

## JOB DESCRIPTION

Position	<b>Therapeutic Support Assistant</b>
Work-Base Location	Primarily The Lioncare School owned by The Lioncare Group but you may from time-to-time be required to work at any resource operated by the organisation.
Line-Managed By	The therapeutic support team manager
Jointly Responsible To	In the classroom setting: special needs class teachers In the wider work setting: the therapeutic support team manager
Ultimately Answerable To	The head teacher and the school operations manager of The Lioncare School
Line-Management and Supervisory Responsibilities	None
Health and Safety Responsibility	Responsibility for promoting the Health and Safety of children, self, colleagues, contracted workers, and visitors whilst working at the home or The Lioncare School or carrying out duties for and on behalf of The Lioncare Group.
Safeguarding and Child protection Responsibility	Responsibility for the Safeguarding and Protection of children cared for and educated by The Lioncare Group.

Primary Task (what the Job exists to do)	<p><i>In consultation and collaboration with special needs class teachers and the therapeutic support team manager, and with due regard to legislative and regulative duties and responsibilities:</i></p> <p><b>Draw on psychodynamic theory and practice to meet children’s therapeutic, learning and pastoral needs in full, and in a way that promotes effective learning and teaching and helps children make sense of their past, gain enjoyment in the here and now, and develop the necessary emotional and practical skills and abilities to move forward in their lives. To achieve this, you will;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accept delegated responsibility and authority from others for improving the provision of quality education and learning and therapeutic support offered each child, and promoting all aspects of the school as a 'facilitating environment' conducive to therapeutic thinking and learning and practice, and children making progress.</li> <li>– Assist in meeting the individual day-to-day learning and pastoral/therapeutic needs of the children attending the school and supported across the whole of The Lioncare Group. This includes their emotional, safeguarding, social, health, psychological, educational and academic needs.</li> <li>– Take personal responsibility for preparing children emotionally and physically each day to engage in and gain benefit from their education and learning.</li> <li>– Strive to ensure that each child has opportunities to experiences being educated and supported and ‘attending school’ in a positive, real and meaningful way.</li> <li>– Actively assist in promoting and maintaining a group-learning environment; demonstrate belief in the value of a group-learning environment as a beneficial tool and a positive experience and actively assist in promoting and supporting and maintaining the group living-and-learning ethos of The Lioncare Group.</li> <li>– Involve yourself fully and assist in creating and compiling and implementing and updating agreed education plans and other relevant plans, logging and recording of information using the organisation’s GDrive digital records management system and BehaviourWatch, writing reports and carrying out all associated administrative tasks and duties within agreed timescales, ensuring all records are accurate and congruent.</li> <li>– Adhere to all statutory guidelines and policy and procedures relating to the appropriate provision of education and safeguarding and protecting children.</li> </ul>
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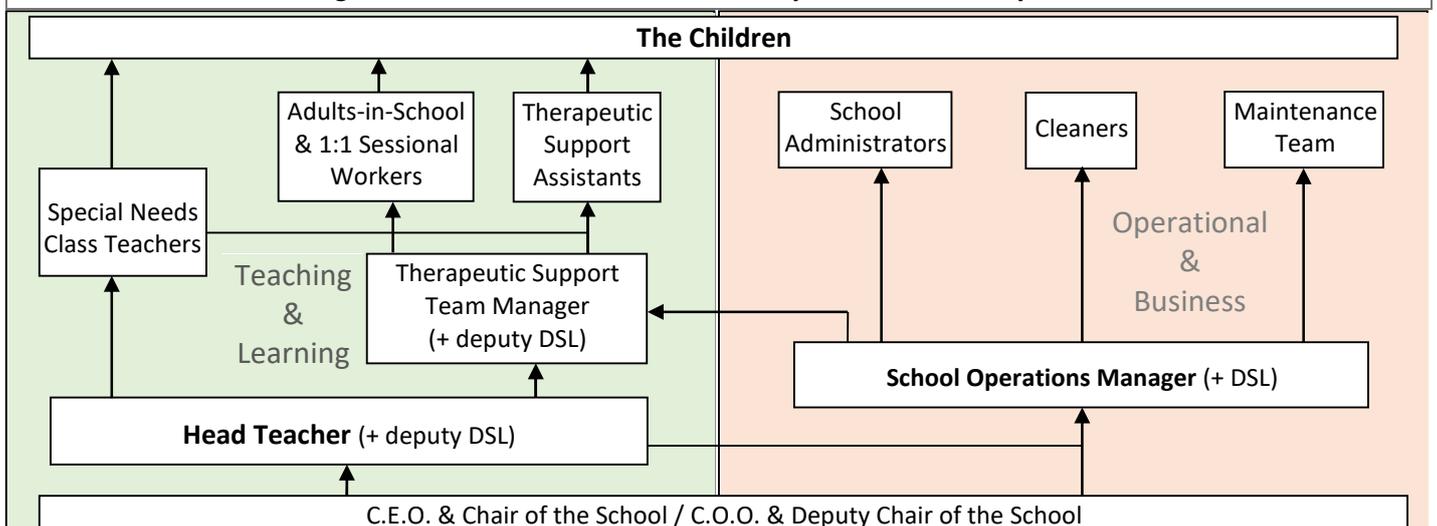
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Act as a positive adult role model for the children attending The Lioncare School, and be an active member of the wider therapeutic community that is The Lioncare Group.</li> <li>– Work collaboratively with colleagues and the children in setting and maintaining and reinforcing appropriate boundaries, to provide a sense of emotional containment, safety, order and belonging amongst all those learning and working at the school. This may on occasion and as a last resort necessitate the use of restrictive physical intervention of a child.</li> <li>– Effectively liaise and interact with all colleagues across the organisation and wider external networks to ensure clear communication and promote positive and harmonious working relationships; this includes liaising and interacting with the families and professional networks of children not resident within The Lioncare Group, and, in this, be prepared to undertake home visits subject to appropriate risk assessment.</li> <li>– Actively assist in assessing the therapeutic needs of the children through contributing to the psychodynamic assessments of emotional need and delivering associated relevant plans for each child.</li> <li>– Be a reflective practitioner, able and willing to reflect on and self-evaluate your own actions and the impact of the work on you, and share this with others so as to engage all in a process of continuous learning, deeper understanding, and improvement.</li> </ul>
Safeguarding Statement	The Lioncare Group puts the welfare of children and adults at the centre of all of its work. Our Safer Recruitment policy and procedure is written with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education and outlines in full the measure taken to deter, reject, prevent and detect those who might abuse children or who are unsuited to work with them.
Equality and Diversity	The Directors and Shareholders of The Lioncare Group believe in and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity in both the service it provides and the employment of its workforce and expects all those employed or associated with The Lioncare Group to promote this in their work and practice.

