

Job Class Profile: **Family Court Counsellor I (UFC)**

Pay Level: **CG-38** **Point Band:** **848-881**

Factor	Knowledge	Interpersonal Skills	Physical Effort	Concentration	Complexity	Accountability & Decision Making	Impact	Development and Leadership	Environmental Working Conditions	Total Points
Rating	6	6	3	6	6	5	5	1	2	
Points	280	100	19	29	180	108	103	21	21	861

JOB SUMMARY

The Family Court Counsellor I (UFC) provides professional alternative dispute resolution and counselling services to clients involved in post-separation/divorce services through Family Justice Services who are making arrangements for custody, access and support of their children. Duties include assessment, screening, case management, case planning, and the provision of education, consultation, guidance and counselling to clients.

Key and Periodic Activities:

- Completes intake assessment to determine suitability of clients for mediation; explains mediation process and establishes clear understanding of process; and ensures applications and forms are complete.
- Provides therapeutic counseling to clients (parties and/or their children) participating in Family Justice Services including individual and family counseling, play therapy, grief counseling, conflict resolution skills building and other relevant services.
- Delivers education to Family Justice Services' clients on an individual and/or group basis (i.e. Parent information Session).
- Provides crisis intervention services to clients experiencing separation, divorce, family violence and other associated problems.
- Engages in consultation with mediators, Provincial Clinical Consultant, counselors and collateral contacts on matters related to client service delivery and/or programming and policy issues.
- Performs documentation and record-keeping activities related to Family Justice Services' clients including daily logging of case notes, completion of intake assessment forms, report/letter writing and other file maintenance tasks.
- Travels throughout a geographic area to deliver counselling services and education to clients.
- Engages in professional development activities to increase understanding and knowledge of issues related to family justice services.
- Attends court to provide testimony on Family Justice Services' cases.

SKILL**Knowledge****General and Specific Knowledge:**

- Knowledge of Family Justice Services' policy and procedures.
- Knowledge of a broad range of theories and intervention strategies.
- Knowledge of custody/access issues, child development/attachment issues and family violence.
- Knowledge of court processes.

Formal Education and/or Certification(s):

- Minimum: Undergraduate Degree in Counselling, Psychology, Social Work or other Social Sciences. Registration with the related association.

Years of Experience:

Minimum: 1 to 2 years

Competencies:

- Ability to provide clinical assessment and evaluation
- Ability to develop plans that meet client needs
- Ability to provide expert advice in the counseling field
- Effective communication skills for interviewing and listening to clients
- Effective mediation skills
- Ability to organize and manage time
- Ability to operate a computer to prepare documents or access databases.
- Ability to write letters, reports and assessments in order to communicate complicated or conceptual ideas where clarity and precision of language is critical.

Interpersonal Skills

- A range of interpersonal skills occur to listen to information, ask questions, provide information and direction to others, provide care/comfort or nurturing to clients, conduct formal interviews, gain the cooperation of others to complete work/address issues/solve problems, provide expert advice or counselling to others, instruct/teach/train, coach/mentor, facilitate meetings/sessions, resolve disputes between people, deal with upset or angry clients on phone or in-person, negotiate contracts/agreements and make formal presentations to groups.
- Communications occur with employees in the immediate work area, within and with other departments, managers, clients, with other government representatives, internal/external executives, and professional associations/advisors.
- The most significant contacts are with clients in-person or on the phone for counselling and education purposes; with mediators to discuss referral and case management issues, organizing parent information sessions as well as office maintenance matters; and with members of the Family Justice Services' counselling team, including Provincial Clinical Consultant, for consultation purposes on client and program matters.
- Frequently the most important interpersonal skills used are to interview and counsel clients, resolving disputes between people and to instruct/teach or train clients on a wide variety of issues.

