

Ministry of Health and Social Services

Terms of Reference for Counsellor

1.0 BACKGROUND

Montserrat, a British overseas territory, is a small island in the Leeward island chain, with a land mass of 39.5 square miles and a resident population of 4649 persons of which, 838 were over 65 years of age (Census, 2018). The eruption of the Soufrière Hills Volcano in 1995 rendered more than half of the island unsafe, as a result, three quarters of the island was declared an exclusion zone, which prohibits anyone from occupying that part of the island. Many families were divided, with people relocating to the UK, the USA and other Caribbean islands.

The delivery of health and social care on Montserrat is the responsibility of the Government and is administered under the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS). The mission of the MoHSS is to promote health and wellbeing, by empowering individuals and communities and assuring access to quality preventative, curative and rehabilitative health and social care services in partnership with other stakeholders.

In accordance with the Sustainable Development Plan (2008-2020) and the Government of Montserrat's Policy Agenda 2019/2020, the strategic priorities of the Ministry of Health and Social Services are:

- Enhanced Human Development:
 - Increased access to essential medical services.
 - Increased and expanded health promotion services to reduce Public health concerns.
- Sustainable Environmental Management and appropriate Disaster Mitigation Practices:
 - Increased focus on mitigating disasters in addition to strengthening preparedness and emergency response.
 - Physical infrastructure designed and built for resilience against disasters.
- Increased access to essential and specialized medical services through leveraging technology as well as direct service provision.
- Increased and expanded health promotion services to reduce public health concerns, to reduce incidences and effect of non-communicable diseases, to improve the care of the elderly and including a focus on vector borne diseases.

- Increased focus on mitigating disaster in addition to strengthening preparedness and emergency response.
- Strengthened community-based treatment programs for vulnerable groups of society.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services has five programmatic areas:



General Counselling Services

The Ministry of Health and Social Services has undertaken substantial work to restructure its overall operations and as such have sought to expand the operations of the Primary Health Care Services and in particular the services of the Mental Health Unit. Presently, the Ministry is unable to offer Counselling services as the Counsellor who was originally assigned to the Social Services Department resigned for personal reasons.

Furthermore, following the recruitment of a Clinical Psychologist in April 2019, the capacity of the Ministry to attend to Mental Health Services was significantly bolstered as these services were previously run by a Mental Health Nurse practitioner and Mental Health Nurse with the quarterly support of a visiting psychiatrist. While the Ministry of Health and Social Services provides counselling services to clients, support is also given to the School Counsellors within the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Sports for students in need of these services.

The MoHSS in its recent Strategic Mental Health Plan (PAHO Consultant Dr Abel) identifies the need to address current gaps in service provision. The gap analysis identifies among other requirements, the need: -

- To increase awareness by health professionals of the psychosocial factors in and the maintenance of mental health disease processes.
- The need to further integrate mental health services into the general health services.
- The further need for counselling services.
- Regular in-service training of all staff in the management of common disorders.
- The development of Home based packages of care for family care and support.
- Expand the range of mental health services to children and adolescents.
- Expand mental health promotion programmes to schools including life skills training.
- To integrate the mental health information system into the general health information system.

2.0 PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT

The Government of Montserrat is seeking to recruit a highly qualified Counsellor with a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experience to work as part of the Ministry of Health and Social Services Team to provide counselling and other mental health related services on the island. The Counsellor will also be required to engage with the Ministry staff as well as the agencies and Departments which engage in linked services with a view of transferring and sharing of knowledge thus ensuring that there is strengthening of the human capacity and service delivery within the Government of Montserrat.

3.0 Scope of Work

The scope of work includes the:

- Provision of high quality counselling and therapeutic support to the individuals and groups with the aim of maintaining and restoring emotional and psychological well-being. Services should be:
 - Confidential
 - Safe, nurturing and supportive
 - Comprehensive and co-ordinated across sectors
- Provision for Mental Health promotion and prevention through public education initiatives.

