



JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **PROGRAM COUNSELOR**

REPORTS TO: Residential Supervisor and Shift Supervisors and/or RSAs where applicable.

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION: provide for the health, safety and well-being of individuals with disabilities, and to support their interests and choices so that they may lead fulfilling lives.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS: The following functions have been determined by the Company to be essential to the successful performance of this position.

1. INTERACT WITH RESIDENTS

- A. Talk to and interact with residents respectfully; be knowledgeable of and sensitive to resident verbal and non-verbal communication.
- B. Provide guidance, counseling and assistance in order to engage residents in the home and community in ways that are relevant, purposeful and in tune with resident choices, interests, and concerns. Activities may include shopping, business errands, going on dates, swimming, participating in exercise groups, participating in church groups and other social activities as determined by resident choices. Choices must meet approval of supervisor.
- C. Respect the house, furnishings and clothes as residents' property and make house TV, radio, and movie choices according to resident interests.
- D. Guide and assist residents in the acquisition of daily living skills both in the home and in the community.
- E. Support and facilitate resident relationships with family members, friends, guardians and other advocates. This support may include but is not limited to facilitating phone calls, correspondence and visits with family and friends, and facilitating attendance at special events such as vacations, funerals, weddings and other celebrations.
- F. Support each resident's personal and family religious belief system in the home and facilitate residents' attendance at religious services according to residents' choice.
- G. Be attentive to and respect residents' desires and cues for personal space and privacy.
- H. Interact appropriately and professionally with residents with regard to attitude, self-control, self-discipline, cooperation, tone of voice, language and usage, and in other areas as needed.
- I. Work with residents to discover and pursue personal goals in keeping with their Risk Management Plans.

2. SUPPORT RESIDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- A. Read and follow each resident's Risk Management Plan, protocols and program plans.
- B. At the beginning of each shift read and initial resident Health Progress Notes, Med Sheets and the Communication Log going back to your previous shift in order to be aware of residents' current status and activities.
- C. Make entries in Health Progress Notes, Med Sheets and the Communication Log as appropriate. Be thorough, complete, professional and legible in your documentation.

- D. As a mandated reporter, inform appropriate professionals of Vulnerable Adult issues.
- E. Provide guidance and assistance to residents in their personal hygiene and appearance in the areas of tooth brushing, bathing, toileting, perineal care, menstrual care, nail care, hair care including seeking/following guardian permission/direction with regarding to hair cuts and hair coloring, care and selection of clothing and dressing appropriately for weather conditions.
- F. Be attentive to resident medical issues and alert supervisors and/or house nurse to medical issues and/or changes in resident health and/or problems relating to medication or medical equipment. Also, alert day program staff and guardian as requested.
- G. Follow medical orders and directions from medical staff and supervisors concerning resident health issues, treatments and therapies and be attentive to details in those orders and directions.
- H. Talk to medical personnel by phone regarding resident health issues.
- I. Accompany residents to medical appointments and to Urgent Care and the Emergency Room as needed. Facilitate communication of information between resident and medical staff. Assist resident participation in medical exams.
- J. When residents are hospitalized, advocate for them by informing hospital staff of resident medical history, preferences, fears and communication style; model respect for the resident and appropriate interaction style. Communicate guardian/conservator's written directions and preferences to hospital staff. Be flexible to accommodate the additional scheduling needs while the resident is hospitalized.
- K. Administer topical, oral (by mouth or through feeding tube), ear, nasal, rectal and vaginal medication and any other treatment prescribed by medical personnel or required by supervisors and/or the house nurse.
- L. Order medication refills as needed or requested and pick them up from the pharmacy when necessary.
- M. Assist residents in and out of the bath tub, the van, furniture and in other situations as needed. This may involve awkward, heavy lifting. Use a Hoyer Lift or other lifting mechanisms for moving residents who require them.
- N. For those residents who require it, reposition them often, ideally every 45 minutes and at a minimum every 2 hours; this may involve lifting a resident and/or using a Hoyer Lift or other lifting mechanism.
- O. Maintain records and documentation relating to resident finances and seek out receipts for all purchases and deposits made on behalf of residents.