### The Role of Therapeutic Support Assistant

A therapeutic support assistant is a member both of the therapeutic support team of The Lioncare School and of the frontline care and support team of the wider organisation of The Lioncare Group. They work collaboratively with, and under the instruction and guidance of, special needs class teachers (in the classroom setting) and the therapeutic support team manager (in the wider setting of the school and workplace).

Therapeutic support assistants create and maintain the conditions necessary for learning to take place. They grow their understanding of each child's individual emotional and social and learning difficulties and needs, and those of the class-group as a whole. They use this understanding to adapt the learning environment and the way and pace that learning is delivered, to address barriers to and promote engagement in learning and teaching, and so that each child and the class-group as a whole gain maximum benefit from their teacher's delivery of the curriculum.

### The Lioncare School: Management Structure and Lines of Authority and Accountability



**General Tasks and Responsibilities:** In accordance with the stated aims and practice approach of The Lioncare Group, the duties of all employees include:

**1. General Tasks and Responsibilities:**

- 1.1. Carry out tasks and responsibilities professionally at all times.
- 1.2. Work with integrity, honesty, and openness at all times.
- 1.3. Assist, support, and promote The Lioncare Group within the wider market place.
- 1.4. Work within and uphold and promote the stated aims, objectives, and therapeutic practice approach of The Lioncare Group and adhere to all published guidance, policies, and procedures.
- 1.5. Comply with current legislation, regulation, and guidance relating to the provision of quality children's social care in a residential children's home and/or education and learning for children in an independent SEMH school and with particular emphasis on safeguarding children and child protection and risk management duties and responsibilities.
- 1.6. Immediately alert the school operations manager (also designated safeguarding lead) or/and head teacher or/and therapeutic support team manager (also deputy designated safeguarding leads) or other manager in their absence of any concerns regarding inappropriate or unacceptable practice occurring within the school, other setting across the organisation, or external agencies.
- 1.7. Liaise in a professional manner at all times, and promote effective working relationships and positive links with, clients, colleagues, and agencies working for and associated with the work of The Lioncare Group and its wider community.
- 1.8. Undertake delegated tasks and instructions from the head teacher and school operations manager and therapeutic support team manager (i.e. the school's leadership group) and others with appropriate authority, to a level of competence expected from the grade of the post.
- 1.9. Prepare for, attend, and engage in all child-centred meetings as necessary and appropriate and required, and include but are not limited to; school meetings, education meetings, network meetings, and P.A.E.N. meetings etc.
- 1.10. Prepare for, attend, and fully engage in regular team meetings, individual supervision sessions, performance review meetings, and half-termly group consultancy sessions.
- 1.11. Exercise responsibilities under the health and safety at work act.
- 1.12. Implement and develop the organisation's policy and practice of equality and diversity.
- 1.13. Engage in the process of informal resolution of problems and difficulties that may arise, always in the aim of maintaining a harmonious and collaborative working environment.
- 1.14. Undertake training and continuous professional development including self-study and research.
- 1.15. Adopt a flexible approach to working times in line with the particular demands of the school and organisation, including assisting in times of staff shortages, increased workload demands, and in emergency situations and unplanned situations.
- 1.16. Undertake other such tasks and duties appropriate to the level of competence expected from the grade of post and in keeping with the organisations policies and procedures, the school's prospectus, the aims and objectives of The Lioncare Group, and all legislation and regulations.

