

Position Description

Position title	MST - Psychiatric Family Therapist
Document ID	
Program/Unit	FPR Response/ Family Services
Term	Full Time - Ongoing
Classification	
Position reports to	MST Psych Supervisor

Organisational context

On 1 July 1997, MacKillop Family Services was formed as a new organisation by re-founding seven agencies operated by the Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in Victoria. However, our legacy and inspiration is much older. From the 1850s, these three congregations, respectively founded by Catherine McAuley, Edmund Rice and Mary MacKillop, worked in Victoria to establish homes for children who were orphaned, destitute or neglected, and for families who were in need of care and support. Throughout the years, the original model of institutional care evolved into different forms of residential care, foster care, education, family support and disability services.

The purpose and character of MacKillop Family Services as a Catholic organisation, continues to draw from the lives, works and inspiration of the three founders who provide a living model for the way our staff and volunteers approach their work. Woven through this ethos is the acknowledgement and recognition of the inherent Aboriginal spirituality of this country and respect for the cultures that have lived here for thousands of generations.

Today, we continue this work within the framework of Catholic social teaching and in the spirit of the Gospel - one of radical inclusion, restoration and accompaniment. MacKillop Family Services is now a national organisation and a leading provider of services for children, young people and families across Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, Western Australia and to other organisations in every state and beyond. We offer services and programs in family support, foster care, residential care, disability services, youth support, education and training, parenting, family therapy, mental health, family violence, early childhood, and support to women and men who, as children, were in the care of our founding agencies.

At MacKillop we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders - past, present and emerging - and acknowledge the importance of their stories, history and wisdom. They hold the memories, traditions, cultures, hopes and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are strongly committed to the ongoing work of Aboriginal self-determination, reconciliation, and cultural safety for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, staff and stakeholders.

MacKillop has almost 1,500 staff, operating out of more than 50 sites, and has forecast annual revenue for the 2020/21 financial year of over \$150 million.

Our purpose

MacKillop Family Services continues our founders' passionate commitment to social justice – to work for the rights of children, young people and families to be safe, to learn, feel nurtured and connected to culture. We provide high quality services to promote healing from trauma and loss, and to enable hopeful futures.

MacKillop Family Services will care compassionately, respond large-heartedly and advocate courageously.

Our vision

Children, young people and families are welcomed and supported by MacKillop to be empowered and thrive.

Our values

We commit to the following five foundational values which we continue to embed in the culture of our organisation and practice:

JUSTICE. We believe in the right of all people to experience respect and to have access to quality services irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, marital status, disability, sexuality or age. We advocate for inclusiveness and social justice in the wider community and commit to these principles across our organisation and all services we provide. *We believe in the right of all people to be treated justly and fairly.*

HOPE. We commit to creating positive and hopeful relationships where people find meaning in their experiences and relationships and are able to learn, explore their strengths and create possibilities for growth and change. *We seek to foster hope that assists people to find meaning.*

COLLABORATION. In our work with individuals, families and other organisations and groups, we commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment. *We commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment.*

COMPASSION. Compassion is an attitude of the heart, an expression of our shared humanity and a deep desire to alleviate another's suffering. We commit to creating an attitude of openness to others and to their circumstances. *We seek to foster compassion, an attitude of the heart and a response to exclusion and suffering.*

RESPECT. We value ourselves and other people, the earth and all creation. We seek to listen and learn from each other and build relationships with respect, being proud of what we hold in common and with understanding and tolerance of our differences. *We seek to act with respect with regard to each other, the earth and all creation.*

Our Sanctuary Commitment

Our values are brought to life through our commitment to the Sanctuary Model. Sanctuary is an evidence-supported, whole-of-organisation framework that guides how we practice as an agency. Sanctuary enables a shared language, knowledge, and response to the impact of trauma and loss on all of us.