EFFORT

Physical Effort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Work demands occasionally result in considerable fatigue requiring periods of rest. — There is lifting of objects less than 10 lbs (chairs, flip charts, small tables for presentations). — Sits while engaging in client in-person or phone sessions. Takes detailed notes while engaging in lengthy phone sessions can create neck stiffness/cramping. In play therapy sessions, some lifting, squatting and kneeling is required for certain activities. Driving (travel within a geographic area) and standing (teaching/formal presentations) are also an occasional requirement for the position. — On a regular basis when performing work on the computer this class uses fine finger/precision work (entering client information into computer systems).
Concentration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Visual concentration is required when in sessions with clients, maintaining eye contact and being cognizant of a client's non-verbal behaviours for assessment purposes; and when reviewing client files or notes and for documenting work into computerized systems. — Auditory concentration is also required when in sessions with clients as there is a need to listen attentively to the client and family members, to be alert to obtain and interpret information correctly, and to listen for tone, voice, and the level of volume in their communications in order to detect distress/urgency. While listening intently for detail and blocking out uncontrollable noises can create strain. — Other senses requiring concentration include the sense of touch when utilizing play therapy activities (play doh, puzzles, puppets, etc.). — A higher than normal level of attentiveness and carefulness is required when delivering the parent information sessions as the information is scripted to ensure consistency and accuracy which is a repetitive process requiring alertness. As well, class must be attentive regarding the health and safety of others while working with children in regard to their physical safety (no hazards exist in play room) or working with clients who present with mental health concerns (clinical depression, suicidal tendencies) requiring careful attention to their well being and knowing when to make appropriate referrals. — Lack of control over the work pace and time pressures can be experienced when completing court reports and case notes in a timely manner. As well, in order to ensure a family members' adjustment it largely depends on how quickly post-separation families reorganize themselves. The longer the parental conflict exists, the more likelihood of the occurrence of negative impacts on the children. — Eye/hand coordination is required for computer work and when conducting play therapy activities. — The need for exact results and precision is required when documenting case notes and report writing which requires accuracy, grammatical correctness and the appropriate use of objective versus subjective data as some file contents are subject to scrutiny and review by court officials and division management.
Complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Performs a series of tasks and activities that can range from repetitive/well defined to different but related to different and unrelated. There is the requirement for creative problem definition

and analysis, development of complex solutions, and there are tasks with strategic or policy significance that can be solved in a team setting. Each client/case brings with it unique problems and challenges with sometimes multiple problems that must be identified and solutions found. Responsible for performing mediation, counselling and education functions that require different skills and knowledge.

- The most typical challenge or problem is working with medium to high conflict couples where one (or both) of the parties has a high conflict personality, a personality disorder, or some other obstacle that impairs their ability to focus on the physical, developmental, cultural, etc. needs of their children.
- When addressing typical problems can consult with peers, Clinical Consultant, Family Justice Services' policies, literature reviews, professional associations, Code of Ethics, standards of practice, governing acts and legislation, and regulations to help find a solution.

RESPONSIBILITY

Accountability and Decision-Making

- Work tasks and activities are moderately prescribed or controlled.
- Exercises a high degree of discretion when accepting referrals, providing counseling to clients and their families, management of caseload, scheduling of appointments and decision to close a file.
- Can determine that a referral is not suitable for counseling services and the focus, intensity and length of services provided.
- Uses judgment and discretion to determine what information is confidential and appropriate to share. A high degree of independent judgment and discretion is also used during completion of intake assessment forms, testimony in court and decision to make outside referrals.
- Requires approval for administrative purchases such as supplies, travel, attendance at training sessions, formal presentations to outside agencies and all requests from the court for child-focused reports or court appearances are screened for acceptance by the Provincial Clinical Consultant.

Impact

- There are moderate impacts within the immediate work area, within the department, outside of the department, outside the organization and on clients. Directly impacts the clients in terms of assisting them to achieve identified objectives and goals (i.e. improving general functioning, reducing/alleviating conflict, improving communication, addressing needs of children, etc.). As a member of a multi-departmental operation, is expected to fulfill the mandate of the Family Justice Services and any deviation from that impacts the delivery of services, desired outcomes, teamwork and reputation of self and agency.
- There are positive and negative impacts on clients and their health and safety; however, there are also impacts on equipment (computer usage), Human Resources (following procedures), health and safety (assessing potential for violence with high conflict couples) and corporate image (integrity and reputation of Family Justice Services).
- Consequences from inadvertently sharing inappropriate information between high conflict couples may escalate conflict. A wrong word or statement may trigger a negative reaction which can ultimately have an impact on the family. Consequences and/or errors are identified

within hours of problem identification and an attempt is made to resolve them.

- There are professional guidelines and procedures in place to help mitigate any errors from a professional perspective, as there is a requirement for licensure to practice and the governing body regulates the practice, guides ethical decision-making, and professional conduct.

Development and Leadership of Others

- There is no supervision to staff.
- May provide orientation and on-the-job training and support to new workers.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Environmental Working Conditions

- There is no requirement to wear any safety equipment or take safety precautions.
- There is no likelihood of injuries or illnesses resulting from hazards in the workplace, given that all health and safety regulations are followed.
- Occasionally exposed to unusual/distracting noise, exposed to glare from computer; isolation while driving through large geographic areas; and awkward or confining workspaces when interviewing or counselling small children.