

Position Description

Title	Therapeutic Specialist
Business unit	Residential Services, Eastern and Southern Melbourne
Location	South-Metro Melbourne (Hampton / Dandenong)
Employment type	Full time Maximum term to 30 June 2025
Reports to	Manager, Therapeutic Services

About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church. We've been supporting people and families for over 100 years. We work alongside people of all ages in local communities in Victoria and Tasmania. Our services reach to Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, the Wimmera region in the west, and across Tasmania.

We empower children, young people and families to learn and thrive. We're there for people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness. We support people with disability to live the life they choose. We assist older people to maintain their independence and enjoy life. We provide opportunities to access training and meaningful employment. We're proud to welcome and support asylum seekers to our community. We work to empower people with the information, skills and tools they need to live a healthy, happy life.

As an organisation, we work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Our purpose: To inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice

Our values: We are imaginative, respectful, compassionate and bold

1. Position purpose

The Therapeutic Specialist is responsible for the provision of high-quality trauma-informed practice advice and guidance to carers, house team-leaders and other members of the care team in an Therapeutic Residential Care context. This position is a key member of the care team promoting the therapeutic needs of the young person and the creation of healing responses and environments. The Therapeutic Specialists is also responsible for conducting Therapeutic Assessments and developing Therapeutic Plans and Practice Advise to optimise outcomes for young people by guiding the implementation of therapeutically intentional services. The Therapeutic Specialist is also responsible for leading reflective practice sessions with staff to problem-solve and collaboratively develop and review strategies and approaches that promote young peoples' healing and progress towards desired outcomes. The Therapeutic Specialist is expected to spend time in the home coaching, role-modelling, and supporting staff with the application of practice advice and therapeutic guidance. Support implementation of Therapeutic Model of Care.

2. Scope

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Budget:

nil

People:

nil

3. Relationships

Internal

- Manager of Therapeutic Services
- Executive and Senior Program Management
- Employees, volunteers and contractors
- Uniting Corporate, Support Services and Mission divisions
- Other Operational services

External

- Consumers and their families, carers and/or advocates
- Government departments and other funding bodies
- Key partners, community services networks and peak bodies

4. Key responsibility areas

Service delivery and Partnerships

- Develop strategies in collaboration with residential carers to ensure children and young people are successfully transitioned and integrated into the home
- Guide residential carers in direct therapeutic work with children and young people so they gain a full understanding of the process of recovery and the therapeutic responses they will need to provide
- Support staff to respond to crisis situations (incidents) in relation to the young person from a practice perspective and to reflect on the triggers and other dynamics associated with the incident
- Work in partnership with the carers, team leaders, and managers to ensure a coordinated, therapeutic and timely response to children and young people related to understanding any assessments, needs identification, risk assessment, practice guidance, and transition planning.
- Develop and sustain service partnerships and linkages to promote joint therapeutic work, particularly with relevant Aboriginal services
- Conduct thorough assessments and develop a therapeutic assessment and intervention plan for each child or young person that is regularly reviewed and updated and applies across all spheres of the child or young person's development including physical, emotional, social, educational/vocational, recreational, cultural and spiritual
- Provide matching and placement advice and support to the Operations team
- Participate as an active member of the care team in all relevant care team meetings, operational groups and panels and maintain regular planned telephone consultation with care team members as agreed regarding the needs of the child, care family and other key stakeholders.
- Provide regular planned and unplanned specialist therapeutic support and advice to the care team in accordance with the therapeutic assessment and intervention plan, which may involve coaching, supporting and role-modelling for carers while being present in the home.
- Support the collection of data to inform reviews of the program and support understanding to implement quality improvement measures.

