

SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANT (Mental Health)

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:

- 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;
- Provides direct assistance to patients in setting up housekeeping in an independent living setting including providing advice and assistance on obtaining furnishing, shopping for groceries, etc;
- 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;
- 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 meeting and conferences to discuss patient progress and care plans;
- Interviews patients and their families and consults with personnel or 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 psycho-social 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;
- Escorts patients to community providers often acting in their behalf to enable them to cope with life experiences and difficulties;
- 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.

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 demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Either (A)** A graduate degree from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university in social work, counseling or a related field;
- or (B)** 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 and one year of subsequent experience in a human service setting;
- or (C)** Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered four-year college or university with a bachelor's degree and two years of subsequent experience in a human service setting;
- or (D)** An equivalent combination of experience and training as outlined by the limits of (A), (B) and (C) above.