Our seven Sanctuary Commitments are as follows:

- Non-Violence - Mean what you say and don't be mean when you say it
- Emotional Intelligence - Look out for yours and other people's feelings
- Social Learning - We all learn from, and teach each other
- Democracy - Everyone is heard
- Open Communication - Be honest and share information

- Social Responsibility - We all help each other ... It takes a village to raise a child
- Growth and Change - Open to new ideas and ways of thinking

The Victorian Family Preservation and Reunification Response (the Response), has been funded as a pilot by the Department of Health and Human Services. It was co-designed with representatives from the child and family services sector to be implemented in 2020-21 by Victorian registered children and family service providers.

This Response includes an initial intensive intervention phase, delivered through a mobile and integrated approach, followed by a sustained service support phase, aimed at preventing at-risk children entering or re-entering care. The Response will link to, align with, and build on (and not duplicate) existing child and family services within the broader service system, providing an enhanced continuum of care across the state. It will be evaluated and continuously developed to enhance the Family Preservation and Reunification (FPR) evidence-base for Victorian child and family services (including Child Protection).

The FPR team will bring an innovative and wrap around service that will provide intensive early intervention support to 0-5 years old, and 10-15 year old children and young people and their families.

The model is an integrated and evidence-based/evidence-informed approach to supporting and problem solving with families and preventing children and young people's re/entry to out of home care. The team will work as a cohesive whole and report directly to the FPR Practice Team Leader.

The psychiatric stream of MST integrates intensive mental health and substance abuse treatment with systemic family practice to provide clinical therapeutic support to young people in or at risk of entering out of home or youth detention.

Psychiatric supervision and support will be provided by a psychiatrist one day per week. MST Support (USA) provides weekly telephone consultation via one-hour conference calls in which the treatment team and supervisor consult with the MST Services (USA) consultant regarding case conceptualization, goals, intervention strategies, and progress. The weekly consultation is designed to assist the team and supervisor in clearly defining weekly goals and case direction, identifying obstacles to success, and developing strategies aimed at successfully navigating those obstacles.

The MST-Psych program is based on intensive home-based treatment for the young client and the family. Therapists often visit families initially as frequently as daily. In addition, 24/7 face-to-face and telephone crisis response by a member of the MST-Psych team is available to the family when needed.

Primary objectives

This program provides intensive family support linked to clinical therapeutic service in order to reduce the demand for residential care services for some of the most complex children and young people in Victoria. The program will have two streams:

- Reunification stream working with children/young people in residential care to reunify them with their families and

- Placement Prevention stream that supports families to prevent children/young people entering Out of Home Care.

The target group is young people aged 9 -17 years, currently in residential care or at risk of out-of-home placement due to serious behavioural problems and co-occurring mental health symptoms and substance use/abuse.

MST-Psych incorporates evidenced-based interventions for youth substance use disorders. Hence, young people with co-morbid psychiatric symptoms and substance use/abuse are a key target group.

Key result areas and responsibilities

The therapist role is at the core of the clinical intervention. Each therapist has a case load of 4 families, and the therapeutic intervention lasts for 4-7 months, averaging 8 over the course of a year. Caseload size variation is determined by the age and relative complexity of the families currently in treatment. Duration of treatment should range from 4-7 months, averaging 6 months. For ongoing programs, maintaining accreditation requires each therapist to treat at least 8 families annually.

The 4-7 months of the MST-Psych intervention is delivered in the home and community where the young person and family reside. This will involve intensive home-based treatment and family visits which may be required initially as frequently as daily. In addition, 24/7 face-to-face crisis response by a member of the MST-Psych team is available to the family when needed.

The therapist will meet with families on a flexible schedule that may include evenings and weekends. Crisis calls after hours on weekdays and on weekends are received by an MST-Psych team member familiar with the family's situation on a rotating on-call schedule. Most crisis calls are handled by telephone, but the on-call therapist needs to be available to respond face-to-face when appropriate.