3. CARRY OUT HOME SAFETY, MEAL PREPARATION AND CLEANING PROCEDURES

- A. Safety and Emergency Response
 - 1. Be familiar with home safety procedures as well as fire evacuation and hazardous weather plans, and execute procedures and plans as needed.
 - 2. Assist residents in evacuation drills and emergency situations in the home; this may include lifting and/or carrying residents who are non-ambulatory, non-compliant or for other reasons unable to move to safety.
 - 3. Assist residents in emergency situations in public; this may include lifting and/or carrying residents who are non-ambulatory, non-compliant or for other reasons unable to move to safety.
 - 4. Clear walkways, fire exits and driveways of snow and ice during snowfalls and as needed.
 - 5. Know how to use emergency phone numbers, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, and emergency pager system, and use them when needed.
 - 6. Maintain appropriate staff-to-resident ratios during your shifts, including when planning and carrying out community activities.
 - 7. Secure wheelchair straps for residents who need them whenever they are in a wheelchair.

8. Whenever a resident is on a changing table ensure that the safety net is secured using all available straps and that the resident is never unattended for any period of time while on the changing table.
9. Use side rails for residents who need them whenever they are in bed.
10. Be familiar with proper use of Hoyer Lift and other lifting mechanisms and techniques; know safe lifting procedures for each resident in your home.
11. Know procedures for calling an ambulance and using a hospital Emergency Room, and execute procedures when needed.
12. Provide crisis intervention and assistance when necessary.
13. Carry out CPR, First Aid, poison control, G-tube replacement and missing person responses as needed.

B. Meals, Food Handling and Preparation

1. Assist residents with meal planning, preparation and cleanup as needed.
2. Shop for groceries as needed.
3. Prepare meals following menu and nutrition guidelines.
4. Share food and table conversation with residents in family style meals when possible.
5. Assist residents with eating as needed.
6. Clean up table and dishes per regulatory standards.
7. Clean the refrigerator, stovetop, oven, and microwave.

C. Maintain a safe, clean and orderly home and van by:

putting things away after use; taking out garbage and recycling; vacuuming and spot cleaning carpet; sweeping and mopping hard floors; cleaning bathrooms, disinfecting tubs after every use and disinfecting toilets as needed; organizing cupboards and labeling products per regulatory standards; dusting; cleaning walls and windows and clearing cobwebs; watering plants; purchasing and restocking supplies as needed; changing light bulbs; cleaning and organizing the garage as needed; and assisting with yard work as requested; assisting with and/or caring for residents' pets, including feeding, watering, attending to the pets' health care and hygiene and cleaning up after them using equipment designated for those purposes; Refueling and maintaining company van as needed; completing chore checklists as required.

D. Take care of laundry and bedding:

Wash, dry, fold and put away clothes and other laundry in proper locations; change and launder wet or soiled bed sheets and disinfecting bed when necessary, according to OSHA regulations.

4. SEEK AND FOLLOW THE ADVICE AND DIRECTIONS OF SUPERVISORS

You must seek the advice of an shift supervisor or residential supervisor when you have questions concerning your performance of the functions of your job. You must follow directions and assignments given by a superior concerning performance of functions of this position.

5. WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH COWORKERS

You must work with coworkers as a team player. You must communicate with coworkers both verbally and in writing. You must recognize and respond appropriately to nonverbal and situational cues from coworkers, such as when there is a need for physical assistance with resident care or verbal reinforcement relating to a behavior issue. When problems or emergencies arise you must be willing and able to adapt to the needs of the group in the working environment.

6. COMPLETE TRAINING

- A. Complete all initial training requirements within 60 days of hire.
- B. Initiate and complete annual training in a timely fashion including CPR, First Aid, OSHA, Vulnerable Adults training and any additional training required at your work site.
- C. Attend monthly staff meetings and other meetings as requested.
- D. Assist as requested in training new employees.

