



Hay River Health & Social Services Authority | Administration des services de santé et des services sociaux de Hay River  
 37911 MacKenzie Highway | 37911, route MacKenzie  
 Hay River, NT X0E 0R6

## Job Description

### IDENTIFICATION

<i>Position Number</i>	<i>Position Title</i>	
	<b>Mental Health &amp; Addictions Counsellor</b>	
<i>Department</i>	<i>Position Reports To</i>	<i>Site</i>
<b>Community Counselling Services (CCS)</b>	<b>Clinical Supervisor Community Counselling Services</b>	<b>Gensen Building</b>

### PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

A Counsellor at Community Counselling Services (CCS) is responsible for providing comprehensive mental health and addictions services for clients falling under the responsibility of the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA), primarily the communities of Hay River and Enterprise. Services are provided in accordance with the NWT Mental Health Act, Child and Family Services Act, the Community Counselling Program Standards, and the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association standards. Services are intended to help improve the mental health and wellbeing of residents and their community.

### SCOPE

This position may be located at one of the Hay River Health & Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) locations. They include the Hay River Regional Health Center (HRRHC), the Gensen Building, Woodland Manor, Supportive Living Services and/or H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital (HHWMH). The HRHSSA is an accredited, integrated health authority that provides the following services: 19 acute inpatient beds (14 Community Support Beds, 1 Family Suite (Palliative), 2 Secure Rooms, 2 Observation

beds), Emergency and Ambulatory Care, including dialysis and endoscopy; Midwifery Care and Delivery; 25 Long Term Care beds; Supportive Living Campus, a Territorial campus providing 11 permanent residences; Diagnostic Services (Diagnostic Imaging, Ultrasound, Mammography); Laboratory; Medical and Specialty Clinics including Diabetes programming; Social Programs (Community Counselling, Healthy Families and Child and Family Services) Community Health and Home Care, Rehabilitation which include Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Language Pathology; and a full range of Support Services.

This position reports directly to the Clinical Supervisor, Community Counselling Services. Located in Hay River, and serving a primary population of around 4000 people, the Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor uses a case management approach to collaborating with various departments of the HRHSSA, and representatives from a number of agencies, including but not limited to: the Family Support Centre; Social Services; HRHSSA medical and nursing staff; Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre; public school counsellors and teachers; South MacKenzie Correctional Center; Natse jee K'eh Treatment Centre and various government and non-governmental agencies.

The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor operates within a culturally sensitive philosophy of education, prevention, therapeutic counselling, out-patient treatment, and aftercare, to minimize the negative physical, mental, social and emotional impacts of mental health and trauma through providing clients with therapeutic interventions and support to maintain psychological well-being. These services include but are not limited to: intake and screening; assessment; therapeutic counselling and treatment; aftercare; prevention and promotion initiatives; planning and delivery of community based mental health services; case management; and crisis response. This involves having the skills to work with various cultural groups and all members of the population (i.e., elders, adults, adolescents, children, couples, and families). The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor is also a key referral agent and service provider for complex addictions and psychiatric clients.

This position impacts on community health and well-being through increased awareness and treatment of mental health issues, reduction of suicides and alcohol related deaths and illnesses, as well as the reduction of family breakdown through prevention, therapeutic counselling, and crisis intervention.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Using a best practices model, the Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor is responsible for, independently and as part of the Community Counselling Services team, providing a continuum of clinical counselling services for elders, children, adolescents, adults, couples, families and groups in all areas of mental health.

### ***Main Activities:***

- Conduct screening, and biopsychosocial intake assessment protocols with clients for a variety of conditions and disorders including, but not limited to: disorders identified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental*

*Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-V)*, addictions, family violence, suicidal ideation, grief and loss, residential school and intergenerational trauma, FASD, concurrent disorders, sexual/physical assault, as well as problems and interpersonal issues with work, school, family, relationships, personal growth, or other important areas of function causing distress. Mental Health & Addictions Counsellors should have the ability to use a number of assessment tools (e.g., Burns, Beck, and Schema);

