

GROUP COUNSELOR I

Definition

Under close supervision, to learn the principles and techniques of group work; to assist in the supervision and care of a group of detainees in a detention facility; to initiate the rehabilitation process by providing guidance and counsel.

Distinguishing Characteristics

The Group Counselor I is the trainee and first working level in the Group Counselor class series. Group Counselor I incumbents are assigned tasks of a well-defined nature. Supervision may decrease as more experience is gained.

The Group Counselor I class is distinguished from the Group Counselor II class in that the Group Counselor II is the journey level class performing the full range of activities associated with the counseling and supervision of a group of detainees in an institution, whereas the Group Counselor I class works under close supervision in a learning capacity acquiring the knowledge and skills of group work methods, techniques, and departmental rules, regulations and procedures.

Typical Tasks

- Maintains living and supervision standards as defined by the Board of State and Community Corrections Title 15 Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities. This includes but is not limited to: Education, Recreation, Health Care, and Child Supervision;
- Maintains the cleanliness, security and safety of the facility at all times; may collect and transport refuse from the unit to a central location, inspects windows, keeps doors locked when not in use, keeps count of detainees as required, and is constantly alert for attempts to escape;
- Conducts searches and confiscates weapons and other contraband articles; reports infractions of rules and regulations and irregular and suspicious occurrences;
- Performs admitting and releasing operations and completes the necessary booking and record work; registers and stores personal belongings; checks for marks, bruises and infection; outfits detainees with clothing; and instructs on institution regulations and routines; supervises detainees and visitors during visitation periods;
- May transport and supervise detainees to other locations where their presence is required;
- Prepares and maintains all required treatment records, reports, memorandums, forms, logs, letters, and other documents related to the detainees' attitudes, behavior, appearance, interests, skills, progress, and needs, including those who are classified under specific risk standards;
- May review and assist in developing detainee's care plan; refers and ensures detainee receives appropriate services through contracted County and community-based organizations;
- Attends and participates in multi-disciplinary meetings and/or briefings to acquire, solicit or share pertinent information as required;
- Meets with individuals and counsels a small assigned group for detainees to gain insight into themselves in relationship to family, peers, and adults; discusses techniques and problems with supervisory and resource personnel;
- Observes the conduct and behavior of a group of detainees and maintains safety at all times; keeps the group occupied with pro-social activities and may impose corrective sanctions when necessary;

orients detainees to the program and detention-behavior and enforces the rights of detainees; reports the more severe behavioral concerns to the supervisor;

- Applies physical/mechanical restraint techniques, and utilizes departmental approved chemical agent when authorized;
- Learns to conduct rehabilitative programming for detainees, based on evidence-based practices, such as anger management, gang awareness, drug awareness, employment searches, college application, health realization, building positive pro-social skills, culinary skills, parenting skills;
- Supervises detainees in a school setting; assists and encourages detainees to attend and to participate in the classroom;
- Attempts to modify anti-social behavior and assists detainees in adjusting to an institutional environment by counseling individuals and groups on personal problems, such as relationships with peers, family, adults, school difficulties, and employment opportunities; teaches, models and encourages good manners, sportsmanship, and proper attitudes towards work, play, citizenship, employment and education, counsel upset and disturbed persons;
- Learns to plan, develop, instruct and supervise recreation and leisure time events and activities for detainees to facilitate change in anti-social behavior and attitudes;
- Collaborates with other County departments, the public, families, schools, law enforcement agencies, and representatives of community-based organizations, and other outside agencies;
- Recognizes signs of health problems, suicide risk, assaults, etc., and takes appropriate action to protect the well-being of detainees; renders first aid as needed;
- May provide cognitive therapeutic approaches and strategies for modifying anti-social behavior; this can include but is not limited to Brief Intervention Tools (BITS), Behavior Modification programs rooted in Positive behavior Interventions and Supports, Motivational Interviewing and Four Core Competencies;
- May make arrests;
- May appear in court to testify;
- May be assigned as a Disaster Service Worker, as required;
- Performs related duties as required.

Employment Standards

Completion of 60 semester or 90 quarter college units.

Special Requirements

- Must be a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident who is eligible for and has applied for citizenship. (Government Code 1031-1031.5);
- Possession of a valid California Driver's License prior to appointment and the ability to qualify for and maintain a County driver authorization;
- Possession of current CPR/First Aid certificate prior to appointment;
- Any felony conviction and/or a conviction outside of California that would be considered a felony in this State is disqualifying;
- Must pass a complete background investigation;
- Must successfully complete the training requirements prescribed by the California Penal Code 832 (PC 832 Core Course) within one year of appointment or vacate position;
- Must successfully complete the training requirements prescribed by the Standards and Training for Corrections (Juvenile or Adult Corrections Officer Core Course) within one year of appointment or vacate position.

Knowledge of:

- The cultural groups present in Santa Clara County;
- The general emotional and behavioral patterns of detainees and the causes of crime and delinquency;
- Leadership techniques for directing or supervising work or leisure time activities;
- General principles of working with groups and individuals;
- First aid practices;
- Acceptable general health care and housekeeping methods;
- Security, inspection, and safety measures necessary in a secure facility;
- English language usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation;
- Personal computers and common office applications.

Ability to:

- Ensure safety and security of detainees and staff in the facility;
- Maintain firm discipline in a fair and tactful manner;
- Prepare concise reports;
- Cope with hostility and aggressive behavior;
- Model and maintain positive and pro-social behavior;
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with others;
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing;
- Aid in the rehabilitation of detainees;
- Organize, instruct and supervise structured recreational and housekeeping activities appropriate to a detention setting;
- Counsel both groups and individuals;
- Complete training in the application of physical/mechanical restraint techniques.

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