

# POSITION DESCRIPTION



**Position:** Mental Health Worker  
**Reports to:** Charge Nurses or  
Senior Nurse Co-ordinators  
**Accountable to:** Director of Nursing & Allied Health

## Purpose of the position

A Mental Health Worker contributes to the promotion, growth and maintenance of the therapeutic community culture at Ashburn Clinic by ensuring that the philosophy, mission and values of the Clinic are demonstrated in everyday work practices.

## Context for the position

Ashburn Clinic is a not-for-profit therapeutic community in Dunedin, offering a professional and supportive environment for assessment, treatment and recovery from mental illness and addictions. Established in 1882 as an alternative to state hospital care, Ashburn Clinic is owned by the Ashburn Hall Charitable Trust and governed by a Board of Trustees. The Clinic provides public and private inpatient psychiatric services for people from all over NZ, aged 17 years and above.

The Ashburn therapeutic community evolved through its association with UK therapeutic communities which developed a group approach to treating the effects of trauma, where staff and patients work alongside each other in an atmosphere of open communication. The Ashburn residential programme provides treatment for a variety of health problems, including personality disorders, trauma-related conditions, eating disorders, mood and anxiety disorders and addictions.

Ashburn Clinic employs psychiatrists, psychotherapists, nursing and occupational therapy staff as well as general practitioners, a dietitian and a social worker. The Management Team consists of the Medical Director, Director of Nursing and Allied Health, Quality Director and the Business Director who leads a team of non-clinical staff responsible for finances, administration, catering, cleaning, quality, buildings and grounds.

As part of its core purpose and Charitable Trust status, Ashburn Clinic provides educational opportunities to internal and external staff. It is a teaching hospital with the capacity to provide placements for students of various disciplines, training for psychiatrists and psychotherapists, as well as educational seminars.

## Key accountabilities of the role

- *Therapeutic intervention*: relates in a professional manner and communicates effectively to support the patient through the healthcare experience, incorporating therapeutic use of self and psychotherapeutic communication skills as the basis for care for patients with mental health care needs.
- *Clinical practice*: provides nursing care in a manner that is responsive to the patient's needs, and which is consistent with the principles of the Therapeutic Community.
- *Professional development*: undertakes responsibility for own professional development and contributes to the development and recognition of professional nursing practice.
- *Health and Safety*: takes reasonable care of own health and safety and reasonable care that others are not harmed by this employee's actions. Follows any reasonable instructions given by the Employer, and co-operates with any reasonable health and safety policy or procedure.

## Key relationships

- The Director of Nursing and Allied Health
- The Unit team
- Ashburn Clinic treatment team
- Members of the Management Team
- Charge and Associate Charge Nurses
- Senior Co-ordinators
- Non-clinical managers and their teams
- The Ashburn Community
- Other health professionals
- The family/whānau of patients.

## General information

### Delegations

A Mental Health Worker has no delegated financial authority. All spending on capital or operational items is to be referred to the Director of Nursing and Allied Health for approval.

### Personal development

Every Mental Health Worker is expected to maintain their professional development and ongoing education.

This Position Description is not an employment agreement or contract and can be changed at any time due to the changing strategic, clinical or business needs of Ashburn Clinic.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of my Position Description and that it has been discussed with me.

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*Mental Health Worker Signature*

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*Date*

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*Director of Nursing & Allied Health Signature*

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*Date*

## Key accountabilities

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<p><i>Clinical practice:</i> Provides nursing care in a manner that is responsive to the patient's needs, in consultation with the Charge Nurses or Senior Co-ordinator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Annual appraisal to be completed on or within one month of anniversary date.</li><li>• Practice within ethical and legal requirements as stated in the Ashburn Clinic orientation package.</li><li>• Active participation within groups and activities that facilitate the Therapeutic Community philosophy, which may include other duties relevant to the service.</li><li>• Use of assessment and intervention skills to provide safety and meet patient needs, following Policies &amp; Procedures documentation standards.</li><li>• Active in the teaching of new staff and students.</li><li>• Development of interpersonal relationships that enables an awareness of an individual's spiritual, cultural, psychological and physical dimensions to provide holistic care.</li></ul>
<p><i>Team work and individual accountability</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence of commitment to multi-disciplinary approach through active involvement in clinical discussion.</li><li>• Ability to demonstrate autonomy and accountability.</li><li>• Ensures appropriate equipment and supplies are readily available and functioning as well as demonstrating an awareness of the standard and safety of the physical environment.</li></ul>
<p><i>Professional development:</i> Undertakes responsibility for own professional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analysis of personal records shows evidence of ongoing education to a minimum of 10 hours annually.</li><li>• Issues of development identified in appraisals are acted upon.</li><li>• Demonstrates positive working relationships with peers and has the ability to use available forums to ensure supervision of issues arising.</li><li>• Accesses sufficient appropriate training to maintain practice.</li></ul>
<p><i>Health and Safety:</i> Ensure health and safety policy and procedures are adhered to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Takes reasonable care of own health and safety, and reasonable care that others are not harmed by this employee's actions.</li><li>• Follows any reasonable instructions given by the Employer, and co-operates with any reasonable health and safety policy or procedure.</li><li>• Reports in a timely manner any hazard, incident or health and safety concern that is apparent.</li><li>• Supports maintaining safe systems and healthy practices in the workplace through active participation and consultation.</li></ul>

## Role requirements

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<p><i>Therapeutic Community:</i> Mental Health Workers at Ashburn Clinic implement the philosophy and practice of a therapeutic community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Works under the supervision of a Registered Nurse.</li><li>• Where appropriate attends and is actively involved in Forum and Community meetings and other groups as required.</li><li>• Works to ensure there is a safe environment and patients are safe.</li></ul>
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*Communication:*  
Mental Health Workers at Ashburn Clinic will have self-awareness and skills to communicate respectfully and develop effective relationships with patients and staff.

