



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Community Counsellor	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-11259	Aklavik	Community Wellness and Support Services/Beaufort Delta

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

As a member of the Primary Community Care Team, the Community Counsellor is responsible for providing comprehensive and culturally relevant mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families/family violence services for the residents of Aklavik and surrounding communities. This position is a first point of contact for clients to access support services. Services are provided in accordance with the cultural values of the community and region, the *Northwest Territories (NWT) Mental Health Act, Child and Family Services Act, Protection against Family Violence Act*, Mental Wellness and Addictions Recovery Action Plan, and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority standards and protocols of the Community Counselling Program. Services are intended to help improve the mental health and well-being of residents and their community.

SCOPE

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is the single provider of all health and social services (HSS) in the NWT, with the exception of Hay River and Tẖcẖq̱ regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-indigenous. Health and social services includes the full range of primary, secondary and tertiary health services and social services including family services, protection services, care placements, mental health, addictions, and developmental activities, delivered by more than 1,400 HSS staff.

While the Tẖcẖq̱ Community Services Agency will operate under a separate board and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency will in the interim, the NTHSSA will set clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and monitoring for the entire NWT. Service Agreements will



be established with these boards to identify performance requirements and adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and policies as established by the NTHSSA.

Located in Aklavik, the Community Counsellor (CC) reports directly to the Regional Clinical Supervisor of Community Counselling and is a key member of the Primary Community Care (PCC) and regional Community Wellness and Support Services (CWSS) Program teams providing direct, community-based, culturally appropriate mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families counselling services for adults, Elders, and their families to ensure their needs are met, while adhering to the standards and protocols of the NTHSSA Community Counselling Program. These services include but are not limited to prevention and promotion initiatives; providing appropriate screening, intake, assessment, planning, aftercare services; the delivery of community-based mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families therapeutic counselling services; care coordination; and providing crisis response services. The CC is also a key referral agent and service provider for complex substance use/misuse, family violence, and people with psychiatric issues 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, and aftercare, to minimize the physical, mental, social, and emotional impacts of substance use/misuse, healthy families/family violence, mental illness, and trauma through providing clients with the tools and support required to achieve and maintain the highest level of mental health that is possible for the individual. This involves having the skills and cultural humility to work with various cultural groups and members of the population (adults, Elders, and families). The incumbent works collaboratively with the PCC Team, and as a part of this team, they are one of the key providers of a full range of mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families counselling services.

Services will be provided in remote locations (i.e., client home, etc.). In these situations, the incumbent may be required to walk to and from the different locations and will experience a variety of weather conditions, including severe cold.

From time to time the CC may be required to work with the Community Wellness Worker and/or Child and Youth Counsellor and/or other service providers in the provision of services to clients, some of whom may be abusive, individuals under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) escorts. These incidents may occur while the incumbent is on duty, as well as when off-duty.

The CC occasionally works with mandated clients (probation, social services), and others that may present as dangerous and unpredictable. As well, the incumbent may be called upon outside of work hours when a traumatic event occurs, within the community or to an individual.



As a result of living in an isolated, Northern community, the incumbent may be required to travel on small planes and ice or winter roads when travelling to or from the community, or to provide service to other communities in the region.

Living in an Indigenous region where individuals' mental health and wellness is dependent on connection to culture, the incumbent will be required to meaningfully participate in cultural programs including on-the-land programs, which would require travel by skidoo, boat, ATV's etc.

The responsibilities of this position may necessitate some on-call duty and flexible work schedules.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Independently, and as part of the PCC Team, provide a continuum of culturally appropriate therapeutic counselling services for individuals, groups, and families, in the areas of mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families/family violence, using wise practices.**
 - Conduct screening, intake, and assessment with various client groups including, adults, Elders, and families, for a variety of conditions including, but not limited to addictions, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, healthy families (including work with victims, offenders, and the Justice system), trauma, impact of residential schools, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, concurrent disorders, victims of sexual/physical assault; difficulties with work, school, family or other important areas of function; and other areas causing distress.
 - Provide culturally appropriate client-centered therapeutic counselling services in individual, family, or group formats within the Stepped Care 2.0 approach to service delivery using a treatment model or service delivery approach that best fits the client(s)' situation including, but not limited to, going out on the land; other Indigenous models of care based on relevant cultural beliefs, values and practices; home visits; solution-focused, cognitive-behavioral, narrative, developmental, systems, stages of change, motivational interviewing, and/or harm reduction.
 - Provide aftercare and follow-up counselling, and to connect with family and community resources where appropriate, following in-patient treatment or hospitalizations related to substance use/misuse, healthy families, or mental health/wellness (participate in discharge planning). This may also include completing check-ins on clients and providing ongoing therapeutic counselling.
- 2. Provide comprehensive and culturally relevant mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and health families/family violence care coordination services; independently, with other members of the CWSS team, and as part of the PCC Team.**