4.0 Professional Tasks

The Counsellor will be required to perform therapeutic counselling interventions in line with the identified needs. This includes:-

1. Provide counselling to individuals and groups using various counselling approaches.

2. Conduct screening assessments to identify mental health issues, risks and protective factors to guide the mental health interventions.
3. Provide a safe environment conducive to emotional exploration and processing of experiences and gaining insight into relevant issues, so that these issues could be resolved if possible.
4. Make appropriate referrals for care to the necessary complementary or auxiliary services.
5. Work in partnership across key agencies or care providers to ensure comprehensive care plans.
6. Develop and implement treatment plans based on clinical experience and knowledge.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of the counselling intervention and modify the treatment plan if necessary.
8. Maintain client records and other paperwork relevant to the client (e.g. assessment; diagnoses; progress notes etc), and keep these records confidential.

Training and Development of other Professionals: -

- Conduct training in various mental health related fields (e.g. Substance Abuse) to service users and key agencies such as Social Services, Education and RMPF.

Public Education and Mental Health Promotion: -

- Coordinate and facilitate workshops, courses, training events and other forums for giving information and teaching about mental health issues.
- With consent from client, engage family members to ensure that they have the relevant psycho-education to understand the client's issues, so that they could provide the relevant support necessary to the client.

Research and Service Improvement:

- Contribute to the design and implementation of population-based research which will inform the development of programs and services which are responsive to the needs of the population.
- Collect data, record trends and advise the Ministry of Health and Social Services on required program changes.

Administrative Tasks:

- Submit quarterly reports to the Clinical Psychologist
- Prepare and regularly update work plans
- Contribute to the strategic plan for the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

Personal Development:

- Ensure that BACP or other accreditation are up to date
- Learn about new developments in the area of counselling and mental health issues through workshops, reading professional publications, attending relevant courses or seminars and attending other continuing education classes if possible.

- Identify and seek opportunities for personal development in areas such as psychotherapy and other relevant areas to improve treatment outcome.

5.0 Qualifications, Skills and Experience

Education

- Must have a Master's Degree in Counselling

Experience

- Minimum 2-5 years working experience with various demographics

Accreditation

Essentials:

- Maintain a current and recognised professional accreditation or licensing body and membership should be maintained for the duration of the period of engagement.

Knowledge

- Have knowledge of different counselling approaches
- Knowledge of human behaviour
- Knowledge of evidence-based assessment and therapeutic interventions.

Skills

- Knowledge and Skills in the principles and practices in Counselling
- Facilitation and Counselling Skills
- Excellent analytical skills
- Report writing skills
- Organising and planning skills
- Computer literacy
- Conflict resolution and mediation skills
- Excellent written communication skills
- Problem Solving Skills

Abilities

Should have the ability to

- Use initiative and work independently
- Manage caseload and participate in clinical management conference
- Assess and develop treatment and intervention care plans

- Plan and facilitate and deliver training workshops
- Relate to a wide range of people

6.0 Remuneration

Remuneration will be commensurate with qualification and experience of the successful applicant.

7.0 Duration

The terms of engagement will be for a contractual period of two (2) years

8.0 Reporting and Management Arrangements

- The Counsellor will report directly to the Clinical Psychologist who will consult with the Director, Social Services on matters concerning clients which fall within the direct remit of the Social Services Department. Ultimate accountability will be to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health and Social Services.
- The Counsellor will be clinically supervised and supported by the Clinical Psychologist in the Mental Health Unit.
- The Counsellor will consult with the Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatrist and other members of the mental health team on clinical matters.

9.0 Other requirements for the post:

- Must be able to work in a small isolated community, with an understanding of the impact current social work practice may have on a different culture.
- A Flexible approach to work with a willingness to assist with the provision of services when there are staff and technical capacity shortfalls.
- Exercise good judgement, integrity and discretion when handling confidential information.
- An up to date Criminal Records Bureau certificate as part of our policy of safer recruitment.

10.0 Confidentiality

All information, data and documentation belonging to the government of Montserrat shall be treated by the Counsellor as confidential and shall not, at any time during or after the termination of his/her engagement, be disclosed by the Counsellor his servants, or agents or any third party without written consent of the Government.