The Therapist will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in a culturally safe and competent way. This includes engaging in regular consultation with the program's Cultural Advisor and including ongoing training.

The MST-Psych Therapist will:

- Conduct MST assessment including review of referral information, identifying and engaging key participants, identifying systemic strengths and weaknesses, and developing an analysis of the fit of problem behaviors within the ecological context
- Engage primary caregiver and other key participants in active change-oriented treatment by identifying and overcoming barriers to engagement
- Implement a problem conceptualization, treatment planning, intervention implementation, outcome review and strategy revision procedure using the MST Analytic Process
- Maintain clear and concise documentation of treatment efforts that promote peer and supervisory review and feedback, and that demonstrate compliance with the nine MST Principles and the MST Analytic Process
- Collaborate with all relevant systems and key participants within each system to ensure their buy-in and cooperation throughout MST-Psychiatric treatment

- Provide direct clinical treatment using methods compatible with MST principles and practices.
- Participate in all MST-Psychiatric training, supervision and consultation activities
- Build strong relationships and work in close collaboration with community stakeholders (i.e., DHHS, court counselors, other providers, judges, schools, etc.) to ensure cooperation among service providers
- Demonstrate ability to work with Aboriginal children, young people, and families with complex trauma needs.

Key selection criteria

The role requires a Masters degree in Psychology, Social Work, Counseling or a related subject area. Work experience in a relevant area is preferred. The role will require evening and weekend hours plus an on-call schedule therefore it is essential that the successful applicant's life circumstances are sufficiently flexible to undertake this role.

Preferred Experience:

- Direct use of pragmatic (i.e., structural, strategic and functional) family therapies
- Individual therapy with children and adults using cognitive behavioral techniques
- Behavioral therapy targeting behavioral change in children at home and school
- Trauma treatment for adults and children using exposure, cognitive therapies, and stress inoculation training
- Implementation of interventions within or between systems in the youth's natural ecology that affect or influence the behavior of youth (i.e., family, peer, school, and neighborhood)
- Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

Preferred Knowledge:

- Family systems, social ecological and behavioural theory and application
- Cognitive-behavioral therapy theory and application particularly in the areas of depression and anxiety
- Child development research and its application in treatment
- Research or training in diagnostic assessment, mental status examinations
- Social skills assessment and intervention
- Preferred sound knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal history, values, the stolen generation, practices and culture
- Demonstrated ability to undertake complex casework with families and children who have experienced trauma

Required Personal Skills:

- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with a demonstrated capacity to work collaboratively with others and exercise influence in a diversity of contexts.

- Ability to participate collaboratively and constructively within teams of peers, staff and other stakeholders, as well as initiative and effective personal judgement when working alone.
- Available to work outside normal business hours and to participate in an on-call roster.

Other information

The incumbent is required to:

- Sign and actively abide by MacKillop’s Code of Conduct.
- Observe and actively support MacKillop’s P.8 People and Workplace Policy.
- Observe and fulfil health and safety responsibilities as contained within ‘WHS-P-001 Responsibility Statements’ document.
- Attend mandatory and other training as required.
- Actively participate in MacKillop’s Bid Management process as required.
- Participate in and promote continuous quality improvement processes.
- Promote an environment that is culturally safe and strengths focussed.
- Abide by principles and commitments of the Sanctuary Framework.
- Incorporate cultural safety into your practice with Aboriginal families.

The incumbent must possess a:

- Valid and current Victorian Driver’s Licence.
- Valid and current Victorian Working with Children Card.
- Satisfactory criminal history check conducted by MacKillop Family Services.

Approval

• Approver’s full name:	Doliza Reyes-Bibbs	Date:	1/07/21
Approver’s position title:	Manager Multi-Systemic Therapy – Psychiatric (MST-P)		
Incumbent’s full name:			
Incumbent’s signature:		Date:	

MacKillop Family Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia’s First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge all Aboriginal children, young people, families and staff who are a part of MacKillop Family Services.

