supervising a small program or sub-unit and/or acting as a lead over professionals other than psychologists.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Employees are responsible for comprehensive and complicated psychological evaluations, intervention, and consultation services. Diagnostic responsibilities may include evaluation for development, intelligence, learning, behavior, personality disorders, and organically which would require using objective, intelligence, visual motor, and projective testing methods and usually neuropsychological tests. Intervention responsibilities include supportive to reconstructive psychotherapy or behavioral analysis training and programming with more difficult or complex cases. Consultation services include providing expert advice to community agencies, such as, to courts on complex family dynamics and forensic cases or providing a high level of expertise to psychologists and other professionals on unusual cases. Employees may design new behavioral rating scales, psychological tests, or integrate existing methods to fit special clientele. Employees may do innovative applied clinical research to develop new modes of treatment and assessment.

Intricacy - Employees administer and interpret psychological assessment procedures in the more complex clinical situations and intervene in multi-focal psychological or learning disorder cases using advanced intervention approaches, which result in personality readjustment and problem resolution. The employees' advanced level of expertise results in other staff referring cases for consultation and/or transfer. Employees receive referrals on children and/or adults with a variety of the more difficult psychological and educational problems. Types of cases include emotionally disturbed, behaviorally disordered, family dysfunction, learning problems, and multi-handicapped. Judgment must be exercised in determining or designing the appropriate assessment techniques which may include observing behavior in various settings, interviewing the client and significant others, and using advanced and specialized psychological, educational, and developmental tests such as projectives and psychological methods. Results are used for a wide variety of decisions, such as, to determine the most effective treatment modality, appropriate school placement, programming, or agency referral and the suitability of couples to adopt a child. A high level of expertise is required for consultation in designing and monitoring programs of intervention for individuals, families, and groups, as well as in engaging in psychotherapy. Decisions have greater authority and accountability than found at the Psychological Associate level.

Subject Matter Complexity - A thorough knowledge of psychological theories, principles, techniques, and therapeutic skills is required. Additionally, work in specific programs requires appropriate concentrations of knowledge on psychotherapy, learning theory and behavior therapy, developmental problems associated with different age groups and curriculum design techniques. Work may require ability to design and manage data collection systems or conduct applied clinical research.

Guidelines - Employees utilize standards of practice established by the American Psychological Association, analyze current scientific literature, and integrate new concepts and practices into their knowledge base.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Employees perform with legal independence and considerable program autonomy in selecting appropriate diagnostic tests, developing intervention goals and approaches, and providing expert consultation. Work is initiated by referrals from various sources within a unit or center or from other agencies. Information on referrals and requested services varies from general to specific.

Nature of Review - The type of review varies with the program setting and structure. Generally, there is peer review, record audits, and quality assurance monitoring of standards set by agency guidelines and outside accrediting bodies; however employees are not required by law to receive legal technical supervision.

Scope of Decisions - Employees' judgment directly affects clients served by the particular program, and influences the course of action taken by other professionals through consultation and training education activities.

Consequence of Decisions - Client adjustment, growth, development, and learning are affected by the effectiveness of the application of advanced testing, therapy, and intervention techniques both directly and through consultation/training provided to other professionals. Decisions and recommendations are regarded as highly authoritative by the judicial system, community agencies, and peers.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Employees work directly with a variety of professional disciplines and paraprofessionals in Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse, Social Services, Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, Blind Services, Correction, or school programs. Contacts are usually in the work unit or with other agencies serving the same clients.

Nature and Purpose - Employees share information and expertise on diagnostic findings and progress with peer professionals and others in staffing and consultation. Work with the client involves developing therapeutic/professional relationships during the treatment process. Consultative work involves serving as expert resource to peer staff and community groups on specialty areas such as neuropsychological testing, forensic assessment, or complicated therapies.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Settings range from locations in local mental health or developmental evaluation centers to institutions and correctional field units which serve clients who may have aggressive and/or profound problems.

Hazards - In some settings, clients may experience periods of extreme aggressiveness that could result in personal injury to the employee. The degree of exposure depends on the location of the position, type of program or unit, and patients/inmates assigned.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Thorough knowledge of the theories and practices of the field of psychology including human behavior, learning theory, and development throughout the life span.

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Thorough knowledge of the range of the special needs of the emotionally and socially distressed, learning disabled, handicapped, and disadvantaged. Thorough knowledge of causes and effects of atypical and disruptive behavior patterns. Thorough knowledge of principles of therapeutic intervention, including interpretive therapy and behavior modification or curriculum design. Thorough knowledge of projective and objective psychological, educational, and developmental tests including those of a complex, comprehensive nature. Advanced skill in the proper application and interpretation of those tests, and in preparing and presenting comprehensive and cohesive reports. Skill in relating expressively and dynamically with others.

Minimum Training and Experience - Doctoral degree in psychology from an appropriately accredited institution and two years of professional psychological experience, one of which must be post doctoral. Refer to the law for specifics regarding experience requirements.

Minimum Training and Experience for a Trainee Appointment – Doctoral degree in psychology.

Necessary Special Qualifications - One must fulfill all requirements for licensure in North Carolina as a licensed psychologist under provisions specified by the Psychology Practice Act (G.S. 90-270).

Special Note: This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.