**Specific Duties and Responsibilities:** In accordance with the stated aims and practice approach of The Lioncare Group, the key responsibilities and duties of a therapeutic support assistant include the following<sup>1</sup>:

**2. Supporting the Company:**

- 2.1. Support at all times the chair of The Lioncare School and head teacher and school operations manager and therapeutic support team manager and (i.e. the school leadership group) in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in relation to the operation of the School.
- 2.2. Inform the head teacher and/or school operations manager as appropriate and keep them updated of all issues requiring further attention and acting on these where appropriate or were directed to do so.

<sup>1</sup> The description given is not exhaustive, yet broadly encompasses those duties and responsibilities which may be allocated to the role of therapeutic support assistant. It is not intended to be a complete list of all the tasks that a therapeutic support assistant could perform; nor is it intended that a single role-holder would be able to take on all the tasks on the list at once.

- 2.3. Attend and actively participate in and contribute to meetings and all other forums as required and appropriate.
- 2.4. Ensure positive links are maintained and improved between the school and all parts of The Lioncare Group and between the school and external agencies and professionals and members of the wider community and public in general.
- 2.5. Take shared responsibility for implementing the clear therapeutic community model of practice and support others in ensuring it is consistently applied across all aspects of the school.
- 2.6. Promote a positive image of the school
- 2.7. Provide constructive feedback on the quality of care and education provided by the school and for the school's improvement plan.

### **3. Multi-Disciplinary Working and Practice:**

In consultation and collaboration with special needs class teachers and therapeutic support team manager, and under the leadership of the head teacher and school operations manager:

- 5.1. Carry out agreed aspects of monitoring, co-ordinating, assessing, and maintaining to a high standard the learning and pastoral/therapeutic provision offered by the school to ensure the needs of the children are met.
- 5.2. Undertake well defined and purposeful interventions based on recognised learning support strategies and core therapeutic principles targeted at supporting and improving individual children's ability to engage safely at school. This may include, but not be limited to:
  - in the classroom: use of memory cards, spaced repetition, practice tests, strategic highlighting, reciprocal questioning etc.
  - supporting off site trips, activities, and the day-to-day transitions between destinations: this may include escorting children both within and outside the premises including between classrooms, to home, to hospital, whilst on educational visits, when attending swimming lessons and sports events and other similar activities.
  - supporting children's transitions from one class-group to the next, and when joining and leaving the school
  - key-working sessions
  - implementing recommendations set out in the treatment programmes from psychodynamic assessments of emotional need
  - reparations and restorative practice
  - home visits and support offered within the child's home environment or setting
- 5.3. Undertake "crisis-management" interventions, such as restrictive physical interventions and management of incidents, safely, and in line with training and policy, and assist and support children and colleagues involved to have the opportunity to debrief, reflect and resolve afterwards.
- 5.4. Assist the therapeutic support team manager and schools operations manager in maintaining, managing and developing systems in the school for accurate, efficient and appropriate logging and recording and monitoring and analysis of information, and assisting in compiling reports and other documents as required and ensuring these are provided to colleagues and external agencies on request and on time. These may include, but are not limited to, the following;
  - end of term reports
  - contributing to education, health and care plan (EHCP) meetings and reports
  - incident forms
  - accident forms
  - records of restrictive physical intervention
  - safeguarding records
  - psychodynamic assessment of emotional need
  - live monitoring forms
  - witness statements
  - factual accounts
- 5.5. Promote the therapeutic community practice and approach underpinning the work of the school and wider organisation, ensuring this is consistently conducted and maintained to a high level of professionalism and

accountability, with all work being implemented in an appropriate and agreed manner.