E. Participate in a performance reviews of your work.

7. CORE VALUES

Understand and uphold the Company's Core Value statement at all times while on duty, regardless of personal practices and beliefs.

8. MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

Maintain confidentiality and professionalism regarding all Company information (within the home, between ACR homes and outside the company) regarding resident, staff and company issues. This also means refraining from discussing resident personal issues in front of residents and refraining from inappropriate comments or gossip.

9. MAINTAIN A PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Maintain a professional appearance while on duty or on premises, including the use of professional language and postures as well as appropriate footwear and clean and neat clothing, jewelry and hairstyles that are in accordance with ACR's dress policy for program counselors and that are appropriate for scheduled activities. This is particularly important when meeting with medical staff, other professionals, parents, and at residents' social events in order to maximize your effectiveness as an advocate and role model for residents.

10. ADHERE TO SCHEDULING POLICIES

You must be punctual and ready to start your shift at designated times and you must continue working until you are replaced by another staff person. You must find your own replacements for scheduled shifts in accordance with house scheduling policies when you need time off due to illness, vacation or for other reasons. You must notify your supervisor of scheduling changes. When emergencies arise or you are unable to work a scheduled shift or attend a scheduled staff meeting, you must call the on-call pager for your home and enter your call back number to immediately alert your supervisor. You must help fill in for sick employees and work occasional unexpected shifts, and you must work a share of weekends and holidays.

11. MAINTAIN THE FRAGRANCE FREE POLICY

Refrain from using scented personal and household products while on duty and/or on company premises both for yourself and for the people you support.

12. DRIVE COMPANY AND/OR PERSONAL VEHICLE

Transport residents and perform job-related errands in a company van or your personal vehicle as requested and/or when necessary. Adhere to company parking policy, and all applicable OSHA and safety requirements. Secure van straps and be able to implement handicap parking and lift requirements as well as emergency van procedures.

13. CARRY A COMPANY PAGER WHEN REQUESTED TO DO SO

Be responsible for carrying the supervisor's pager for the home in which you work when requested to do so, and when on call adhere to requirements regarding staying within 60 minutes of the office, and having alternate care available for children and/or pets as needed, should an emergency arise.

14. ADHERE TO COMPANY POLICIES

Adhere to all company policies as stated in the current ACR Employee Handbook and the Policy Book located in each house.

15. ACCEPT OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED BY A SUPERIOR.

FOR AWAKE NIGHT SHIFTS ONLY

In addition to the Essential Functions listed above, the following functions have been determined by the Company to be essential to the successful performance of awake night shifts.

17. FOLLOW HOUSE-SPECIFIC AWAKE NIGHT DUTY LIST

- A. Stay awake and alert at night and follow the house-specific Awake Night Duty List as it pertains to resident care; specifically:
 - 1. Check on residents during the night as directed in their Risk Management Plans. Assist them if needs arise that require your help or presence.
 - 2. Assist residents with their morning routines when your shift includes those hours.
 - 3. Follow the protocol for when residents are sick.
 - 4. Notify supervisor and/or on call nurse for resident health related questions/concerns.
- B. Follow the house-specific Awake Night Duty List regarding cooking, cleaning and any other household duties which are to be completed during the Awake Night shift.
- C. Make time clock punch-ins or telephone call-ins to the designated voice mail system every hour of the awake night shift within 10 minutes either side of the hour and when random signal light indicates it is time to do so; this is to maintain records showing our staff remain awake as required by the Risk Management Plans in the home.

FOR ASLEEP-NIGHT SHIFTS ONLY

In addition to the Essential Functions listed above, except those that are specific to awake shifts, the following functions have been determined by the Company to be essential to the successful performance of asleep night shifts.

18. REMAIN AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH EMERGENCY RESPONSE AS NEEDED

- A. Remain on premises and within hearing distance of residents or awake night staff and/or monitoring devices, telephone or other emergency alarm mechanism.
- B. Wake up and assist in emergency situations.
- C. Maintain a professional appearance including clean and appropriate sleepwear (such as two-piece pajamas or a sweat suit).