- Provide short and long-term therapeutic counselling services in individual, family, or group formats using a treatment modality that best fits the client (s) including but not limited to: Family Systems Theory, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, Group Therapy, Emotion Focused Therapy, Brief Solution Focused Therapy, Cognitive-Interpersonal Therapy, Mindfulness, Experiential Therapies (e.g., art, play), , Motivational Interviewing, Harm Reduction, and Client Centered Therapy;
- Plan and prepare for client sessions according to the case plan. Preparation may consist of one or more of the following: reviewing the client' s file, researching and reviewing relevant therapeutic techniques, and reviewing relevant case studies;
- Provide aftercare and follow-up counselling, following in-patient treatment for addictions, family violence, suicidal ideation, self-harm, or mental health related hospitalization, participating in discharge planning where possible. Aftercare services may include medication monitoring and keeping in regular contact with clients, as well as connecting clients with resources in the community;
- Involvement in research and/or publications is encouraged.

**2. The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor is responsible for, independently and as part of the Community Counselling Services team, providing comprehensive mental health and case management services.**

***Main Activities:***

- Take a lead role in case management and case planning for mental health clients. Conduct care coordination/planning involving necessary professionals/traditional healers/services on a regular basis;
- Complete screening and risk assessment for suicide and mental status with all client groups and individuals, including those that are hospitalized;
- Provide consultation to physicians and nurse practitioners when determining need for hospitalization and possible medevac for mental health issues (based on outcomes of screening and risk assessment);
- Provide leadership and advocacy with clients in working with other agencies, without engaging in enabling behavior;
- Participate in case consultations with representatives from referring agencies;
- Participate on a community or agency committee and report back to the Community Counselling Services team;
- Attend interdisciplinary rounds at the hospital if asked to do so by the clinical supervisor.

**3. The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor is responsible for contributing to the effective functioning of the Community Counselling Program (CPP) standards for practice and enhancing the development, delivery and continuity of mental health services.**

***Main Activities:***

- Evaluate therapeutic counselling and treatment outcomes to determine the best service for clients;
- Participate in service evaluation, data collection activities, and other program design and delivery initiatives.

**4. The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor, independently and as a member of the Community Counselling Services team, is a consultant and leader on mental health issues within Hay River.**

***Main Activities:***

- Provide community awareness and education. This includes but is not limited to providing presentations and/or workshops that raise awareness of relevant mental health issues within the community;
- Work in partnership with the Community Wellness Workers in providing education sessions to professionals;
- Provide orientation and training on mental health, addictions, and family violence to key stakeholders within the community (e.g., RCMP, Probation Services, Youth Justice Committee, Family Support Centre, HRHSSA Employees, Schools, Non-government organizations, Band councils);
- Provide expertise and materials to community groups.

**5. The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor is responsible, independently and as part of the Community Counselling Services team, for completing a number of administrative duties.**

***Main Activities:***

- Compile caseload statistics and assisting the Clinical Supervisor with preparing program reports;
- Perform clerical work needed to complete reporting and file management responsibilities, including word processing, photocopying, letter writing and so on;
- Assist in the planning and implementation of program enhancements;
- Assist in identifying and pursuing professional development opportunities;
- Answer telephone calls and responds to messages;
- Complete intake reports, clinical case notes, discharge summaries, referral letters, and other documentation as required in the format set out by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Clinical Supervisor.

## **POSITION ROLE IN CLIENT & STAFF SAFETY:**

The HRHSSA is committed to creating a culture of safety throughout the organization. A culture of safety is necessary to provide optimal care to our clients, and a healthy workplace for staff. An organization with a culture of safety is characterized by several elements:

- Client-centered care;
- Healthy workplace;
- Open communication; and a
- Blame-free and accountable environment.

All staff throughout the organization shares the responsibility for client and staff safety by:

- Demonstrating a commitment to safety;
- Complying with safety policies, procedures and best practices;
- Identifying and reporting safety issues; and
- Participating in safety initiatives.