- 5.6. Act as an advocate and positive adult role model for the children, and at all times maintain a professional approach towards colleagues and other professionals and members of the public that have reason to interact with school and the wider organisation of The Lioncare Group.
- 5.7. Implement agreed systems, procedures, and practice that comply with legislative, regulatory, registration and inspection requirements and that promote the quality of teaching and learning and education of the school.

#### **4. Contribute to the Quality Of Care, Welfare and Experiences of Children:**

- 4.1. Implement agreed systems, procedures, and practice that promote the quality of care and welfare of the children.
- 4.2. Build good relationships with children.
- 4.3. Encourage good standards of children's behaviour in line with positive behaviour support plans and with practice as described in our policy for promoting positive behaviour.
- 4.4. Always consider behaviour as the physical manifestation of an uncommunicated underlying emotion: "what we can't talk about we act out". Seek to speak to the underlying emotion rather than the presenting behaviour.
- 4.5. Aim to support children to overcome barriers to learning and encourage full participation within the school's curriculum model for therapeutic education.
- 4.6. Offer help to children who need support, whilst encouraging and promoting their interdependence.
- 4.7. Positively join with and actively engage in activities and community visits and celebrations of achievements.

#### **5. Support the Quality of Classroom Teaching and Learning:**

Under the direction and supervision of special needs class teachers, and in consultation with the therapeutic support team manager:

- 5.1. Support children's play activities; listen and talk with the children, join in play activities and show children how to play/give them permission to play, support individual children where they need help whilst promoting their agency.
- 5.2. Play games with the children that promote the practicing of essential skills, encourage sharing, develop ability to take-turns, and that foster cooperation and work through envy.
- 5.3. Attend to the sensory needs as recommended and set out in children's occupational therapy reports and other assessment documents.
- 5.4. Encourage children' oral language development through play, books, stories and personal interaction and by supporting and implementing plans written by speech and language therapists.
- 5.5. Support literacy development by reading or telling stories and rhymes, guiding children to information books, labelling children's drawings and models, and providing an audience for children's reading activities.
- 5.6. Support numeracy development by promoting counting and matching games and rhymes practicing number bonds and tables, building with shapes and developing appropriate language, and supporting practical classroom-based planned activities that form part of the special needs class teacher's programme.
- 5.7. Supervise and support children while they undertake work set by their special needs class teacher.

#### **6. Contribute to Each Classroom and Learning Area of the School Being a True 'Facilitating Environment':**

- 6.1. Organise and maintain the stock of available materials and resources and oversee their appropriate distribution.
- 6.2. Maintain and catalogue collections of resources including but not limited to libraries, collections of computer software, mathematics equipment and similar.
- 6.3. Prepare classroom materials by duplicating templates, setting out materials, making booklets, and clearing away equipment etc.
- 6.4. Make displays and including but not limited to mounting examples of children's work, pictures, and interest tables, under the guidance and supervision of special needs class teachers and members of the school leadership group.
- 6.5. Ensure the school's online safety policy is effectively implemented both in the use of equipment and the supervision of the children.

- 6.6. Regularly consider what changes are needed to make the space neurodivergent-friendly.
- 6.7. Ask yourself, “is this space comfortable and inviting and welcoming?”, and take the initiative to make it so.

## **7. Safeguarding and Risk Management:**

- 7.1. Assist in developing a safeguarding culture whereby community members within the school share responsibility for the emotional and physical safety of each other.
- 7.2. Support the school leadership group in liaising with all carers and relevant persons and local authorities, and including the families and/or carers of those children not resident within The Lioncare Group’s own residential provision, to ensure their specific safeguarding needs are met.
- 7.3. Accept and act positively to changes in tasks in response to day-to-day changes and emergencies.
- 7.4. Develop your practise and that of others that promotes the safeguarding of individuals.
- 7.5. Comply with legislative, regulatory, registration and inspection requirements that support the safeguarding of individuals from harm or abuse and ensure others do the same.
- 7.6. Maintain your own and others understanding of harm, abuse and safeguarding.
- 7.7. Develop your practise and that of others that balances positive outcomes for individuals with risk and safety.
- 7.8. Work in partnership with others to manage risk to personal safety.
- 7.9. Assist others to devise, support, monitor and implement positive risk management plans and procedures related to behaviour, activities and daily life in school.
- 7.10. Contribute evidence, observations, and information that promotes the formulation of effective positive risk management plans and effective risk management in general.

