

Behavioral Health Assessment Officer: Skills Checklist

Preferred Skills

Behavioral Health Assessment Officer (BHAO) candidates may bring a range of relevant experience to their role in a rural hospital. *See our job description tool for details about responsibilities and qualifications.*

Preferred skills the BHAO has gained include:

- Strong communication
- Working effectively as part of a multi-professional team
- Person-centered approach
- Strong networking/community outreach/partnership development
- Persistent follow up with patients/families and providers
- Strong skills in crisis management and risk assessment
- Motivational interviewing
- De-escalation

Training

The list of trainings for BHAOs should be all-inclusive and assume they will need to be prepared in each essential area. Once the BHAO is hired, program leaders can refine the training based on that person's prior skills and knowledge. Trainings include:

- Emergency department (ED) workflows/collaboration with ED providers
- Substance use disorder (SUD) training with clinical experts (e.g., daylong plus refreshers)
- Culturally sensitive psychiatric evaluation in the ED, with particular focus on the culture/population of the region
- Management of suicide and violence risk in the ED
- De-escalation and safety training, such as Preventing and Managing Crisis Situations (PMCS)
- Screening, Brief Interventions and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)
- Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS) (can be done by BHAO but typically done by registered nurse)
- Opioid Overdose Prevention Training of Trainers (TOT)
- Behavioral health and SUD resources/organizations in the region
- Referrals to and collaboration with SUD treatment providers
- Disposition and connection for follow up
- Telehealth (patient privacy and consents, best practices, technology, workflows)

The BHAO's colleagues in the ED will need training on the role of the BHAO and processes for working with them, such as changes to triage, screening, and flow of communication.

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