## **Commitment to Client Centered Care**

Recognizing that our clients are the experts for their own lives, the Hay River Health & Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) is committed to support our clients as leaders to accomplish the goals that they have set out for us in their personal care. The (HRHSSA) will endeavor to provide client centered care through the following:

- Involving clients in their care by reducing barriers that may inhibit our ability to help them.
- Providing a culture that will ensure clients have a voice and participate in their own personal care.
- Empowering clients through improving client satisfaction, enhancing the quality of care and ultimately the quality of life for our clients.
- Focusing on the experience of the client from their perspective and listening to their needs.
- Fostering collaboration between the client and organization by working together to achieve our goals.
- Providing continuous dialogue with the clients to ensure that each and every client is seen as a unique individual.
- Ensuring staff are provided with the training and tools required to complete the best job possible.

## **Criminal Record Check**

Employment with the Hay River Health & Social Services Authority is contingent on providing a satisfactory criminal record check including the vulnerable sector check to the Human Resources Office prior to the official start date of a position.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Working knowledge of therapeutic treatment options as well as the skill and ability to provide such treatment to people of all ages and cultures with mental health, addictions, and family violence issues;
- Knowledge of child, adolescent and adult developmental, psychological, social and cognitive development;
- Knowledge of the different referral agencies/services available within the NWT for those individuals who require in-patient or alternative assessment and care. This includes knowledge of referral routes and case management techniques;
- Working knowledge of the biopsychosocial presentation, determinants and precipitators of mental health and mental health disorders and the biopsychosocial presentation, and models of addictions (e.g., abstinence model, moral model, harm reduction model) in order to recognize and interpret findings and determine an appropriate treatment plan.
- An ability to appropriately use clinical, diagnostic and treatment planning terminology with clients, other health care providers and referral agents;
- General knowledge of the DSM-V classification system, psychopharmacology and psychophysiology of disorders;
- Working knowledge of the signs of violence and/or abuse at an early stage as well as current trends and best practices in addressing psychological outcomes of violence;
- Knowledge and experience working with trauma;
- Knowledge of current trends and ability to apply best practices with clients for addressing risk factors for addictions, mental health disorders, trauma and family violence;
- Ability to apply the NWT Mental Health Act, the Child and Family Services Act, as well as knowledge of other NWT legislations;
- Adherence to a professional code of ethics and a working knowledge of the application of ethics in a variety of complex situations;
- Knowledge and understanding of the community demographics, values, culture, and history;
- Knowledge of and ability to network resources within and outside the HRHSSA to ensure support for clients and their families;
- Ability to communicate effectively in a cross cultural setting;
- Ability to draft written documents, which are clear, concise and easy to understand by both professionals and non-professionals;
- Ability to work as a team member as well as be self-directed, meet deadlines, prioritize workloads and manage several tasks at once.

The knowledge, skills and abilities required are attained through completion of a Masters degree in counselling, clinical psychology or clinical social work (or other related field). The experience and/or education of the Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor must include a minimum of 500 counselling hours obtained under a qualified

clinical counselling supervisor where at least 120 of those hours are direct client contact.

Experience with children and youth would be an asset.

The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor must be eligible to register as a Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association.

The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor must hold a valid class 5 driver's license.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

### Physical Demands

Demand	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
Sitting with a client or at a computer for extended periods.	Daily	6 hours	Moderate

### Environmental Conditions

Demand	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
An office setting with good lighting and temperature control.	Daily	Ongoing	Low
Working with clients in close proximity, as well as doing home-visits with clients when required	Daily	Ongoing	Moderate
Exposure to persons with illnesses such as TB, Hep B and C, HIV/Aids and other communicable diseases due to working in close proximity.	Daily	Ongoing	Moderate
Exposure to a variety of home conditions, which may be unhygienic, noisy, and unsavory.	Weekly	Ongoing	High

The majority of mental health and addictions services are provided within an office/clinic setting (i.e. office, classroom), although counsellors will also visit clients deemed high risk and/or unable to attend in-house counselling at their homes. In these situations, the incumbent may be required to walk to and from the different locations where s/he will experience a variety of weather conditions. The severity of Arctic temperatures requires a period of adjustment, but with proper preparation do not cause undue hardship. The Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor often works with mandated clients (probation, social services) and others that may present as dangerous and unpredictable.