## **8. Managing Self as a Therapeutic Practitioner<sup>2</sup>:**

- 8.1. Understand the role you have taken up, and the boundaries and limits to this role
- 8.2. Understand the client group with whom you are working
- 8.3. Show capacity to carry out clinical observations and formulate a working hypothesis
- 8.4. Show capacity to acknowledge, use and maintain the boundaries of the therapeutic community where you work
- 8.5. Take steps to develop your understanding of therapeutic community methodologies and related theory
- 8.6. Adapt your own communication in a range of situations that match the needs and understanding of those with whom you are communicating
- 8.7. Actively embrace and incorporate in to your practice the concept of use of self
- 8.8. Display capacity to work both reflectively and reflexively
- 8.9. Take steps to develop your capacity to contain anxiety
- 8.10. Recognises the importance of the environmental setting and of the external environment
- 8.11. Understand principles of organisational dynamics and how they are enacted in The Lioncare Group and between The Lioncare Group and other organisations
- 8.12. Be a participant observer
- 8.13. Recognise what is the primary task of The Lioncare School and The Lioncare Group and the contribution you make to achieving the primary task

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<sup>2</sup> For further detail and explanation, please refer to the Core Competencies as a Therapeutic Practitioner table at the end of this document

**Selection Specification:** The criteria below indicate qualities needed to do the job well. Candidates will be selected according to the extent to which they satisfy these criteria. Evidence of potential will also be considered. Most of the criteria must normally be met in order to qualify for selection.

## **Essential Criteria**

### **Knowledge and Experience**

- Some experience of working in a school or/and similar learning setting or/and a residential children's home.
- Some knowledge of an SEMH school or related learning environment or approach.
- Understanding of the real difficulties faced and felt every-day by the children in our care.
- Experience of encouraging children to develop their full potential.
- Experience of delivering quality care, learning, education, and nurture to vulnerable children.
- A reasonable standard of education and general knowledge.
- Some knowledge of theory and practice in providing quality care and education for children.
- Good written and oral communication skills, and able to record accurately, objectively, and with clarity.
- IT skills including Word, Excel, Email/Internet, and record management systems, and able to operate basic IT appliances including telephone system, scanners, and photocopiers
- Understanding the importance of confidentiality, privacy, and discretion.
- Awareness of the stressful and emotionally and physically challenging nature of the task and role.
- Understanding of the importance of practicing equality and diversity and confronting discrimination.
- Understanding of the importance of OFSTED and regulation in an independent school.

### **Skills and Abilities**

- Ability to relate to, communicate with, and meet the needs of children with social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, trauma, and complex needs.
- Ability to develop as a therapeutic practitioner.
- Ability to be assertive yet supportive, exercise sanctioned authority, have good interpersonal skills, and able to function as part of a team and wider organisation.
- Ability to take on board instruction, use own initiative, and accept personal authority and responsibility.
- Ability to effectively prioritise self and workload within agreed timescales, and display good organisational skills.
- Able to work under pressure.
- Ability to assist in assessing the need of individual children, in creating plans for meeting these needs, and assist in maintaining appropriate records of progress and achievement, and to assist others in doing the same.
- Ability to relate to and communicate effectively with colleagues and other professionals and encourage their collaborative participation in the work of The Lioncare Group.

### **Personal Qualities**

- Honesty, openness and integrity
- Capacity to be reflective and a reflective practitioner
- Organised
- A stable, balanced, and rounded personality
- Confident, robust and resilient character
- Flexible and adaptable to changing situations and demands including working flexible hours when necessary
- Capable of both thinking and doing
- Belief in the value of difficult to reach children
- Commitment to training and self-development

### **Desired Criteria**

- Experience of working in an SEMH independent school and/or a residential therapeutic community for children.
- Prior experience of working in the same or a similar role.
- Understanding of cost awareness and efficiency.
- Relevant qualification: therapeutic childcare and/or education and/or classroom support and/or teaching.
- Self-aware, motivated, sense of humour, creativity, conscientious work-ethic.
- Full clean driving licence

## **Statement of Variation**

This job description sets out the details of the post at the time it was drawn up. These details may vary without changing the general character of the duties or level of responsibility entailed. Such variation cannot itself justify reconsideration of the grading of the post.

## CORE COMPETENCIES AS A THERAPEUTIC PRACTITIONER

Competency Heading		Definition - The TC Practitioner Strives To...
Role related competencies	1	Understanding of role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understand the boundaries of their role, the place this has within the wider organisation &amp; the outcomes it is designed to achieve</li> </ul>
	2	Understanding of client group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide responses of understanding to the particularity of the client within the context of the community</li> <li>• Shows developing insight into the clinical issues extent within the client group</li> <li>• Relates to others as human beings not as diagnoses or labels</li> </ul>
	3	Clinical observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to accept 'not knowing' &amp; allow time for understanding to emerge</li> <li>• Capacity to observe behaviour/mood/interactions &amp; notice internal &amp; external dynamics involved</li> <li>• Capacity to formulate a hypothesis</li> </ul>
	4	Capacity to acknowledge and use the boundaries of the TC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing awareness &amp; capacity to regulate boundaries</li> <li>• Ability to share authority with all members of the community - 'dispersed authority'</li> <li>• Capacity to own &amp; use their own authority</li> <li>• Recognises the significance of space &amp; time &amp; how therapeutic structures are established</li> <li>• Creative / flexible use of TC structures</li> </ul>
Therapeutic practice related competencies	5	Understanding of TC methodologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows a willingness to learn &amp; engage with 'methods'</li> <li>• Emotionally open within a 'culture of enquiry'</li> <li>• Developing knowledge &amp; understanding of psychodynamic ideas</li> <li>• Desire to acquire both academic &amp; experiential knowledge in a 'living-learning environment'</li> <li>• Desire to be a part of a containing matrix of relationships &amp; use the community to address &amp; solve problems</li> </ul>
	6	Communication skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness to both conscious &amp; unconscious communication &amp; recognises behaviours &amp; affects are communication</li> <li>• Communicates in a clear direct manner &amp; actively listens &amp; engages with others to further their understanding</li> <li>• Can adapt the mode of communication appropriate to the audience</li> <li>• Avoids telling others what to think; provides/creates opportunities for understanding to grow / develop / emerge</li> </ul>
	7	Use of self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitivity - attuned &amp; receptive - can takes things in</li> <li>• Capacity to use one's interactions with others therapeutically</li> <li>• Ability to monitor thoughts &amp; feelings evoked by others &amp; link these to underlying issues of the child</li> <li>• Genuineness - congruence - authenticity - not hiding behind professional status / role</li> </ul>
	8	Capacity to work both reflectively and using reflexively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can think about one's own capacities &amp; deficits in relation to the work</li> <li>• Can work by continually being aware of one's responses to others &amp; one's self</li> <li>• Self-reflection / awareness - desire to know why one is drawn to this work</li> <li>• Has self-knowledge - able to self-talk - adopt a third position</li> </ul>
	9	Capacity to contain anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to tolerate 'not knowing'</li> <li>• An ability to tolerate stress &amp; recognize personal limits</li> <li>• Can notice &amp; sustain feeling difficult feelings long enough to understand where they derive from &amp; to take appropriate action</li> <li>• Self-contained - can contain their own anxiety</li> <li>• Owns their mistakes</li> <li>• Capacity to retain ones one identity - strength of character</li> </ul>
Organisational related competencies	10	Recognises importance of the environmental setting & external environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses 'daily living' as opportunities for learning - 'opportunity-led work'</li> <li>• Acknowledges the symbolic nature of the environment</li> <li>• Understands 'corrective emotional experience', primary care &amp; therapeutic adaptation</li> <li>• Political / social awareness - can challenge status quo</li> </ul>
	11	Understanding of organisational dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can understand &amp; acknowledge issues of authority, power, leadership</li> <li>• Can understand the varied reasons for organisational anxiety, the defences which operate to avoid this &amp; one's own role in managing this</li> <li>• Aware of own valency - the tendency to take up a familiar defensive role in a group context</li> </ul>
	12	Participant observer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can observe self &amp; others without being compelled to act before reflecting</li> <li>• Can wait, think, talk with others before acting</li> <li>• Capacity to learn from direct experience; capacity to explore &amp; be vulnerable, not defensive/avoidant</li> </ul>
	13	Recognises the primary task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundaried - able to acknowledge one's own place in the organizational structure</li> <li>• Clarity about one's role - engages directly in the key tasks defined in their job description &amp; its relation with the primary task of the community</li> </ul>