- Develop working relationships with other staff, Elders, and community agencies to ensure coordination of services.
 - Take a lead role in care coordination and planning for CWSS clients, including taking a lead role on the PCC Team in service planning for clients.
 - Conduct care coordination/planning involving necessary cultural/professional supports/services on a regular basis to connect individuals and families to their culture and community supports.
 - Make referrals where required.
 - Seek cultural knowledge wise practice initiatives and continually build a cultural knowledge base by attending culturally relevant activities and seeking out cultural mentors.
 - Provide consultation to physician(s) when determining need for a mental health related hospitalization and possible Medevac.
 - Provide leadership and advocacy with clients in working with other agencies.
3. **Conduct suicide risk assessments and mental status exams and provide recommendations regarding care and monitoring to clients who may be in Health Centers, referred by a third party, self-referred, walk-ins, etc.**
- Complete screening, risk assessment, mental status exams, and safety planning for suicide, violence, and other abuses (i.e., physical, emotional, sexual, etc.).
 - Prioritize and identify community and regional resources for each client in crisis.
 - Make referrals where required.
4. **As one of the primary providers of CWSS within the BDR the incumbent is an important consultant and educator of the PCC Team and other community agencies on mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families/family violence.**
- Provide culturally appropriate community awareness and education. This includes but is not limited to providing presentations and/or workshops that raise awareness of mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families within the community.
 - Work in partnership with the Community Wellness Workers in providing education sessions.
 - Collaborate with community service providers and organizations in prevention and wellness activities as relates to mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families (i.e., going out on the land).
 - Provide orientation and training on mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families to key stakeholders within the community (i.e., RCMP, Nurses, Schools, Non-Government Organizations, Indigenous and community governments, etc.).
 - Provide materials and expertise to community groups.



5. Contribute to the effective functioning of the CWSS and enhance program development, delivery, and continuity of care.

- Complete documentation, clinical notes, referral letters, and other documentation as required in the format set out by the NTHSSA standards and protocols of the Community Counselling Program.
- Actively participate in community interagency meetings.
- Participate in program evaluation, data collection activities, and other program design and delivery initiatives.
- Evaluate therapeutic counselling and treatment outcomes, in collaboration with clients, in order to determine the best service.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual demands.

Environmental Conditions

The incumbent may spend 30% of their day in client homes or in public locations with potential exposure to cigarette smoke, pets, and other unsanitary conditions.

Sensory Demands

The incumbent will spend approximately 60% of the day providing direct counselling services either within their office setting or within client homes and 20% of the day providing indirect counselling services such as case consultations with family, health care provider team, social workers, etc. This requires the use of the combined senses of touch, sight, smell and hearing during assessment and provision of counselling services.

Mental Demands

In this profession there is some level of uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work, and people in crisis can be abusive to those trying to help. The incumbent may be exposed to and/or experience highly emotional situations, such as suicides, as well as 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, culture, residential schools, etc.).

Providing these services in a small community presents unique challenges to the incumbent. For instance, the incumbent may have 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 even outside of work.



KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire and apply awareness of the detrimental effects of colonization, especially the residential school system, and its impacts on Indigenous communities, families and individuals.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire and apply awareness of the intergenerational impacts caused by the trauma of colonization on communities, families, and individuals.
- Knowledge of the biological, psychological, and social factors contributing to mental health, mental health disorders, substance use/misuse, and healthy families; and signs of substance use/misuse, mental health disorders, and healthy families in order to assess and determine an appropriate treatment plan.
- Knowledge of therapeutic treatment options, wise practices, as well as the skill and ability to provide treatment to people of all ages related to mental health/wellness, substance use/misuse, and healthy families in a cross-cultural environment.
- Knowledge of adult developmental, psychological, social, and cognitive development. Knowledge of child and adolescent development, psychological, social, and cognitive development.
- Knowledge of and ability to refer clients to community supports and connections to culture within and outside the region to ensure support for clients and their families (i.e., for individuals who require in-patient or alternative [such as psychiatric] assessment and care).
- Knowledge of treatment options and Indigenous based programming for people of all ages with addictions; knowledge of referral routes and care coordination in a cross-cultural environment.
- Knowledge of the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to demonstrate understanding and respect of the culture, traditions, community norms, and cultural values of the community.
- Knowledge of privacy and confidentiality practices and the ability to adhere to the expectations of maintaining client privacy and confidentiality.
- Knowledge of and the 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 relevant NWT legislation.
- Skills in relationship building and working collaboratively and cooperatively as an effective team member within diverse work groups and teams across the organization.
- Oral and written communication skills.
- Interpersonal skills including problem-solving, decision-making, and facilitation.
- Cultural awareness, trustworthiness, cultural humility, self-awareness, and the ability to be self-reflective.
- Must be able to work flexible hours to meet the needs of the community, including some evenings and weekends.
- Ability to relate to clients and families in a trauma-informed, culturally safe/anti-racist,



empathetic, strengths-based, identity-affirming, and respectful manner.

- Ability to adhere to a professional code of ethics.
- Ability to prepare written documents, which are clear, concise, and easy to understand by all.
- Ability to appropriately use clinical and treatment planning terminology with clients, other health care providers and referral agents.
- Ability to operate a computer and use Microsoft software, internet, and email programs.
- Ability to complete tasks / projects on time through the routine planning of own work and organization of resources.
- 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 Diploma in social sciences; and five (5) years of relevant counselling and/or relevant lived experience in Northern Indigenous communities.

Lived experience is defined as someone who has:

- living in a community within the NWT, preferably within the Beaufort Delta Region
- active in and supportive of community activities and events
- active in and supportive of cultural activities
- Indigenous cultural knowledge and understanding of healing grounded in Indigenous values and practices

Strong awareness of cultural diversity, specifically, Northern Indigenous values and practices.

Eligibility to register with a professional governing body is an asset i.e. Social Work License in the Northwest Territories; Certification with Canadian Counsellors and Psychotherapists Association; etc.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Proof of immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required

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 **Inuvialuktun and/or Gwich'in**