

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
CLASS SPECIFICATION**

**Class Code: 002755
Grade: 23
FLSA: E**

THERAPIST I

DEFINITION OF SERIES:

The Therapist series directly provides psychosocial treatments and services, including psychotherapeutic counseling, requiring knowledge of, and skill in, a full range of concepts, theories, principles, methods, techniques and generally-accepted practices of professional psychosocial therapy.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

The Therapist I classification is the first working/entry level professional position in the Therapist series. The Therapist I is distinguished from the next higher classification of Therapist II in that the latter requires the advanced level of professional licensure, and is generally assigned professional work involving nonstandard and complex elements that require application of highly developed clinical skills; assignments. At each successive level, the incumbents are expected to demonstrate greater initiative, self-direction, independent judgment, and conflict resolution with less supervision than that of the preceding level.

MAJOR DUTIES:

Under supervision of a licensed mental health care professional, provides crisis intervention therapy, direct psychotherapy, direct clinical counseling and/or facilities, or directly provides, other forms of psychosocial treatment such as sponsorship of self-help/support groups. A Therapist I elicits critical client-specific information about a client's overall background, emotional distress, physical-psychoic trauma, mental illness or substance abuse, and other wants/needs/concerns/issues, makes an evaluation, recommends a treatment plan or programmatic response, makes referrals, and facilitates or directly provides various psychosocial treatments – psychotherapy, psychoeducation, psycho-rehabilitation, self-help/support groups, etc., consistent with programs and resources.

The Therapist I provides professional clinical assessment, referral/coordination, direct treatment (short or long term), case management, other case work, support-advocacy, crisis intervention, crisis response and related professional services to persons presenting with emotional, behavioral, substance abuse and related types of problems/disorders. In addition, training or advice is given to childcare providers, law enforcement personnel and others.

A Therapist I may serve on an interdisciplinary team of caseworkers, and may coordinate therapeutic and social service support to mitigate problems and facilitate better functioning of clients. In a clinic or local health program, a Therapist I plan and provides psychosocial treatments-services including individual, family and group intervention, short- or long-range therapeutic counselling or other support services to assist clients and to help solve psychosocial problems

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES: (Illustrative Only)

- Obtains information from persons presenting with indicators of mental illness, substance abuse, emotional distress and other problems, their family members (as appropriate) and other sources;

makes an initial and follow-on clinical assessments or program eligibility determinations; makes referrals or prepares and executes treatment plans, tracking client progress; prepares and maintains case files; and prepares reports.

- Collaborates closely with supervisor and other mental health/medical professionals and recommends diagnoses.
- Coordinates referrals and provides appropriate linkage for clients to community services; works closely with representatives of other agencies (private and public) involved in cases to ensure clinical coordination of services and continuity of care among various treatment/provider agencies.
- Attends case consultation staff meetings; makes recommendations regarding appropriate treatment interventions.
- Participates in cross-functional, cross-unit service integration meetings and conferences concerning the needs of, and treatment plans for individuals.
- Recommends or determines eligibility for programmatic assistance consistent with guidelines. Informs applicants and clients of parameters of various programs specific to their situations.
- Identifies and recommends appropriate resources to control or alleviate problems and develops, with the client, a plan of action for services and follow-up.
- Counsels clients and family members to aid them in achieving better mental health functioning.
- Provides crisis intervention.
- Provides or coordinates preventive, protective and supportive services to individuals or groups threatened by conditions or circumstances detrimental to their well-being or that of the community.
- Advocates for clients regarding eligibility, services, etc.
- Prepares/maintains case records, uses automated recordkeeping systems and prepares reports to supervisors and, as pertinent to assignments, including reports for the courts.
- Coordinates with staff in social, mental health, health, education and other governmental units or agencies outside the unit/team of assignment and with staff in non-governmental organizations to meet the needs of clients.
- Attends case consultation staff meetings; makes recommendations regarding treatment plans.
- Participates in cross-functional, cross-unit service integration meetings and conferences concerning needs of, and treatment plans, for individuals.
- Participates in staff discussions of unit/team, departmental and programmatic policies and procedures.
- Uses a computer and modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise software and specialized software for planning, scheduling, recordkeeping, communicating (email), word processing, manipulating data, preparing presentations, reporting time and attendance, researching (the Internet), and performing other functions.
- May prepare court papers. May testify in court.
- As assigned, plans and presents training.
- As assigned, operates a motor vehicle to get to/from meetings/events, client sites, etc.
- Performs related duties, as required.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

(The knowledge, skills and abilities listed in this specification are representative of the class but are not an all-inclusive list.)

WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF:

- Co-occurring medical/psychiatric issues and the effects of the pharmacological resources used in treatment thereof altogether at a level sufficient to provide effective services to clientele.

- Regulations, policies, procedures and systems governing funding/delivery of the services provided and related recordkeeping, including privacy-confidentiality, to ensure adherence to applicable Federal, State, County, departmental, programmatic, fiscal and other guidelines; this includes knowledge of the organization and operations of juvenile justice, criminal justice, Federal/State correction-rehabilitation-parole-probation systems, child welfare/protective services and other matters related to the services provided and the clientele served in sufficient detail to operate within the context of the program/unit of assignment.
- State, County and community resources, such as medical, mental health, legal and social services, to make referrals/placements and help ensure completeness of responses to needs.

SKILL IN:

- The concepts, theories, principles, methods, techniques and generally-accepted practices of professional psychosocial treatment, therapy and counseling to assess, refer, counsel, manage cases of, and provide related professional services to, persons presenting with emotional, behavioral, substance abuse and related types of problems/disorders. This body of information includes socioeconomic/cultural factors and interpersonal dynamics as well as professional ethics and standards-of-practice, pharmacological resources, and professional resources such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Health Disorders. The specific professional knowledge-skill set required varies by professional area-of-practice, unit/program of assignment and other factors.
- Problem solving to select, organize, and logically process relevant information (verbal, numerical, or abstract) to solve a problem. This includes ability to recognize subtle aspects of problems, identify relevant information, and make balanced recommendations and decisions.
- Written communication to understand written information, draw inferences, form hypotheses and develop logical arguments, and to express such information in writing so that others will understand.
- Oral communication to understand verbal information, draw inferences, form hypotheses and develop logical arguments, and to express such information verbally so that others will understand, agree or comply, and, at times, be convinced or persuaded. This includes the ability to listen 'actively' and encourage effective oral communication by others, such as clients, concerning social, behavioral and emotional problems.
- Interpersonal skills to interact with business contacts in a businesslike, customer service-oriented manner; this includes skill in establishing and maintaining effective professional working relationships and working as a member of an interdisciplinary team, and skill in human relations to develop and maintain effective, empathetic Therapist-client relationships.
- Using, client intake, case management and reporting systems to document and use personal, diagnostic, therapeutic, counseling, case management, administrative, financial and other types of information; this includes skill in ensuring adequacy and accuracy of data/transactions and, as assigned, generating reports.
- Utilizing a computer, modern office suite software (such as MS Office), enterprise systems/software, specialty systems/software for client referral, case tracking/reporting, etc.

ABILITY TO:

- Establish positive working relationships with other employees, clients and their families, other agencies, and the public.
- Follow directions in a professional manner; prepare reports and document client services in a timely and professional manner.
- Work within a team and collaborate with team members;
- Act professionally with regard to a code of ethics and confidentiality.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS:

Therapists I receive 'controlled' assignments that are designed, in part, to help the Therapist I solidify and build one's own knowledge/skill sets; professional development and growth resulting in progressively more independent application of knowledge/skills are key aspects of this class of work. There is immediate access to the supervisor or a higher-level professional for guidance and assistance. Regularly scheduled, and as-needed, progress reviews are the norm; the work is expected to be professionally effective. Work is subject to review for quality, quantity, timeliness, teamwork, customer service and other factors.

GUIDELINES:

Guidelines include, but are not limited to, the concepts, theories, principles, methods, techniques and generally-accepted practices of professional psychosocial therapy and counselling; professional ethics and standards-of-practice of the profession; specific systems, rules, procedures, practices and programmatic elements, services and other specifics of the unit and program(s) of assignment including protocols and procedures of State departments-agencies; contextual matters directly related to the services provided and the clientele served; and confidentiality-privacy requirements. A Therapist I selects and applies professional methods-techniques, uses professional references and adheres to professional ethics, standards-of-practice and programmatic requirements to elicit critical client-specific information, make an evaluation, recommend a treatment plan/programmatic response and/or directly provide an effective therapeutic response.

