



**IDENTIFICATION**

Department	Position Title	
Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency	Mental Health Counsellor	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
27-94052	Behchokǫ	Health and Social Program/ Tłıchǫ

**PURPOSE OF THE POSITION**

As a member of the Primary Community Care Team, the Mental Health and Addictions Counsellor is responsible for providing comprehensive mental health, addictions, and family violence services for the residents of Behchokǫ. Services are provided in accordance with the Northwest Territories (NWT) Mental Health Act, Child and Family Services Act, Protection Against Family Violence Act, Mental Health and Addiction Services Framework and Action Plan, and the NWT Community Counselling Program Standards. Services are intended to help improve the mental health and well-being of residents and their community.

**SCOPE**

The scope of the Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) is to manage the delivery of a range of integrated public Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and First Nations health, wellness and education programs and services for the Tłıchǫ communities of Behchokǫ, Gametı, Wekweetı and Whatı. Established in 2005 as part of the Tłıchǫ Agreement, the Agency is designed to be an interim GNWT organization through which the Tłıchǫ Government will eventually exercise their treaty rights for self-government. The Agency serves approximately 3,000 people. Programs and services include K-12 education, health and wellness, child and family services, mental health and addictions, an 18-bed Long Term Care Facility, continuing care and independent living.

The Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency vision "Strong Like Two People" is a metaphor for the desire by community leadership to build an organization, and create program and services, that recognize the strength and importance of two cultures.

Local Tłıchǫ and non-Tłıchǫ knowledge have complementary strengths, which together can achieve solutions to contemporary problems which neither could alone.



Located in Behchokò, the Mental Health Counsellor (Counsellor) reports directly to the Clinical Supervisor, Mental Health and Wellness for administrative supervision, functional input and clinical guidance.

The Counsellor is a key member of the Primary Community Care team providing direct, community based, culturally sensitive, mental health, addictions, and family violence counselling services to clients. These services include but are not limited to: prevention and promotion initiatives; planning and delivery of community based mental health, addictions, and family violence therapeutic counselling services; case management; and providing crisis response, supported living, consumer self-help and vocational/education services. The Counsellor is also a key referral agent and service provider for complex addictions, family violence, and psychiatric clients who may be referred for inpatient treatment or other services outside of the community.

This position operates within a philosophy of education, prevention, therapeutic counselling, out-patient-treatment, and aftercare, to minimize the negative physical, mental, social and emotional impacts of addictions, family violence, mental illness, and trauma through providing clients with the tools, support, and therapeutic venue required to achieve and maintain the highest level of mental health that is possible for the individual. This involves having the skills to work with various cultural groups and all members of the population (elders, adults, adolescents, children and families).

The incumbent works collaboratively with the Primary Community Care Team. As a part of this team, they are the key provider of a full range of mental health and addictions counselling services. As a member of the Community Counselling Program, the Mental Health Counsellor plays an important role in ensuring that clients' needs are met by providing appropriate screening, intake, assessment, mental health, addictions, and family violence counselling, treatment services, planning, and aftercare.

This position impacts on community health and well-being through increased awareness and treatment of mental health, addictions, and family violence issues, reduction of suicides and alcohol related death and illness, as well as the reduction of family breakdown through prevention, therapeutic counselling, and crisis intervention. By providing mental health, family violence, and addictions treatment within the community fewer individuals will need to be referred out of the community reducing costs overall.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Provision of a continuum of therapeutic counselling services in the areas of mental health, addictions, and family violence.**

- Conducts screening, and bio-psycho-social assessments with various client groups including, elders, adults, couples, families, adolescents and children.



- Provides treatment for a variety of conditions and disorders/diagnoses including, but not limited to those identified by the Diagnostic and Statistical Standards Manual of Mental Disorders - Fifth Edition (DSM-5) (i.e. depression, anxiety, addictions, posttraumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia), family violence (including work with of victims, offenders, and the Justice systems), trauma, impact of residential schools, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, co-occurring disorders, victims of sexual/physical assault, work stress, dysfunction at school, within the family or in other important areas of functioning which are causing distress.
- Determines risk, complexity of care requirements and urgency of needs. Based on assessment, implements plan of care to mitigate risk as required.
- Provides short- and long-term outpatient treatment through client-centered therapeutic counselling services in individual, family, or group formats using a treatment modality that best fits the client(s) situation.
- Provides follow-up counselling, after in-patient treatment for addictions, family violence, or mental health-related hospitalization (participate in discharge planning).
- Awareness of and practice with various standardized mental health and addictions assessment tools.
- Completes screening and risk assessment for suicide, violence and mental status with all client groups and individuals.
- Prioritizes and identifies community and regional resources for each client in crisis.

