



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADVOCATE I/II

Classification specifications are only intended to present a descriptive summary of the range of duties and responsibilities associated with specified positions. Therefore, specifications *may not include all* duties performed by individuals within a classification. In addition, specifications are intended to outline the *minimum* qualifications necessary for entry into the class and do not necessarily convey the qualifications of incumbents within the position.

**FLSA STATUS:** Non-Exempt

### DEFINITION:

Under immediate (Behavioral Health Advocate I) or general (Behavioral Health Advocate II) supervision, utilizes lived experience to build rapport and provide support, guidance, and advocacy to clients and their families; assists clients with accessing and navigating behavioral health care services, resources, and systems of care; encourages full client engagement in services to promote wellness and recovery; and performs related duties, as assigned.

### SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED:

Receives immediate (Behavioral Health Advocate I) or general (Behavioral Health Advocate II) supervision from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

*Behavioral Health Advocate I:* This is the entry-level classification in the non-certified Behavioral Health Advocate series. Initially under close supervision, incumbents learn and perform routine support and advocacy duties while learning Authority policies and procedures. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied, complex, and difficult; close supervision and frequent review of work lessen as an incumbent demonstrates skill to perform the work independently. Positions at this level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the Behavioral Health Advocate II level but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise.

*Behavioral Health Advocate II:* This is the journey-level classification in the non-certified Behavioral Health Advocate series. Positions at this level are distinguished from the Behavioral Health Advocate I by the performance of the full range of duties as assigned, working independently, and exercising judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit.

This classification series is distinguished from the Peer Support Specialist series in that the latter requires Peer Specialist certification and may perform billable activities.

Positions in the Behavioral Health Advocate series are flexibly staffed; positions at the Behavioral Health Advocate II level are normally filled by advancement from the Behavioral Health Advocate I level; progression to the Behavioral Health Advocate II level is dependent on (i) management affirmation that the position is performing the full range of duties assigned to the classification; (ii) satisfactory work performance; (iii) the incumbent meeting the minimum qualifications for the classification including any licenses and certifications; and (iv) management approval for progression to the Behavioral Health Advocate II level.

### **EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL DUTIES:**

Essential duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

*Positions at the Behavioral Health Advocate I level may perform some of these duties and responsibilities in a learning capacity.*

- Provides peer to peer support services in the office and/or in the field including, but not limited to outreach, support, encouragement, guidance, advocacy, and referrals to external resources and services for clients and their families; builds rapport with clients and their families through sharing stories of lived experience and recovery.
- Encourages and supports clients to fully engage in services; provides outreach and assists clients in addressing and overcoming barriers to treatment.
- Prepares and facilitates a variety of wellness groups and group activities; monitors groups to ensure compliance with group rules and encourages client participation.
- Assists clients and families to understand behavioral health problems and steps to recovery.
- Serves as a role model to build and sustain connections and relationships with clients and the community.
- Accompanies clients to meetings and appointments to support their self-advocacy and facilitate better communication with service providers.
- Conducts tours of Authority facilities and provides information and resources to clients and the public.
- Assists with administrative and clerical tasks as assigned; maintains files and records.
- Maintains client confidentiality in compliance with all Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) regulations.
- Observes and complies with all Authority and mandated safety rules, regulations, and protocols.
- Performs related duties as required.

### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

Any combination of education, training, and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential duties of the position is qualifying. The incumbent will possess the most desirable combination of education, training, skills, and experience, as demonstrated in their past and current employment history. A typical example includes:

#### **Education and Experience**

Education:

- Behavioral Health Advocate I/II: Equivalent to completion of the twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade.

Experience:

- Behavioral Health Advocate I: Direct lived experience either personally or as a caregiver of someone who has recovered from behavioral health illness and/or substance use disorder.
- Behavioral Health Advocate II: Two (2) years of experience providing peer support services to clients in a behavioral health care setting.

**Licenses and Certifications**

- Behavioral Health Advocate I/II: Some positions may require possession of a valid California Driver's License, a satisfactory driving record, and a properly registered and insured vehicle, to be maintained throughout employment.

**Knowledge of:**

*Positions at the Behavioral Health Advocate I level may exercise some of these knowledge and abilities statements in a learning capacity.*

- Behavioral health care system and services.
- Impact of mental health issues on life functioning.
- Group facilitation methods and techniques.
- Principles and practices of building and maintaining strong relationships and connections with peers.
- Principles and practices of direct client service delivery.
- Principles of behavioral health education.
- Cultural, social, and environmental factors and influences affecting behavioral health.
- Community and governmental services and resources.
- Basic needs and challenges for individuals and families accessing behavioral health services, including cultural barriers.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and regulations as well as industry standards and best practices pertinent to the assigned area of responsibility, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Authority and mandated safety rules, regulations, and protocols
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service, interacting and effectively dealing with the public, community-based organizations and service providers, stakeholders, and Authority staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.

**Ability to:**

- Engage and encourage clients to participate in treatment services by sharing stories of lived experience and inspiring hope.

- Assist clients in identifying and addressing barriers to treatment.
- Interpret Authority programs and policies to clients, the general public, and outside agencies/organizations.
- Establish and maintain the confidence of clients and family/caregivers with diverse cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Understand scope of authority in making independent decisions.
- Effectively utilize community resources to assist clients.
- Listen attentively to clients and address their needs and issues fairly and professionally.
- Work well with and provide services to a variety of clients in various stages of behavioral health illness/treatment; maintain appropriate boundaries, identify and nurture strengths, and support their right to make independent decisions as appropriate.
- Prepare clear and concise correspondence, documentation, and other written materials.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and procedural guidelines.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Maintain the confidentiality of client information.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with clients, their families, Authority staff, and the behavioral health community.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS (ADA)**

When assigned to an office environment, must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone; ability to stand and walk between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information.

When performing field work, must possess mobility to work in changing site conditions; to sit, stand, and walk on level, uneven, or slippery surfaces; to reach, twist, turn, kneel, and bend; and to operate a motor vehicle and visit various sites throughout the Tri-Cities; vision to observe client behavior, signs of illness, and potential hazards. The job involves frequent walking to locate, assist, and deliver services to clients, with exposure to hazardous materials and waste in some locations. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects averaging a weight of 10 pounds, or heavier weights, in all cases with the use of proper equipment and/or assistance from other staff.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees also work in the field and are exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, and may be exposed to blood and bodily fluids, and other hazardous physical substances and fumes. Employees interact with clients with behavioral disorders who may display

erratic and assaultive behavior, including those who require emergency crisis intervention. Employees may also interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

In accordance with California Government Code Section 3100, Tri-City Mental Health Center employees, in the event of a disaster, are considered disaster service workers and may be asked to protect the health, safety, lives, and property of the people of the State.

Receive satisfactory results from a background investigation, which includes fingerprinting; a pre-employment physical examination, which includes a drug/alcohol test; and an administrative review.