

Social Worker – Investigative/Assessment and Treatment

This is advanced, professional level casework providing protective, investigative, counseling and case management services for children who at risk for neglect and/or abuse. Employees are assigned to local departments of Social Services and provide social work services including treatment and immediate response to crisis situations for at-risk children in the most complex cases in the departments. Work involves investigation of alleged neglect and abuse, substantiation of the alleged neglect or abuse as prescribed by federal and state guidelines, providing expert testimony in court hearings, and following-up with case management and preventive services for clients. Employees analyze situations and determine appropriate courses of action immediately or in short time spans and often under very stressful conditions. Employees may provide group, family or individual treatment to clients of any age and any developmental, mental, medical, substance abuse, financial or family problem. Employees typically report to a Social Work Supervisor III under general supervision. Employees may have combined investigative and treatment roles or may have separate functions depending on the size and organizational structure of the departments of Social Services.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope – Employees manage a caseload of clients in the most difficult and complex cases. Work may involve providing treatment in group, family or individual therapy to clients of any age and/or with any developmental, mental, medical, financial, substance abuse or family problem including abused, neglected or homeless children. Work includes clinical and social investigation, assessment of individuals and family dynamics, crisis intervention, referrals for treatment and placement in foster care or residential facilities. Employees provide expert testimony.

Intricacy – Employees exercise considerable judgment in determining whether abuse or neglect has occurred, to what extent and how it occurred. The selection of appropriate treatment for the family and clients requires significant understanding of their personalities based on assessments and interviews.

Subject Matter Complexity – Employees must understand social work theory, techniques and practices, individual and group behavior, social problems, medical and mental illness, family dynamics, coping behavior, crisis intervention, and treatment of various medical and mental diseases and social issues.

Guidelines - Guidelines include state and federal laws, program rules, directives, policies and regulations, professional ethics and quality assurance standards.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions – Work is jointly planned with members of multidisciplinary teams or protective services committees and supervisors. Legal precedents are used in some settings.

Nature of Review – Work is reviewed by unit supervisors, program managers or higher-level administrators, usually on a routine basis.

Scope of Decisions – Decisions affect children and their families and are often made under stressful and sometimes dangerous situations. Many decisions must be made immediately or with little time for consultation.

Consequence of Decisions – Assessments, interviews and service treatment decisions affect the safety and well being of children in abuse and neglect situations. Failure to follow-through on case management visits, remove a child from parent or foster custody or monitor treatment outcomes can lead to severe injury, neglect or child fatality.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts – Contacts include clients and their families, foster families, a variety of medical and psychological professionals, law enforcement, legal services and social and community agencies.

Nature and Purpose – The purpose is to gather and share information, to determine the extent of abuse or neglect, to provide counseling, to arrange for services and to provide expert opinions to legal officials.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions – Employees work in offices, but work involves visiting homes, schools, health and mental health facilities, and other service agencies.

Hazards – Hazards may include contact with irate clients and/or family members who may be hostile, resistant or violent. Some homes may be poorly maintained and have unsafe living conditions. Some may be in unsafe areas where the threat of violence is real or in isolated areas where access to emergency services may be difficult.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills and Abilities – Thorough knowledge of social work principles, techniques and practices and their applications to complex casework, treatment, and investigation of abuse or neglect of children; thorough knowledge of policies and procedures as evidenced by the ability to cite the authority of federal and state law; thorough knowledge of individual and group behavior, family dynamics, and medical, behavioral and/or psychosocial problems and their treatment theory. Considerable knowledge of governmental and private organizations and resources in the community. Ability to interact and motivate a resistant involuntary client population and the public who may not agree with the laws, rules or policies of the process or the programs; ability to prepare documentation such as written investigative reports for the court, case records and treatment plans; ability to testify as an expert witness; ability to employ advanced case management interview techniques to establish a supportive relationship and involve families in the initial assessment for the need of services; ability to quickly assess the risks and safety of the client environment during daylight hours, after dark and in high crime areas; ability to employ expert negotiation skills in the most complex cases; ability to analyze and assess child development safety issues in relation to risk factors; ability to analyze tense family situations and make decisions about removing children when the decision has to be made with limited direct information and limited access to consultation; ability to communicate effectively and establish supportive client relationships. Ability to perform manual work exerting up to 50 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

Minimum Training and Experience Requirements: - Master's degree from an accredited school of social work and one year of social work experience; or a Bachelor's degree from an accredited school of social work and two years of social work or counseling experience; or Master's degree in a counseling field and two years of social work or counseling experience; or a four-year degree in a human services field or related curriculum and three years of social work or counseling experience; or graduation from a four-year college or university and four years of experience in rehabilitation counseling, pastoral counseling or a related human service field providing experience in the techniques of casework, group work or community organization; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.

One year of work experience can be credited for completion of the social work collaborative.

Administering the Class – Varying settings, programs and job designs at this level allow for flexibility in accepting counseling experience or social work experience as required by the job.

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.