**2. Provides comprehensive mental health, addictions, and family violence services in a culturally sensitive manner.**

- Works collaboratively with other service providers in planning for clients with mental health, addictions, and family violence issues.
- Refers to professionals, traditional healers, and other services on a regular basis.
- Makes referrals where required (note: and travel arrangements where required when services are required outside of the community).
- Provides consultation when determining need for hospitalization and possible medevac for mental health issues.
- Provides leadership and advocacy with clients in working with other agencies.
- Participates in case conference meetings with other professionals and service providers when necessary.
- Provides critical incident stress management and debriefing in response to adverse community events.
- Utilizes familiarity with best practices and promising practices relating to mental health, addictions, and issues facing individuals with these diagnoses such as: homelessness, unemployment, stigma and involvement in the justice system.
- Applies strong ethical awareness and boundaries in the role of Mental Health Counsellor to preserve the integrity of the counselling program.



- Participates in clinical supervision with the Clinical Supervisor, Mental Health and Wellness.
- 3. Responsible for the effective administration functioning of the mental health, addictions, and family violence programs.**
- Completes documentation as required in the format set out by the Department of Health and Social Services and Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency
  - Ensures professional conduct, client care, record keeping and administrative practices according to the Northwest Territories Community Counselling Program Standards.
  - Participates in program evaluation, data collection activities, and other program design and delivery initiatives.
  - Evaluates therapeutic counselling and treatment outcomes to determine the best service for clients.
- 4. Provision of consultation services and education to the Tłı̨chǫ Region Primary Community Care Teams and other community agencies on mental health, addictions, and family violence issues.**
- Provides community awareness and education. This includes but is not limited to providing presentations and/or workshops that raise awareness of relevant mental health, addictions, and family violence issues within the community.
  - Participates in interagency meetings as required.
  - Works in partnership with other community resources to provide education sessions to professionals and community members.
  - Provides orientation and training on mental health, addictions, and family violence to community organizations (i.e. RCMP, Social Workers, Nurses, Schools, Non-Government Organizations, Band Councils, etc.)
  - Provides materials and expertise to community groups.
  - Delivers presentations which are well structured and easy to understand.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

No unusual demands.

### **Environmental Conditions**

The majority of mental health services are provided within an office/clinic setting (i.e. office, classroom, etc.). In these situations, the incumbent may be required to walk to and from the different locations where s/he will be experience variety of weather conditions. The severity of Arctic temperatures requires a period of adjustment, but with proper preparation does not cause undue hardship.



As a result of living in isolated, northern community the incumbent will be required to travel on small planes and ice or winter roads when travelling to or from the community.

### **Sensory Demands**

The incumbent will spend approximately 60% of the day providing direct counselling services and 20% of the day providing indirect counselling services, such as 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.

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**

The incumbent may be presented with competing urgent priorities as well as highly emotional situations, such as suicides. Professionals providing mental health counselling services have been known to suffer traumatization as a result of repeatedly hearing client's traumatic stories (i.e. sexual abuse, multiple losses, residential schools, cultural issues, etc.). Because of this, the Counsellor requires excellent self-care skills.

Providing these services in a small community presents unique challenges including having to deal with friends, neighbors, 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, etc.).

In this profession there is some level of uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work and when a traumatic event occurs within the community, or to an individual, the incumbent will often be called upon, outside of work hours. The Mental Health Counsellor occasionally works with mandated clients (probation, social services) and others that may present as dangerous and unpredictable. 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 aggression (i.e. clients or family members under the influence of drugs or alcohol). As a result of living in isolated, northern community, the incumbent may be required to travel on small planes and ice or winter roads when traveling to or from the community.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of therapeutic treatment options as well as the skill and ability to provide such treatment to people of all ages with mental health, addictions, and family violence issues.



