Mental Health Worker

Definition
Under the supervision, of a registered nurse (RN) or Program Specialist, assists professional staff in coordinating and providing care to individuals with an acute or persistent mental disorder or with co-occurring disorders.

Distinguishing Characteristics
The Mental Health Worker is distinguished from the higher level, nonprofessional class of Licensed Vocational Nurse and the licensed Psychiatric Technician I and II classes in that the Mental Health Worker classification does not require a license and incumbents perform the more routine tasks relating to the care and treatment of patients and other closely related services while the Licensed Vocational Nurse and Psychiatric Technician are expected to administer medications and perform at a higher skill level, and may provide work direction to the Mental Health Worker as necessary for teamwork and to maintain safety.

Typical Tasks
● Takes routine temperature, pulse and respiration of patients;
● Assists and encourages patients with the basic activities of daily living (ADLs), such as bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, positioning, lifting or other essential needs;
● May provide total care, as necessary under direction of a RN;
● As a member of a multidisciplinary team, and in compliance with approved techniques, intervenes in crisis situations by identification, prevention, early intervention, and if indicated, containment of assaultive behaviors in accordance with County training provided to Mental Health Workers;
● Reports changes in physical condition and/or behavior of patients to the RN;
● Monitors and records patient activities, maintains special observations and precautions;
● Engages patients in individual and/or group activities and conversation;
● Assists in orienting new patients to the unit;
● Monitors the milieu for safety; reports any unsafe conditions to a RN;
● Searches patient belongings for contraband upon admission, and/or as directed;
● Accompanies patients to on-site appointments;
● Maintains patient confidentiality;
● May arrange transportation for discharged patients;
● May maintain visitors log and coordinate patient visits;
● May order and restock supplies and maintain supply sign-out log;
● May update, maintain and provide community resources to patients, visitors and family members;
● Obtains and delivers specimens to laboratory for analysis;
● May be assigned as a Disaster Service Worker, as required;
● Performs other related work as required.
Employment Standards
Possession of a high school diploma or equivalent and one (1) year of experience providing patient care in an in-patient acute or sub-acute psychiatric facility.

College course work in Sociology and Psychology is desirable.

Possession of a CPR for the Professional Rescuer Card before completion of Acute Psychiatric Services orientation.

Knowledge of:
- Nursing practices and the various types of materials and equipment related to patient care and their application;
- Basic social and psychological needs, problems, attitudes and behavior patterns related to persistent and acute mental disorders;
- Effective communication and customer service techniques.

Ability to:
- Perform a variety of routine patient care services and administer simple treatments;
- Read, write, spell and speak in English
- Communicate effectively with patients, and establish/maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work;
- Understand and follow written and oral instructions;
- Demonstrate concern, compassion and respect to patients and deliver excellent customer service;
- Stand and walk for long periods, sitting infrequently, and exercise a moderate amount of physical exertion consistent with containment of behavioral aggression:
- Lift, carry, push and/or pull 50 pounds;
- Frequently reach and bend above and below waist level;
- Exercise manual dexterity in the handling of patients or equipment;
- Contribute to a positive work environment and work effectively and respectfully as part of a team in providing patient care; follow the appropriate chain of command, addressing disagreements calmly and positively outside the immediate patient environment;
- Maintain a professional attitude, demeanor and appearance, including appropriate dress and proper identification;
- Cope with and perform in a locked, therapeutic psychiatric environment;
- Maintain simple records.

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