- Incorporates therapeutic use of self and psychotherapeutic communication skills as they relate to Mental Health Workers.
- Establishes, maintains and terminates therapeutic interpersonal relationships with individuals and groups.

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*Cultural safety:*  
Mental Health Workers at Ashburn Clinic acknowledge the different cultures of Aotearoa/New Zealand and demonstrate culturally safe care in partnership with patients.

- Applies the principles of cultural safety in caring for patients.
- Demonstrates an awareness of cultural diversity.

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*Professional judgment:*  
Makes professional judgments that will enhance practice.

- Identifies situations in a mental health setting requiring a nursing response.
- Assesses situations in a mental health setting in a manner that reflects an understanding of safety issues and patient/consumer needs.
- Identifies the mental health care needs of the patient in partnership with the patient, their family and whānau.
- Incorporates an understanding of therapeutic principles in planning and implementing nursing interventions.
- Makes clinical nursing judgments based on current nursing knowledge, psychotherapeutic principles and critical reflection.
- Identifies the impact of sociopolitical issues and the healthcare delivery system on the life experiences of patients of mental health services.
- Reflects upon and evaluates the effectiveness of professional judgments with peers and experienced mental health nurses.

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*Nursing care:*  
Manages nursing care in a manner that is responsive to the patient's needs, and which is supported by nursing knowledge.

- Carries out a mental assessment status as part of a broader nursing assessment, as delegated by the Charge Nurses, Associate Charge Nurses or Senior Co-ordinator.
- Implements mental health nursing care in a manner which facilitates the independence, self-esteem and safety of the patient.
- Uses the Therapeutic Community framework to assess, plan and implement mental health nursing care with patients, their family and whānau.
- Implements mental health nursing care which demonstrates an understanding of psychotherapeutic and partnership principles.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of mental health nursing care in partnership with patients, their family and whānau.
- Describes a range of therapeutic modalities including individual therapy, group therapy, and physical assessments and treatments.

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*Management of the environment:*

- Understands the principles of mental health.
  - Maintains a therapeutic environment.
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<p>Promotes an environment which maximises patient safety, independence, quality of life, and health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers the impact of the milieu on the mental health of the patient.</li> <li>• Identifies potential risk factors within the mental health setting and community environments, and communicates these to the team.</li> <li>• Assesses risk factors and identifies strategies that maintain own, patient and others' safety.</li> <li>• Implements nursing responses, procedures and protocols for managing threats to safety within the clinical environment.</li> <li>• Identifies clinical protocols – for example, for restraint, observation, treatment against the patient's will, AWOL, self-harm, aggression.</li> <li>• Describes basic de-escalation, calming techniques, and conflict resolution.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Legal responsibility:</i> Practices nursing in accord with relevant legislation and upholds patient rights derived from that legislation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accesses guidelines, policies and protocols for safe mental health nursing practice.</li> <li>• Describes the implications of legislation for mental health nursing practice – for example, the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992, Privacy Act 1993, Health and Disability Services Act 1993, the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Ethical accountability:</i> Practices nursing in accord with values and moral principles which promote patient interest and acknowledge the person's individuality, abilities, culture and choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discusses ethical issues related to mental health nursing practice – for example, informed consent, privacy, refusal of treatment, rights of formal and informal patients.</li> <li>• Recognises ethical dilemmas and problems arising in a mental health nursing context.</li> <li>• Applies ethical principles to mental health nursing practice.</li> <li>• Makes appropriate clinical judgments regarding the extent to which the patient is capable of participating in decisions related to their care, in consultation with other team members.</li> <li>• Accepts responsibility for own actions and invites feedback in relation to these actions.</li> <li>• Consults with experienced mental health nurses when confronted with an ethical dilemma.</li> <li>• Practices within recognised codes of ethics and codes of conduct.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Health education:</i> Assists patients and groups to achieve satisfying and productive patterns of living through health education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses the readiness of the patient to participate in mental health education strategies.</li> <li>• Provides mental health education appropriate to the needs of the patient and within a nursing framework.</li> <li>• Ensures the patient has adequate knowledge of the effects and consequences of treatment options.</li> <li>• Ensures that patients receive and understand relevant and current information regarding their mental health care.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Inter-professional healthcare:</i> Promotes a nursing perspective within the inter-professional activities of the health team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocates for the patient, their family and whānau within the mental health care team.</li> <li>• Provides input from nursing assessments to participate in the decision-making processes of the mental health team.</li> <li>• Describes the diagnostic criteria for major mental illness.</li> <li>• Utilises knowledge of group dynamics to promote effective mental health team interactions.</li> <li>• Promotes the delivery of integrated and co-ordinated mental health care.</li> </ul>

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*Quality improvement:*  
Contributes to ongoing quality improvement in nursing practice and service delivery.

- Reflects on patient, family and whānau feedback on the evaluation of nursing care and mental health service delivery.
- Shares knowledge and experience with colleagues and promotes quality improvement strategies.

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*Professional development:*  
Undertakes responsibility for own professional nursing development and contributes to the development and recognition of professional nursing practice.

- Identifies ongoing educational opportunities for mental health nurses.
  - Participates in appropriate clinical supervision.
  - Identifies own learning needs.
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