- Knowledge of child, adolescent, and adult developmental, psychological, social, and cognitive development.
- Knowledge and the ability to work with a variety of approaches to psychotherapy, including Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Narrative, Solution Focused, and other best practices for the treatment of mental illness.
- Knowledge of and an ability to refer clients to traditional healers and elders.
- Knowledge of the biopsychosocial presentation, determinants and precipitators of mental health and mental health disorders and the biopsychosocial presentation, and models of addictions (abstinence model, moral model, harm reduction model, etc.) and the biopsychosocial presentation, determinants, and precipitators of family violence in order to recognize and interpret findings and determine an appropriate treatment plan.
- Knowledge of the Diagnostic Standards Manual classification system (DSM-5), psychopharmacology and psychophysiology of disorders.
- 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, including interpersonal therapy, supportive counselling, group support and cognitive behaviour strategies.
- Knowledge of current trends and ability to apply best practices with clients for addressing risk factors for addictions, mental health and family violence.
- Knowledge of and ability to network resources within and outside the employing Region to ensure support for clients and their families.
- Skilled in working with families in crisis, providing individual and group counseling, and conflict management.
- Ability to apply an integrated stepped care approach to service delivery.
- Ability to reach sound decisions in times of crisis.
- Ability to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting including with community members impacted by colonization and residential schools.
- Ability to practice in a trauma-informed, recovery-oriented approach.
- Ability to acquire knowledge of the different referral agencies and services available within the NWT (and community) for those individuals who require in-patient or alternative (such as psychiatric) assessment and care, this includes knowledge of referral routes and case management techniques.
- Ability to offer options for treatment planning and multiple interventions for addictions treatment, based on client-centered practices, such as SMART models, harm reduction practices and abstinence-based support.
- Ability to appropriately use clinical, diagnostic and treatment planning terminology with clients, other health care providers and referral agents.
- Ability to apply the NWT Mental Health Act, the Child, and Family Services Act, the Protection Against Family Violence Act, as well as knowledge of other NWT legislations.
- Adherence to and member of a professional governing body and code of ethics.



- Ability to acquire knowledge and understanding of the community demographics, values, culture, and history.
- Ability to organize and facilitate groups designed to provide counselling services and therapeutic interventions to a wide variety of participants.
- Ability to communicate (orally) 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.
- Ability to operate a desktop computer with a basic software package, including email, excel, and Microsoft office.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

**Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

A master's level degree in Counselling, Psychology or Clinical Social Work or a related discipline with a focus on therapeutic counselling with one (1) year of relevant therapeutic counselling experience in a scope of practice or experience in addictions, mental health, and family violence.

The experience of the Mental Health and Addiction Counsellor should include clinically supervised education or work experience (therapeutic counselling experience under a qualified clinical counselling supervisor) that includes at least 500 hours, where at least 120 of these hours are direct client contact.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

Must have a valid Class 5 Drivers License (or equivalent)

Must be able to produce satisfactory criminal records check and departmental check.

This position requires an up-to-date immunization record.

**Tłı̨chǫ Region – Regional Requirements**

Within the region, the incumbent must be able to acquire within a reasonable time frame and remain current with the following training and certifications:

- Satisfactory Vulnerable Sectors Criminal Record Clearance.
- Registered and in good standing with a reputable Canadian, Provincial or Territorial regulatory or licensing body, such as Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), Canadian Psychological Association (psychologists) or registration



with the NWT social workers professional licensing body. Other regulatory bodies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Ability to travel within the Tłıchǫ Region to support the communities of Gametì, Wekweetì and Whatì when necessary.
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
- Cultural Training
- Mental Health First Aid
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Workplace Safety
- Hand Washing Certificate
- Training under the Accreditation Canada Standards

**Position Security** (check one)

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

**French language** (check one if applicable)

- French required (must identify required level below)  
Level required for this Designated Position is:  
ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION  
Basic (B)  Intermediate (I)  Advanced (A)   
READING COMPREHENSION:  
Basic (B)  Intermediate (I)  Advanced (A)   
WRITING SKILLS:  
Basic (B)  Intermediate (I)  Advanced (A)
- French preferred

**Indigenous language:** Select language

- Required
- Preferred