

THERAPEUTIC SPECIALIST

Therapeutic specialists are licensed in their individual fields, and provide important support services to students who have been identified as needing their assistance in order to learn effectively. The specialists receive their students as a result of referral; but an important aspect of their work is to conduct detailed screenings to ensure that the treatment is appropriate to each student's condition.

Professional specialists include:

- Speech/language pathologists,
- Audiologists,
- Physical therapists,
- Occupational therapists.

Therapists work as an integral part of the school community, working as a member of the entire team of educators. Their work is not "extra;" rather, it is central to ensuring, for some students, that they have full access to the school's offerings. However, not every school staff includes each of the therapeutic specialists on a full-time basis. The consequence, as with other shared resources, is that communication between the specialist and both administrators and classroom teachers is a critical aspect of the role.

The domains and components of a therapeutic specialist's responsibilities are as follows:

Planning and Preparation

- Demonstrating knowledge and skill in the specialist therapy; holding the relevant certificate or license
- Establishing goals for the therapy program appropriate to the setting and the students served
- Demonstrating knowledge of district, state and federal regulations and guidelines
- Demonstrating knowledge of resources, both within and beyond the school and district
- Planning the therapy program, integrated with the regular school program, to meet the needs of individual students
- Developing a plan to evaluate the therapy program.

The Environment

- Establishing rapport with students
- Organizing time effectively
- Establishing and maintaining procedures for referrals
- Establishing standards of conduct in the treatment center
- Organizing physical space for testing of students and providing therapy

Delivery of Service

- Responding to referrals, and evaluating student needs
- Developing and implementing treatment plans to maximize students' success
- Communicating with families
- Collecting information; writing reports
- Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

Professional Responsibilities

- Reflecting on practice
- Collaborating with teachers and administrators
- Maintaining effective data management system
- Participating in a professional community – providing inservice when appropriate
- Engaging in professional development
- Showing professionalism, including integrity, advocacy, and maintaining confidentiality

Domain 1: Panning and Preparation

Component	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<i>1a: Demonstrating knowledge and skill in the specialist therapy; holds relevant certificate or license</i>	Specialist demonstrates little or no knowledge and skill in the therapy area; does not hold the necessary certificate or license.	Specialist demonstrates basic knowledge and skill in the therapy area; holds the necessary certificate or license.	Specialist demonstrates thorough knowledge and skill in the therapy area; holds the necessary certificate or license.	Specialist demonstrates extensive knowledge and skill in the therapy area; holds an advanced certificate or license.
<i>1b: Establishing goals for the therapy program appropriate to the setting and the students served</i>	Specialist has no clear goals for the therapy program, or they are inappropriate to either the situation or the age of the students.	Specialist's goals for the therapy program are rudimentary, and are partially suitable to the situation and the age of the students.	Specialist's goals for the therapy program are clear and appropriate to the situation in the school and to the age of the students.	Specialist's goals for the therapy program are highly appropriate to the situation in the school and to the age of the students, and have been developed following consultations with administrators and teachers.
<i>1c: Demonstrating knowledge of district, state and federal regulations and guidelines</i>	Specialist demonstrates little or no knowledge of special education laws and procedures.	Specialist demonstrates basic knowledge of special education laws and procedures.	Specialist demonstrates thorough knowledge of special education laws and procedures.	Specialist's knowledge of special education laws and procedures is extensive; specialist takes a leadership role in reviewing and revising district policies.
<i>1d: Demonstrating knowledge of resources, both within and beyond the school and district</i>	Specialist demonstrates little or no knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district.	Specialist demonstrates basic knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district.	Specialist demonstrates thorough knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district and some familiarity with resources external to the district.	Specialist demonstrates extensive knowledge of resources for students available through the school or district and in the larger community.
<i>1e: Planning the therapy program, integrated with the regular school program, to meet the needs of individual students</i>	Therapy program consists of a random collection of unrelated activities, lacking coherence or an overall structure.	Specialist's plan has a guiding principle and includes a number of worthwhile activities, but some of them don't fit with the broader goals.	Specialist has developed a plan that includes the important aspects of work in the setting.	Specialist's plan is highly coherent and preventive, and serves to support students individually, within the broader educational program.
<i>1f: Developing a plan to evaluate the therapy program</i>	Specialist has no plan to evaluate the program, or resists suggestions that such an evaluation is important.	Specialist has a rudimentary plan to evaluate the therapy program.	Specialist's plan to evaluate the program is organized around clear goals and the collection of evidence to indicate the degree to which the goals have been met.	Specialist's evaluation plan is highly sophisticated, with imaginative sources of evidence, and a clear path towards improving the program on an ongoing basis.