FOR JUNIOR PROGRAM COUNSELORS ONLY

19. The following modifications to the Essential Functions listed above apply to Program Counselors between ages 16-18 who are referred to as Junior Program Counselors:

- A. Junior Program Counselors may not work awake night or asleep night shifts (between the hours of 11 p.m.-5 a.m.) and they may not work in homes licensed as ICFs/MR.
- B. Junior Program Counselors must work with another Program Counselor who is over the age of 18 and who is certified to pass medications; a Junior Program Counselor may never work alone.
- C. Junior Program Counselors may not administer topical, oral (by mouth or through feeding tube), ear, nasal, rectal and vaginal medication.
- D. Junior Program Counselors may not make entries in Health Progress Notes (HPNs); they should read HPNs to keep current and note their observations to a med-certified staff who can enter them in the HPNs. One exception is that when working hospital shifts, Junior Program Counselors may note their observations in HPNs. They may accompany residents to medical appointments only under the direct supervision of a med certified staff.
- E. Junior Program Counselors may not transport residents either in a company vehicle or in their own vehicle. They may not drive a company vehicle at any time, such as for errands, refueling or maintenance.
- F. Junior Program Counselors may not assume responsibility for the house pager, and they may not pick up shifts at other ACR locations without the approval of their direct supervisor.

NON-ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS: The following are job functions that are customarily performed by the person responsible for this position, but they are not considered essential.

1. Perform routine and emergency home maintenance as needed.
2. Demonstrate creativity in problem resolution and in proposing new ideas for programming, residential care and household tasks.
3. Take resident and household dry cleaning to the dry cleaner's as needed.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. You must possess the following character traits:
 - A. **Judgment:** you must possess judgment and decision-making skills sufficient to perform the functions of the job, in both day to day and crisis situations.
 - B. **Independence:** you must be self-sufficient and resourceful enough to carry out the functions of the position. The position requires you to be adept at decision-making, problem solving and taking initiative with minimal direction from supervisors. You must be able to recognize what needs to be done and to prioritize work with minimal direction from supervisors.
 - C. **Responsibility:** You must be responsible in carrying out the functions of the position. You must be reliable in quality of work, attention to details, task completion and follow up. You must be responsible for timely completion of required training. You must be responsible for being punctual and for remaining at your shift until you are replaced by another staff person. You must be responsible for adhering to house scheduling policies and for time management while on the job.
 - D. **Communication:** you must be able to communicate effectively with clients, coworkers, supervisors, health care professionals and others related to your work. You must be able to listen effectively and perceive interests, needs and concerns of those with whom you are working, and take initiative in communicating to others in ways that maximize the interests and well-being of persons being supported.
 - E. **Positive Tone and Morale:** You must be able to contribute a positive tone and morale to the workplace in order to perform the functions of the position. You must present a positive and professional attitude toward the residents, toward your coworkers, toward your work and toward the Company. You must be able work with coworkers as a team player, and you must be willing to help out when problems and emergencies arise.
 - F. **Empathy:** you must understand the feelings of others. This character trait is critical in working effectively with individuals with disabilities.
 - G. **Self-control:** Employees must be able to exercise and model self-control and self-discipline in their interactions with both residents and coworkers sufficient to perform the functions of the job. The work environment can be emotionally challenging due to resident behavior issues, crises, and the every-day needs of the residents. You must be able to control emotions and temper.
 - H. **Socialization:** You must be able to accept and conform to rules and regulations of the company and the position. The position requires that you adhere to company policies, safety and conduct rules and other procedures and regulations. You must be able to cooperate, work and communicate with coworkers, supervisors and office staff. Your socialization skills must also be sufficient to guide and motivate residents to become appropriately involved in the mainstream of community living and to perform all other functions of the position.
 - I. **Stress tolerance:** you must be able to function effectively under stressful conditions. This position is often stressful due to crises, emergency situations, resident behavior issues, regulatory requirements and inspections. You must be able to maintain self-composure and work effectively and professionally under these conditions.

