

TEAM UP Role Development – Behavioral Health Clinician (BHC) Role

Updated – September 30, 2019

I. Context

The staffing model for TEAM UP includes a role for an integrated behavioral health clinician (IBHC) team member who partners with the primary care provider and the Community Health Worker (CHW) to deliver comprehensive services to patients and families. While there are many common elements, there is also some variability in health centers' previous or current experience with this type of role.

Goal of memo: Outline the integrated behavioral health clinician (BHC) role, responsibilities, and skill set that all TEAM UP health centers will use.

II. Considerations

- Health centers may have previous experience with a particular approach to the integrated behavioral health clinician role, and health centers may have currently employed staff that will function in this role for TEAM UP.
- The potential candidate pool is likely to vary among health centers.
- Organizational structures, human resources, hiring, and on-boarding processes are likely to vary among health centers.

III. Psychiatry in an Integrated Model

In addition to integrated behavioral health clinicians such as LICSWs and LMHCs, psychiatrists are physicians who specialize in behavioral health with a distinct role in an integrated care model. Psychiatry supports building capacity within primary care to address behavioral health issues through consultation, shared learning, and enhanced access to specialty-level care when appropriate.

IV. Overview of Integrated Behavioral Health Clinician Role:

The following description of core competencies and role responsibilities is drawn from a variety of resources cited below, including: SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Core competencies (skills):

- Ability to provide behavioral health treatments and interventions that adhere to the primary care model: brief and solutions-focused
- Ability to make quick and accurate clinical assessments of mental and behavioral conditions
- Skilled in providing evidence-based interventions that focus on improving patient function
- Ability to think in terms of population health framework

- Provide behavioral health services to patients with less-complex presentations and accurately step up care/refer to specialty care for more complex cases
- Assist in collaborating with specialty care in supporting children with complex needs in the medical home
- Knowledge of common chronic conditions in pediatric primary care, including symptoms, mechanisms, common co-occurring behavioral health problems and appropriate treatment
- Training or knowledge in following topics
 - Interaction between biology, health and behavior
 - Biological components of health and disease
 - Common psychotropic medications and their uses and common side effects
- Flexibility and comfortable with frequent interruptions
- Comfort functioning effectively as a member of an interdisciplinary team
- Possess strong communication and consultation skills
- Knowledge of culture’s impact on health and the ability to incorporate patient beliefs into treatment planning
- Care management skills and knowledge of local resources for outside referrals
- Utilize motivational, collaborative decision making and other skills in patient/ family engagement

Core responsibilities of the Integrated Behavioral Health Clinician role:

The following grid identifies common elements included in many sample job descriptions:

Common Elements in the Integrated Behavioral Health Clinician Role		
Address acute mental health issues	Screening, assessment and brief intervention within primary care	Motivation and lifestyle changes for chronic medical conditions
Care Planning & Care Management	Consultation for primary care providers	Quality Improvement Activities

Core Responsibilities:

- Provide comprehensive assessment, confirmation of diagnosis, consultation, and brief intervention for less-complex presentations of behavioral conditions
- Consult with primary care provider to provide effective treatment planning and assist clients in successfully achieving goals
- Assist the primary care team in developing care management processes such as the use of guidelines, disease management techniques, case management, and patient education to improve self-management of chronic disease
- Provides timely feedback to the primary care provider verbally and through active documentation of patient progress and diagnostic information in the treatment chart
- Actively participate in meetings to support implementation and improvement of health center’s integrated care model
- Teach patients, families, and staff care, prevention, and treatment enhancement techniques
- Monitor the health center’s behavioral health program, identifying problems related to patient services and making recommendations for improvement
- Assist in the detection of “at risk” patients and development of plans to prevent further psychological or physical deterioration

III. References

[Core competencies for integrated behavioral health and primary](#) care by SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality literature review - [Provider- and Practice-Level Competencies for Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care](#)

[Link](#) to California Mental Health Services Authority Behavioral Health Counselor roles and responsibilities

Cherokee Health Systems' Behavioral Health Consultant [job description](#)

IV. Previous Iterations

BHC Role Memo vF5 3.16: <https://app.box.com/s/7zpdyw617xpyxnszlbccdvgnl0swa9ap>