Domain 2: The Learning Environment

Component	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<i>2a: Establishing rapport with students</i>	Specialist's interactions with students are negative or inappropriate; students appear uncomfortable in the testing and treatment center.	Specialist's interactions are a mix of positive and negative; the therapist's efforts at developing rapport are partially successful.	Specialist's interactions with students are positive and respectful; students appear comfortable in the testing and treatment center.	Students seek out the specialist, reflecting a high degree of comfort and trust in the relationship.
<i>2b: Organizing time effectively</i>	Specialist exercises poor judgment in setting priorities, resulting in confusion, missed deadlines, and conflicting schedules.	Specialist's time management skills are moderately well developed; essential activities are carried out, but not always in the most efficient manner.	Specialist exercises good judgment in setting priorities, resulting in clear schedules and important work being accomplished in an efficient manner.	Specialist demonstrates excellent time management skills, accomplishing all tasks in a seamless manner; teachers and students understand their schedules.
<i>2c: Establishing and maintaining clear procedures for referrals</i>	No procedures for referrals have been established; when teachers want to refer a student for special services, they are not sure how to go about it.	Specialist has established procedures for referrals, but the details are not always clear.	Procedures for referrals and for meetings and consultations with parents and administrators are clear to everyone.	Procedures for all aspects of referral and testing protocols are clear to everyone, and have been developed in consultation with teachers and administrators.
<i>2d: Establishing standards of conduct in the treatment center</i>	No standards of conduct have been established and specialist disregards or fails to address negative student behavior during evaluation or treatment.	Standards of conduct appear to have been established in the testing and treatment center. Specialist's attempts to monitor and correct student negative behavior during evaluation and treatment are partially successful.	Standards of conduct have been established in the testing and treatment center. Specialist monitors student behavior against those standards; response to students is appropriate and respectful.	Standards of conduct have been established in the testing and treatment center. Specialist's monitoring of students is subtle and preventive, and students engage in self-monitoring of behavior.
<i>2e: Organizing physical space for testing of students and providing therapy</i>	The testing and treatment center is disorganized, and poorly suited for working with students. Materials are usually available.	The testing and treatment center is moderately well organized, and moderately well suited for working with students. Materials are difficult to find when needed.	The testing and treatment center is well organized; materials are available when needed.	The testing and treatment center is highly organized and is inviting to students. Materials are convenient when needed.

Domain 3: Delivery of Service

Component	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<i>3a: Responding to referrals, and evaluating student needs</i>	Specialist fails to respond to referrals, or makes hasty assessments of student needs.	Specialist responds when pressed to referrals, and makes adequate assessments of student needs.	Specialist responds to referrals, and makes thorough assessments of student needs.	Specialist is proactive in responding to referrals, and makes highly competent assessments of student needs.
<i>3b: Developing and implementing treatment plans to maximize students' success</i>	Specialist fails to plan treatment plan suitable to students, or mismatched with the findings of assessments.	Specialist's plans for students are partially suitable for them, or sporadically aligned with identified needs.	Specialist's plans for students are suitable for them, and are aligned with identified needs.	Specialist develops comprehensive plans for students, finding ways to creatively meet student needs and incorporate many related elements.
<i>3c: Communicating with families</i>	Specialist fails to communicate with families and secure necessary permission for evaluations, or communicates in an insensitive manner.	Specialist's communication with families is partially successful: permissions are obtained but there are occasional insensitivities to cultural and linguistic traditions.	Specialist communicates with families and secures necessary permission for evaluations, and does so in a manner sensitive to cultural and linguistic traditions.	Specialist secures necessary permissions and communicates with families in a manner highly sensitive to cultural and linguistic traditions. Specialist reaches out to families of students to enhance trust.
<i>3d: Collecting information; writing reports</i>	Specialist neglects to collect important information on which to base treatment plans; reports are inaccurate or not appropriate to the audience.	Specialist collects most of the important information on which to base treatment plans; reports are accurate but lacking in clarity and not always appropriate to the audience.	Specialist collects all the important information on which to base treatment plans; reports are accurate and appropriate to the audience.	Specialist is proactive in collecting important information, interviewing teachers and parents if necessary; reports are accurate and clearly written, and are tailored for the audience.
<i>3e: Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness</i>	Specialist adheres to his or her plan, in spite of evidence of its inadequacy.	Specialist makes modest changes in the treatment program when confronted with evidence of the need for change.	Specialist makes revisions in the treatment program when it is needed.	Specialist is continually seeking way to improve the treatment program, and makes changes as needed in response to student, parent, or teacher input.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<i>4a: Reflecting on practice</i>	Specialist does not reflect on practice, or the reflections are inaccurate or self-serving.	Specialist's reflection on practice is moderately accurate and objective without citing specific examples, and with only global suggestions as to how it might be improved	Specialist's reflection provides an accurate and objective description of practice, citing specific positive and negative characteristics. Specialist makes some specific suggestions as to how the therapy program might be improved.	Specialist's reflection is highly accurate and perceptive, citing specific examples that were not fully successful, for at least some students. Specialist draws on an extensive repertoire to suggest alternative strategies.
<i>4b: Collaborating with teachers and administrators</i>	Specialist is not available to staff for questions and planning, and declines to provide background material when requested.	Specialist is available to staff for questions and planning, and provides background material when requested.	Specialist initiates contact with teachers and administrators to confer regarding individual cases.	Specialist seeks out teachers and administrators to confer regarding cases, soliciting their perspectives on individual students.
<i>4c: Maintaining effective data management system</i>	Specialist's data management system is either non-existent or in disarray; it cannot be used to monitor student progress or to make adjustments to treatment when needed.	Specialist has developed a rudimentary data management system for monitoring student progress; occasionally uses it to make adjustments to treatment when needed.	Specialist has developed an effective data management system for monitoring student progress; uses it to make adjustments to treatment when needed.	Specialist has developed a highly effective data management system for monitoring student progress; uses it to make adjustments to treatment when needed. Specialist uses the system to communicate with teachers and parents.
<i>4d: Participating in a professional community</i>	Specialist's relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving, and specialist avoids being involved in school and district events and projects.	Specialist's relationships with colleagues are cordial, and specialist participates in school and district events and projects when specifically requested.	Specialist's participates actively in school and district events and projects, and maintains positive and productive relationships with colleagues.	Specialist makes a substantial contribution to school and district events and projects, and assumes a leadership role with colleagues.
<i>4e: Engaging in professional development</i>	Specialist does not participate in professional development activities, even when such activities are clearly needed for the development of counseling skills.	Specialist participation in professional development activities is limited to those that are convenient or are required.	Specialist seeks out opportunities for professional development based on an individual assessment of need.	Specialist actively pursues professional development opportunities, and makes a substantial contribution to the profession through such activities as offering workshops to colleagues.
<i>4f: Showing professionalism, including integrity, advocacy, and maintaining confidentiality</i>	Specialist displays dishonesty in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public, and violates principles of confidentiality.	Specialist is honest in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public, plays a moderate advocacy role for students, and does not violate norms of confidentiality.	Specialist displays high standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality in interactions with colleagues, students, and the public, and advocates for students when needed.	Specialist can be counted on to hold the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality and advocating for students, and takes a leadership role with colleagues