### Sensory Demands

Demand	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
Focused assessment and observation activities, when assessing the status and safety of the client.	Daily	4 Hours	High

Composing case notes and program reports.	Daily	1.5 Hours	Moderate
Dealing with language barriers, poor literacy skills and physical, cognitive or mental impairments in clients.	Daily	5 Hours	High

The incumbent will spend approximately 80% of the day providing both direct and in-direct (i.e., case consultations with teachers, parents, social workers, and nurses). This requires the use of the combined senses of touch, sight, smell and hearing during assessment and provision of counselling services. This involves the use of the whole self (self is the tool in counselling) to tune into the client's message through verbal, non-verbal and other conflicting messages. The incumbent must be constantly aware of the client's physical and emotional needs (i.e., mood, hygiene) when screening and providing for mental health/addictions assessment and treatment services. This type of focused concentration is highly energy intensive and results easily in fatigue.

In dealing with clients who are working through experiences of childhood and adult trauma, it is necessary to listen to their words as well as their tone of voice, timbre of voice, and body language, as it is not unusual for 'flashbacks' and dissociation to occur, sometimes without the client being aware of it, making it necessary for the Mental Health & Addictions Counsellor to re-orient the client prior to ending the session.

In working with children, who often communicate through symbolism and metaphor, it is necessary to be attuned to the various ways children communicate their thoughts, feelings, and needs including body language, play stories, energy level, tone of voice, and other verbal and non-verbal cues.

### **Mental Demands**

Demand	Frequency	Duration	Intensity
Dealing with clients who may be very aggressive, potentially abusive, volatile, under the influence of mood altering substances or in crisis, raising questions about personal safety.	Daily	Ongoing	High
Counselling clients with complex issues and emotionally disturbing experiences and histories of trauma.	Daily	5 Hours	High
Experiencing indirect exposure to violence.	Daily	1 Hour	High
Exposure to family crisis and the temporary break-up of the family.	Daily	3 Hours	High
Dealing with the various effects of trauma.	Daily	Ongoing	High
Dealing with crisis situations where the client's safety and life may be at threat.	Daily	1 Hour	High
Dealing with agency or client demands for treatment, or placement.	Frequent	4-6 Hours	Moderate to High
Pressure from frequent deadlines, work interruptions, unpredictable or frustrating situations. There is some disruption to personal life.	Daily	Continuous	Moderate to High



Mental stress at times is extremely high. The stress results from dealing with highly emotional situations, such as suicides, as well as from dealing with competing urgent priorities. Professionals providing mental health and addiction counselling services have been known to suffer from vicarious traumatization as a result of repeatedly hearing client's traumatic stories (i.e. sexual abuse, multiple losses, residential schools, cultural issues). Thus, Mental Health & Addictions Counsellors require excellent self-care skills, as well as needing regular supervision and (optional) counselling services to maintain balance.

Providing these services in a small community presents unique challenges that can add additional stress on the incumbent. For instance, the incumbent may have to deal with friends, neighbours, relatives or social acquaintances who are receiving services, as well as victims and perpetrators, on a day-to-day basis outside of work (i.e. present at community functions, grocery shopping, walking, down the street). In a small community anonymity is virtually impossible and dual relationships cannot be avoided.

Although the incumbent does not work shift work and is not on call, when a traumatic event occurs within the community or to an individual the incumbent will often be called upon, outside of work hours. This may cause undue stress as the incumbent's personal time may be perceived as not their own.

In this profession there is some level of uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work.

People in crisis can be abusive to those trying to help. As a result, there is legitimate concern about the risk of verbal or physical assault (i.e. Clients or family members under the influence of drugs or alcohol).

## CERTIFICATION

Position Number: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>_____ Employee Signature</p> <p>_____ Printed Name</p> <p>_____ Date</p> <p>I certify that I have read and understand the responsibilities assigned to this position.</p>	<p>_____ Supervisor Title</p> <p>_____ Supervisor Signature</p> <p>_____ Date</p> <p>I certify that this job description is an accurate description of the responsibilities assigned to the position.</p>
<p>_____ Director/Chief Executive Officer Signature</p> <p>_____ Date</p> <p>I approve the delegation of the responsibilities outlined herein within the context of the attached organizational structure.</p>	

**The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by the incumbents of this job. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities and activities required of this position.**

October 2012 – NEW  
July 2016 – scope, editorial changes  
July 2017 – Commitment statement