



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Mental Health and Addictions Counsellor	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-4256	Yellowknife	Mental Health and Addiction Services/HQ

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

As a member of the Yellowknife, Łutselk'e and Fort Resolution 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 Łutselk'e, Fort Resolution and Yellowknife. Services are provided in accordance with the *NWT Mental Health Act, Child and Family Services Act, Protection against Family Violence Act, Mental Health and Addictions Services Framework and Action Plan, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP), Health Information Act (HIA)* 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 Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłı̄chų regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-aboriginals.

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 health and social services staff.

While the Tłı̄chų Community Services Agency (TCSA) will operate under a separate board and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency (HRHSSA) will in the interim, the NTHSSA will set clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and monitoring for the entire Northwest Territories. 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. Under the direction of the Minister of Health and Social Services, the NTHSSA is established to move toward one integrated delivery system as part of the government's transformation strategy.

The NTHSSA administers all Social Services, Public Health, Home Care and general physician services throughout Yellowknife, Dettah, and Ndilo, as well as all regional Health and Social Services delivered in Łutselk'e and Fort Resolution totaling approximately 20,000 residents. NTHSSA provides and supports the delivery of community based health and social services to adults and children in order to enhance the health and well-being of communities through excellence accountability and respect for regional diversity.

Located in Yellowknife, the Mental Health and Addictions Counsellor (Counsellor) reports directly to the Regional Supervisor, Mental Health and Addictions.

The Counsellor is a key member of the Yellowknife, Łutselk'e and Fort Resolution Primary Community Care team providing direct, community based, culturally sensitive, mental health, addictions, and family counselling services to clients of all ages. These services include but are not limited to: prevention and promotion initiatives; planning and delivery of community-based mental health, addictions, family violence, therapeutic counselling services, system navigation and providing crisis response 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. 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 region's Primary Community Care Teams. As a part of this team they are the key provider of a full range of mental health and addictions counselling services.

This position 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.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

- Conduct screening, and bio-psycho-social assessments with various client groups including, elders, adults, couples, families, adolescents and children.
- Provide 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, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia), family violence (including work with

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.
- Provide 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
- Provide 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.
- Complete screening and risk assessment for suicide, violence and mental status with all client groups and individuals.
- Prioritize and identify community and regional resources for each client in crisis.

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

- Work collaboratively with other service providers in planning for clients with mental health, addictions, and family violence issues.
- Refer to professionals, traditional healers, and other services on a regular basis.
- Make referrals where required (note: and travel arrangements where required when services are required outside of the community).
- Provide consultation when determining need for hospitalization and possible medevac for mental health issues.
- Provide leadership and advocacy with clients in working with other agencies.
- Participate in case conference meetings with other professionals and service providers when necessary.
- Provide critical incident stress management and debriefing in response to adverse community events.
- Utilize 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.
- Apply strong ethical awareness and boundaries in the role of Mental Health and Addiction Counsellor to preserve the integrity of the counselling program.
- Participate in clinical supervision with the Regional Supervisor, Mental Health and Addictions.

**3. Responsible for the effective administrative functioning of the mental health, addictions and family violence programs.**

- Complete documentation as required in the format set out by the Department of Health and Social Services and Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority.
- Ensure professional conduct, client care, record keeping and administrative practices according to the Northwest Territories Community Counselling Program Standards.

- Participate in program evaluation, data collection activities, and other program design and delivery initiatives.
- Evaluate therapeutic counselling and treatment outcomes to determine the best service for clients.

**4. Provision of consultation services and education to the Yellowknife, Łutselk'e and Fort Resolution Primary Community Care Teams and other community agencies on mental health, addictions, and family violence issues.**

- Provide 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.
- Participate in interagency meetings as required.
- Work in partnership with other community resources to provide education sessions to professionals and community members.
- Provide 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.)
- Provide materials and expertise to community groups.
- Deliver presentations which are well structured and easy to understand.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Physical Demands**

No unusual demands.

**Environmental Conditions**

The majority of mental health and addictions 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 and addiction 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 and Addictions 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.
- Skilled in working with families in crisis, providing individual and group counseling, and conflict management.
- Knowledge of and ability to network resources within and outside the employing Region to ensure support for clients and their families.
- 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 packages, including email, excel, and Microsoft office.

**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.

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- 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 Yellowknife Region to support the communities of Fort Resolution and Łutselk'e when necessary.
- Ability to travel within the NWT to communities outside the Yellowknife region when required.

### **Position Security**

- 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