



HEALTH CAREER OPTIONS GUIDE

for internationally educated health professionals

Mental Health Worker

This profession is also known as:

- social services worker
- crisis intervention worker
- youth services worker
- community counsellor
- aboriginal outreach worker



What is a mental health worker?

A mental health worker administers and implements a variety of social assistance programs and community services, and assists clients to deal with personal and social problems.

What are the main duties of a mental health worker?

- Interview clients to obtain case history and background information
- Assess clients' relevant skill strengths and deficits
- Assist clients to sort out options and develop plans of action while providing necessary support and assistance
- Counsel clients living in group homes and half-way houses, supervise their activities and assist in pre-release and release planning
- Participate in the selection and admission of clients to appropriate programs
- Meet with clients to assess their progress, give support and discuss any difficulties or problems
- Implement life skills workshops, substance abuse treatment programs, behaviour management programs, youth services programs and other community and social service programs under the supervision of social services or health care professionals
- Assist in evaluating the effectiveness of treatment programs by tracking clients' behavioural changes and responses to interventions

What personal characteristics or desired traits do I need for this work?

To work in this field, you need:

- To understand human nature, be interested in the welfare of others and want to help them.
- Patience, maturity, and good listening skills.
- Leadership, reasoning and decision-making skills
- To communicate clearly, both orally and in writing

Where do mental health workers work?

They are employed by social service and government agencies, mental health agencies, group homes, school boards, correctional facilities and other establishments.



What are typical work conditions?

- Work environments can be fast paced, emotionally and physically demanding
- Work may be in office settings, residential group homes, hospitals or clinics.
- Shift work is possible, as is responding to emergencies at any time.

What qualifications do I need?

- College or university program in social work, child and youth care, counselling or other social science or health-related discipline is usually required.
- Previous work experience in a social service environment as a volunteer or in a support capacity may replace formal education requirements for some occupations in this unit group.
- Social service workers may be required to be a member of a provincial regulatory body in some provinces
- There may be requirement for a variety of checks as follows: Child Abuse Registry check; Driver's validity license check; Criminal Record check; Adult Abuse Registry

What communication skills do I need?

You need:

- Strong interpersonal skills which encourage team work
- Strong oral skills
- Ability to develop rapport with clients and maintain their trust.
- Advanced decision making skills in stressful/crisis situations

For a full listing of the essential skills you may need, view:

http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/es_view_profile-eng.do?prof_id=15&lang=eng

What wage may I be paid for this work?

Average Canadian hourly wage Low 13.75 Median 21.00 High 32.00

http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_report_bynoc.do?noc=4212&reportOption=wage

Career Outlook

http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/LMI_report_bynoc.do?noc=4212&reportOption=outlook

Are there opportunities for advancement?

Progression to professional occupations in social services, such as family and marriage counsellors, social workers, and probation and parole officers, is possible with additional training and experience.

Learn more about mental health workers by viewing these sites:

- National Occupation Code 4212
The government of Canada has given a code to each occupation/profession. Use this code to learn more about mental health workers through government sites.
<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/QuickSearch.aspx?val65=4212>
- Self Assessment Readiness Tool (SART)™ for Mental Health Worker
This tool will allow you to compare your own skills and competencies to this occupation. This may help you make an informed decision about this career option.
<https://assesshealthcareers.ca/>

Mental Health Worker educational programs are offered nationally at both publicly funded and private career colleges. See the following links for further information:

- National Association of Career Colleges
<http://nacc.ca/>
- Colleges and Institutes Canada
<http://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/>

References

- Outline from CSMLS webpage, Accessed 3/25/2016
<http://altcareers.csmls.org/careers/assayer/>
- National Occupational Classification, 2011 (NOC 4212) 15/4/16
<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/QuickSearch.aspx?val65=4212>
- Workopolis
www.workopolis.com
- Government of Canada, Job Bank <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca>