

Position Description

Social Worker: Psychiatric Assessment and Planning Unit (PAPU)

Classification:	Social Work Grade 3
Business unit/department:	Mental Health Division (MHD)
Work location:	Austin Hospital
Agreement:	Victorian Public Mental Health Services Enterprise Agreement 2024-2028
Employment type:	Part-Time
Hours per week:	24 Hours
Reports to:	PAPU NUM
Direct reports:	None
Financial management:	Budget: None
Date:	June 2026

Position purpose

The Grade 3 Social Work position has a critical role in assessing patients' social environments and relationships, recognising the effects of the psychological, familial, social, economic and cultural determinants on health and wellbeing, advocating for the rights of patients and their families/carers, assisting patient flow through coordinating and collaboratively developing discharge plans and post discharge follow up. This role will provide direct care.

Working within a multi-disciplinary team, through targeted discipline specific social work interventions, the role will contribute to minimise impact of admission on the consumer/patient's functioning and social connections

About the Directorate/Division/Department

The Mental Health Division provides care and services through a comprehensive range of teams to meet the needs of mental health consumers and carers throughout Victoria. Services are located across Austin Health campuses and in the community.

All mental health services work within a clinical framework that promotes recovery-oriented practice and supported decision making. This approach to client wellbeing builds on the strengths of the

individual working in partnership with their treating team. It encompasses the principles of self-determination and individualised treatment and care.

In 2016, the Victorian Government introduced the Safewards model throughout all public mental health services. It is designed to create a safe and supportive environment; to improve therapeutic relationships and increase the potential for collaboration between staff and consumers. Austin Health is committed to the Safewards model through ongoing education and resourcing. All mental health clinicians are expected to have a sound understanding of the model and its application in clinical practice

Psychiatric Assessment and Planning Unit (PAPU)

PAPU is a 4 bed short stay unit. The aim of PAPU is to ensure that people receive timely access to short-term inpatient care and treatment where required to minimize the need for an extended inpatient stay by ensuring people can be adequately and appropriately supported in the community.

PAPU also aims to reduce demand on the emergency department by actively seeking to admit people from ED or the community who fit PAPU's admission criteria. PAPU primarily works with adults however young people aged 16-18 may also access PAPU if this is considered to be clinically appropriate

Position responsibilities

Direct Clinical Care:

- Offer holistic, psycho-social client centered assessment and interventions
- Provide direct services to patients and their families/carers/significant others to minimise impact of admission on their functioning and social connections
- Contribute to the development of discharge plans that optimise outcomes for consumers/patients
- Provide high quality, evidence-based clinical assessment, risk formulation, planning and treatment at an individual or systems level as indicated by clinical need
- Enhance social and emotional functioning through targeted discipline specific social work interventions including the mobilisation of services and supports
- Work collaboratively/ in partnership with carer/family in support of consumer/patient needs within bounds of cultural safety and in support of diverse needs
- Conduct family meetings as clinically indicated
- Provide leadership in interventions around child safety and child wellbeing, family violence and other complex individual/family needs
- Engage in psychosocial and risk assessment of patients, families/carers/significant others and develop comprehensive interventions where issues of abuse/neglect, family violence, housing are identified
- Ensure that services and actions taken are patient centred and involve the patient's informed consent especially when dealing with 3rd parties
- Involve clients and carers in decision making regarding their discharge and negotiate agreed plans of action
- Involve the identification for the use of 'brokerage funding' that will assist in the process of planning and supporting discharge
- For family/carers, provide support, psychoeducation and linking to appropriate community support
- Demonstrate ability to work under direct supervision and more independently and appropriately seek support.
- Develop strong collegial relationships with all members of the team across allied and health and nursing.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to provide integrated treatment and a safe and smooth discharge process.



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- Actively participate in regular supervision (clinical, operational, and professional) and performance development and review processes.
- Demonstrated knowledge of, and commitment to, the Recovery Oriented Practice, Trauma Informed Care, Safewards Model and collaborative clinical practice
- Work collaboratively with the Lived Experience Workforce empowering them in their roles and providing a lived experience perspective to the service

Education:

- Participate in both internal and external continuing education programs and demonstrate a commitment to improving professional performance and development to satisfy Continuing Professional Development requirements.
- Contribute to team, discipline, portfolio-management, service planning, research and evaluation activities so that the team's and service's performance and culture is safe, healthy and productive with a view to continual improvement. This may include supervision of students and people in the SW Graduate Program

Research:

- Appropriately use information and communication systems that support the effective and efficient clinical and administrative operation of the position and safe and effective care.
- Complete a high standard of accurate and timely clinical documentation and data entry in an efficient manner and in accordance with MHD and relevant professional / mental health sector statutory requirements.
- Identifies opportunities for process redesign and to support staff in the implementation of redesign projects and activities.
- Supports and actively participates in research and implements findings into clinical practice.
- Aware of and adherence to ethical research practices.
- Supports quality improvement and research initiatives and effectively manages change to improve patient outcomes
- Undertake roles and other duties as directed appropriate to your experience and training that are necessary for the efficient functioning of the team and the service.

All Employees:

- Comply with Austin Health policies & procedures as amended from time to time.
- Comply with the Code of Conduct and uphold our values, and diversity and inclusion commitments.
- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues, and members of the public. Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself
- Comply with the principles of patient-centered care.
- Comply with Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements.
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management.
- A commitment to Austin Health values
- Demonstrated knowledge of professional standards.
- Demonstrated ability to use clinical information systems.
- Knowledge of legal and ethical requirements.
- Demonstrate understanding of and commitment to Austin Health's Reconciliation Action Plan.

• Selection criteria



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Essential skills and experience:

- At least 2 years experience as a social worker post qualification
- Demonstrated understanding of professional frameworks, theories and practices as they relate to mental health.
- Knowledge of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act (2022) and other relevant legislation and conventions, especially: Child, Youth and Families Act 2005; the Privacy Act 1988; Family Violence Protection Act and MARAM responsibilities
- Knowledge of, and experience in delivering a range of crisis intervention and emotional and behavioural management strategies.
- Proven ability to enhance team functioning as an active team member and model positive responses to change and adaptation.
- Displays highly effective oral, written and interpersonal communication.
- Displays strong organisational and time management skills, as shown by a dynamic and flexible approach to time management and clinical caseload demands.
- A commitment to Austin Health values
- A positive approach to ongoing self-education and skill development
- A flexible, innovative team-oriented approach to service delivery
- A positive approach to change and diversity

Desirable but not essential:

- Demonstrated cultural sensitivity when working with people with diverse backgrounds.
- Demonstrated commitment to evidence-based practice, research, and quality
- Demonstrated ability to flexibly manage competing and at times stressful situations, monitoring one's own stress levels and practicing and promoting self-care strategies.

Professional qualifications and registration requirements

An approved degree in Social Work with eligibility for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers. A minimum of 2 years in a social work role post-graduation.

A current Victorian Driver's License (without restrictions), and ability to drive a work vehicle.
A current Working with Children's Check (without restrictions).

Quality, safety and risk – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues and members of the public by following organisational safety, quality and risk policies and guidelines.
- Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality, and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself.
- Promote and participate in the evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Comply with the principles of person-centered care.
- Comply with requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.

Other conditions – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Adhere to Austin Health's core values: *our actions show we care, we bring our best, together we achieve, and we shape the future.*
- Comply with the Austin Health's Code of Conduct policy, as well as all other policies and procedures (as amended from time to time).
- Comply with all Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional development requirements.



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- Provide proof of immunity to nominated vaccine preventable diseases in accordance with Austin Health's immunisation screening policy.
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management.

General information

Cultural safety

Austin Health is committed to cultural safety and health equity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise cultural safety as the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Equal Opportunity Employer

We celebrate, value, and include people of all backgrounds, genders, identities, cultures, bodies, and abilities. We welcome and support applications from talented people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, people with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQIA+ and people of all ages and cultures.

Austin Health is a child safe environment

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. Austin Health has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and commits to protect children. We take allegations of abuse and neglect seriously and will make every effort to mitigate and respond to risk in line with hospital policy and procedures.



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