2. You must possess the following physical abilities:
 - A. Seeing: sufficient vision to perform the functions of the job. Normal or corrected-to-normal vision is sufficient.
 - B. Hearing: sufficient hearing to perform the functions of the job.
 - C. Speaking: sufficient verbal skills to communicate effectively at an understandable level with a wide range of individuals and agencies, both in person and on the telephone.
 - D. Interaction: You must have the ability to effectively interact, both verbally and non-verbally, with residents, other staff, parents, and on behalf of residents in the community.
 - E. Writing: You must have writing skills sufficient to perform the functions of the job.
 - F. Math skills: must have basic math and money skills sufficient to conduct household and client business transactions and to maintain required documentation.
3. You must have a valid driver's license and your vehicle must have at least the minimum automobile insurance required by State law. You must be able to transport residents and perform job-related errands in a company van when available or in your personal vehicle, and you must park vehicles according to the company parking policy.
4. You must have no record of DUI/DWI and no more than 2 moving violations and no more than one accident due to a violation in the last 36 months.
5. You must be able to perform awkward, heavy lifting of up to 70 pounds and you must be able to wear a back belt when required.
6. You must have reliable transportation to the work site.
7. You must present a professional appearance while on duty or on premises, including the use of professional language and postures as well as appropriate footwear and clean and neat clothing, jewelry and hairstyles that are in accordance with ACR's dress policy for program counselors and that are appropriate for scheduled activities, or, when working the asleep night shift, clean and appropriate sleepwear (such as two-piece pajamas or a sweat suit). This is particularly important when meeting with medical staff, other professionals, parents, and at residents' social events in order to maximize your effectiveness as an advocate and role model for residents.
8. You must refrain from using scented personal and household products while on duty and/or on company premises.
9. You must refrain from smoking while on duty or on premises.
10. You must be willing to participate in drug and alcohol testing.
11. You must limit non-work-related telephone and cell phone use (including texting) and internet use to emergency or safety issues only, and when possible notify your supervisor in advance.
12. You must have the ability to learn Company structure, acronyms and medical terminology.
13. You must have the ability to use household appliances including but not limited to cordless and cellular phones, fax machine, washer/dryer, dishwasher, stove, microwave, vacuum cleaner, smoke detectors, fire alarm and fire extinguisher.

14. You must have the ability to cook and to follow recipes used in the home. The recipes and food products used are determined by resident choice and dietary requirements and may include pork and other meat products.
15. You must have the ability to use household cleaning chemicals such as detergents and disinfectants and to follow label directions.
16. You must have the ability to organize, prioritize and complete multiple functions.
17. You must be able to adhere to Company policies as stated in the current employee handbook and the house policy book.

When working an Awake Night Shift, in addition to 1-17 above,

18. You must be able to stay awake and alert at night.
19. You must be able to complete the Awake Night Duty List.
20. You must refrain from having other responsibilities (such as doing homework) which may impair or interfere with your emergency response.

When working an Asleep Night Shift, in addition to 1-17 above,

21. You must be able to wake up quickly when emergencies arise.
22. You must be able to wake up independently and be ready to work at the beginning of your scheduled shift if you are working a subsequent awake position.
23. You may not have other responsibilities that may impair or interfere with your emergency response. For example, you may not be the sole caretaker of small children who would also need your attention in an emergency such as a fire, and you cannot entertain guests whose presence may interfere with your emergency response.

PLACES WHERE WORK IS PERFORMED: in the residents' home and in community settings determined by resident agenda such as parks, malls, libraries, clinics, places of worship, swimming pools, movie theaters, and other places where residents want and/or need to go. If resident health requires hospitalization your shifts may be performed at a hospital.

PREPARATION OF JOB DESCRIPTION: This job description was prepared from observing the work in process and from information provided by ACR Residential Supervisors, Program Directors and Program Counselors. It was prepared by Kristin Pitchford, Policy Specialist with ACR Homes, and is updated from time to time.