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People and teams

- Provide leadership in the professional development of staff, including supporting a culture of reflective practice, quality supervision and coaching
- Facilitate training for professionals and care team members in trauma-informed therapeutic approaches to out-of-home care
- Contribute as directed to research, conferences, training and/or forums
- Promote and maintain a positive, respectful and enthusiastic work environment

Administration

- Maintain data systems including timely collection, uploading and reporting of information
- Collect and analyse data to support strategic direction
- Write high quality, accurate, timely and thorough documentation

Legal requirements & risk management

- Report areas of serious risk to next level supervisor and work together to mitigate those risks in line with agency policies and procedures.
- Provide regular reports on required service delivery and related issues, as required
- Ensure all legal, funder and statutory requirements pertaining to the position are met including serious incidents, reportable conduct, and mandatory reporting (child safety)
- Foster a culture where risks are identified and appropriately managed

Personal accountability

- Compliance with Uniting's values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.
- Cooperate with strategies to actively ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children who come into association with us.
- Ensure appropriate use of resources.
- Work collaboratively with Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) employees and external stakeholders in accordance with Uniting's values and professional standards of behaviour.
- Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace.
- Identify opportunities to integrate and work collaboratively across teams.
- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and health and safety of others (to the extent required).
- Promote a positive safety culture by contributing to health and safety consultation and communication.
- Promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to line management
- Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e. equal employment opportunity, health, and safety) and mandatory training specific to position.
- Declare anything that you become aware of through the course of your engagement which may impede your suitability to work with children and/or young people.
- Declare any potential or actual conflict of interest that you become aware of through the course of your engagement:
 - Based on a relationship with a current member of Uniting's workforce
 - Based on my ongoing work with another organisation

5. Person specification

Qualifications

- Bachelor level in relevant professional discipline such as social work, psychology or social science (required)
- Masters level in Psychology and Social Work or equivalent (desirable)

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Experience

- Experience in providing high quality practice advice and guidance to professionals working with clients presenting with complex needs and statutory involvement
- Extensive knowledge of out of home care sector including relevant legislation and regulations
- Extensive knowledge of child development and the impact of abuse and neglect
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of trauma informed practice and trauma recovery principles
- Well-developed analytical and report writing skills
- Demonstrable leadership experience (desirable)
- Demonstrated practice leadership through the delivery of practice related forums, workshops, and conference presentations (desirable)

Core selection criteria

- **Values alignment:** ability to demonstrate and authentically promote Uniting's values.
- Demonstrated ability to provide safe environments for children and young people and protect them from abuse and neglect.
- **Leadership:** strong leadership and management skills and knowledge within a complex service delivery environment; ability to build strong, high functioning teams and align teams with the organisational values and goals, particularly those related to consumer-centricity; role modelling expected behaviour
- **Stakeholder Relationships:** strong negotiation and influencing skills; ability to engage, build and maintain strong, mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders; track record of being able to form positive, collaborative and effective relationships with staff; ability to establish credibility with staff
- **Change Management:** knowledge of contemporary change management models; demonstrated experience in leading successful change programs at scale
- **Problem-solving:** proven ability to take a solution-focussed and strengths-based approach within a complex, ambiguous and evolving community services environment
- **Interpersonal focus:** strong interest in people, respect for others, and the ability to suspend judgement.
- **Cooperative:** demonstrates team behaviours striving for co-operative and professional relationships.
- **Conscientious:** responsible, dependable, organised and persistent.
- **Open to experience:** high level self-awareness, with the ability to recognize mistakes, as an opportunity for reflection, learning and development.
- **Professionalism:** professional, confident, focused and clear about purpose and able to set appropriate personal boundaries.
- **Organisational Skills:** ability to multitask, prioritise work commitments and manage multiple priorities
- **Communication:** open, honest, articulate and flexible approach to communication both written and verbal, and the ability to actively listen.

6. We are a child safe organisation

Uniting is a child safe organisation and is committed in everyday practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, at all times. As a child safe organisation, employment with Uniting is subject to a satisfactory national (and international where relevant) police check and relevant Working With Children Check (and NDIS Worker Screening Check where relevant) to your State prior to commencement of any paid or unpaid work and/or participation in any service or undertaking.

This position description is subject to review and may change in accordance with Uniting's operational, service and consumer requirements.