

NEW MEXICO JUDICIAL BRANCH

COURT PSYCHOLOGIST

This job description is ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY and is not a comprehensive listing of all functions performed.

SUMMARY

Under direction, and in accordance with American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines, independently conduct court-ordered evaluations including child custody, competency to stand trial and other criminal and civil case-related evaluations; serve as a consultant and resource for interpreting and integrating psychological test results for court staff and Clinicians; serve as an expert witness for the court pursuant to NMRA Section 11-706; address emergency situations daily in the courtroom and in the office.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education: A Ph.D. in Psychology, Counseling or other mental health related field; 40 hours of specialized training in Forensic Psychology; 40 hours of mediation training, and 20 hours in advanced mediation training in the area of family/child custody disputes.

Education Substitution: None.

Licensure: Current license to practice in the State of New Mexico as a Psychologist.

Experience: Five (5) years experience working with families and children in a therapeutic setting, crisis intervention, assessing the lethality of domestic violence and child abuse (physical and sexual), use of psychological assessments, projective and objective tests, and other forensic assessment instruments, of which three (3) years must have been in performing court-ordered forensic evaluations.

Experience Substitution: None.

Knowledge: Knowledge of procedural criteria for conducting child custody, competency and other forensic evaluations; psychological testing instruments including the interpretation and integration of results on projective, objective, competency, intellectual functioning, memory and neuropsychology tests; structured diagnostic interviews; current New Mexico Board of APA guidelines for child custody and other forensic evaluations; child development; psychopathology; family systems theory and therapy; substance abuse; domestic violence and child abuse; cultural diversity; statewide mental health agencies and resources; treatment planning and forensic report writing; family court guidelines; legal knowledge relevant to mental health evaluations; research regarding syndromes and propensity for behaviors; advanced mediation/settlement/facilitation/negotiation techniques; thorough understanding of the DSM-IV-(TR); rules of civil procedure, local court rules, rules of courtroom procedure and rules of evidence.

Skill & Ability: **Skill** in performing comprehensive diagnostic and evaluative interviews; administering, interpreting and integrating psychological tests; using deductive and inductive reasoning; independently and accurately assessing crisis situations quickly; assessing the lethality of cases involving domestic violence and child abuse cases. **Ability** to testify in court on felony and misdemeanor cases as an expert both under examination and cross examination; use initiative and independent judgment; conduct child custody, competency and other criminal and civil case related forensic evaluations; educate parties, judicial officers and community; work with individuals who are in

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high conflict, mentally ill, or who have serious personality disorders; work in stressful environments and/or hostile situations on a daily basis; debrief jurors in critical incident criminal and civil cases; communicate effectively both orally and in writing; work with a culturally diverse population; provide direction and guidance to professional and clerical staff; manage cases and maintain confidentiality.

EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED

Clinical Services - Conduct in-depth assessment and inquiry into highly conflicted family cases; assess the developmental and psychological needs of children; conduct in-depth evaluative and diagnostic interviews; write detailed reports including treatment recommendations in the form of a court order; research the literature as related to cases.

Conduct court-ordered forensic evaluations such as competency to stand trial, dangerousness, criminal responsibility, suicidality, mental status examinations, and competency to testify as a witness; testify as an expert witness in district and metropolitan court in criminal and civil cases both under examination and cross-examination; conduct risk and amenability to treatment assessments and psychological evaluations to assess eligibility for Court Mental Health Programs; research legal standards to answer referral questions raised by the court; review court records, documents provided by the court or counsel, and coordinate with other state agencies, and attorneys; write comprehensive forensic reports to address court-ordered referral questions, establish diagnosis and make treatment recommendations.

Conduct court-ordered child custody evaluations consistent with APA guidelines. Determine procedures to be used in complicated cases including which psychological tests to administer; gather information regarding family dynamics, social structure, psychopathology, substance abuse, collateral data, criminal records of all parties, and other information deemed necessary; assess the psychological functioning of each party and developmental need of the child(ren); observe the child(ren) interacting with each parent and significant others; integrate test results with other data gathered to determine the ability to parent and the level of attachment of the child(ren) to each parent; consult with collateral sources such as therapists, physicians, teachers, daycare providers, and others deemed necessary; assess the lethality of domestic violence and child abuse (physical and sexual); assess suicidality and dangerousness as well as potential risk of aggression between parties and/or toward the child(ren); write comprehensive reports outlining critical issues; make recommendations regarding parenting plans and treatment recommendations in the form of court orders; provide the court with the relevant information without increasing the conflict between the parties.

Testing - Use advanced degree and skills to administer and interpret objective, projective, competency, intellectual functioning, and neuropsychological tests; review new psychological tests and determine if they will be used in the evaluation process.

Training - Educate parents, judicial officers and the community in child development and the impact of on-going conflict; coordinate with other state agencies and associated professionals; serve as a consultant of the court and legal community; provide training to student interns; train staff on administering, scoring and interpreting psychological tests; maintain current knowledge and expertise in the field that is disseminated to other professionals and the community.

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May provide administrative direction, attend meetings, and work in an advisory capacity regarding management and staff issues in the absence of the Clinical Director.

WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The following functions are representative of the work environment and physical demands an employee may expect to encounter in performing tasks assigned to this job.

Work is performed in an office, field or court setting. The work performed requires travel (valid driver's license required) travel may also be periodically required for training, meetings and presentations. The employee is expected to be punctual and to adhere to assigned work schedule. Assigned work schedules are flexible; include days, nights, weekends and holidays; overtime may be required. The employee must regularly interact positively with co-workers, clients and the public; work under severe time constraints and meet multiple demands from several people. The work requires prolonged use of computers, repetitious hand, arm and finger motions as well as manual/finger dexterity. The employee must be able to walk, talk, hear, kneel, stoop, lift, pull and carry up to 40 pounds. The employee may be required to sit or stand for long periods of time. The employee may be exposed to fluctuating outdoor and building temperatures; hostile or violent situations that may arise when dealing with individuals involved in court cases, disturbing or hazardous court exhibits and contagious health conditions.