COMPLEXITY:

Complexity of the work is reflected in the array of client problems that often manifest within context of physical disabilities, physical maladies, diminished intellectual capacity, extreme indebtedness, poverty, unemployment, language barriers, diverse cultural norms/taboo, legal problems and a host of other factors; co-occurrence itself is a complicating factor because a Therapist I must interview-assess-recommend-decide-act within context to be effective.

The Therapist I is generally assigned a range of professional work involving a combination of standard, recurring and nonstandard, complex elements that require proficiency in a full range of therapeutic knowledge and skills

SCOPE AND EFFECT:

The work involves treating a variety of standard psychosocial problems and situations, including crises, in accordance with established criteria. The impact of the work is individual- and often family-specific, and it results in prevention, stabilization, recovery or enhanced functioning or well-being, or full self-sufficiency, of clientele.

CONTACTS:

Business contacts are with clients, their family members, social work, mental health and human service professionals, support staff, nurses, doctors, teachers, law enforcement and court personnel, for-profit and not-for-profit service providers, and other parties within and outside of County Government to provide, coordinate or report on professional advice and service and perform related functions.

PUBLIC SERVICE /ASSISTANCE:

A Therapist I provides direct professional assistance or care to clients. There are intensive interactions with clients concerning their wants, needs, concerns and problems; professional, therapeutic counseling is provided.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The work of the class is generally performed in office-type settings in mental health centers, health clinics, schools and other indoor venues; however, several Therapist positions are located in closed, protective custody correctional facilities. There are incidental or occasional home visits by Therapists in some positions and regularly recurring home visits by Therapists in a few positions.

HAZARDS:

Work involves occasional exposure to some risk of aggressive or unpredictable behavior by clients.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Work is primarily sedentary Work may involve evening-weekend-holiday duty or rotating shifts. The work requires ordinary physical effort to sit, walk, stand, bend, and reach or carry light items.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Any combination of experience and training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities as qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Education:

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Master's Degree in clinical or counseling psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, nursing, or a related behavioral science field.

Experience: None**Equivalency: None****LICENSE REQUIREMENT:**

One of the following licenses, issued by the State of Maryland, must be held prior to appointment, and maintained by, the employee:

- Licensed Graduate Social Worker (LGSW);
- Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor (LGPC);
- Licensed Graduate Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LGADC); or
- Licensed Graduate Marriage and Family Therapist (LGMFT).

Note: There will be no substitutions for this requirement.

Possession and maintenance at all times of a:

- Valid Class C (or equivalent) driver's license from the applicant's state of residence when required for job-related duties.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD: (may vary according to assignment)

Individuals appointed to a position in this class will be required to serve a probationary period of six (6) months, during which time performance will be carefully evaluated. Continuation in this class will be contingent upon successful completion of the probationary period.

NOTE:

Individuals appointed or promoted to a position in this class in the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation will be required to serve a probationary period of twelve (12) months. Performance will be carefully evaluated during the probationary period. Continuation in this class will be contingent upon successful completion of the probationary period.

MEDICAL EXAM PROTOCOL: Limited Core Exam with a pre-placement Drug/Alcohol Screen.

PROMOTION POTENTIAL:

Incumbents hired at the Therapist I level, may, upon recommendation of their appointing authority and funding availability be promoted up to the Therapist II level after two (2) years of professional experience rendering therapeutic counseling, social work, nursing or psychology services and obtaining licenses required for the Therapist II position.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:

Positions in this class are non-supervisory.

CLASS SPECIFICATION HISTORY:

Class Established: September 1976

Revised: March 1981

January 1988

Classification Study: May 1996 (M)

June 2001

Classification Study: June 2003 (M)

January 2013

August 2013

Classification Study: January 2018 (M)

(Probationary Period) February 2020

(Add License) June 2023

Notes: Employees in this class have a mandatory licensure requirement, as specified in the Code of Maryland, which contains regulations governing the practice of clinical counseling-psychotherapy-nursing-psychology, and by the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists, the Maryland Board of Nursing, the Maryland Board of Social Worker Examiners or the Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists, as pertinent to the profession.