

Position Description

Position title	Therapeutic Specialist
Program/Unit	Clinical Services / Intensive Therapeutic Care (ITC)
Classification	Common Law Contract subject to qualifications & experience
Position reports to	Principal Practitioner, NSW

Organisational context

Established in 1997, MacKillop Family Services (MacKillop) strives to ensure all families are supported to provide children with a safe and permanent home, and the best possible start to their lives.

Continuing the child and family welfare programs of our three founding agencies – the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers – we provide early intervention programs to support the most vulnerable families, and provide education, disability support, home-based care and out of home care for vulnerable children and young people in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia.

MacKillop has almost 1,500 staff, operating out of more than 50 sites, and has forecast annual revenue for the 2022/23 financial year of over \$213 million.

Like our founders, we are deeply committed to our work, and are driven by social justice. We believe every child should be protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation, and are a child-safe organisation that is committed to protecting and advocating for the best interests of children and families across all our programs.

Our work is underpinned by our values, and by a deep understanding of the impact of trauma, informed by the Sanctuary Model. Sanctuary is a blueprint for organisational change, which supports organisations to provide a safe, non-violent environment for people affected by trauma. It also supports staff and carers to form communities that are safe and caring, and to maintain a culture that reflects these qualities at every level within the organisation. MacKillop is the only licensed provider of training in the Sanctuary Model in Australia.

MacKillop is deeply committed to promoting diversity. Our diversity encompasses differences in race or ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, intersex status, sexual orientation, language, age, religion, socio-economic status, relationship status, physical and mental ability, thinking styles, experience, and education. We believe that the wide array of perspectives that results from such diversity makes us more creative, flexible, accessible and productive.

Our purpose

MacKillop Family Services continues our founders' passionate commitment to social justice – to work for the rights of children, young people and families to be safe, to learn, feel nurtured and connected to culture. We provide high quality services to promote healing from trauma and loss, and to enable hopeful futures.

MacKillop Family Services will care compassionately, respond large-heartedly and advocate courageously.

Our vision

Children, young people and families are welcomed and supported by MacKillop to be empowered and thrive.

Our values

We commit to the following five foundational values which we continue to embed in the culture of our organisation and practice:

JUSTICE. We believe in the right of all people to experience respect and to have access to quality services irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, marital status, disability, sexuality or age. We advocate for inclusiveness and social justice in the wider community and commit to these principles across our organisation and all services we provide. ***We believe in the right of all people to be treated justly and fairly.***

HOPE. We commit to creating positive and hopeful relationships where people find meaning in their experiences and relationships and are able to learn, explore their strengths and create possibilities for growth and change. ***We seek to foster hope that assists people to find meaning.***

COLLABORATION. In our work with individuals, families and other organisations and groups, we commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment. ***We commit to working in a collaborative spirit through cooperation, coordination, partnership and empowerment.***

COMPASSION. Compassion is an attitude of the heart, an expression of our shared humanity and a deep desire to alleviate another's suffering. We commit to creating an attitude of openness to others and to their circumstances. ***We seek to foster compassion, an attitude of the heart and a response to exclusion and suffering.***

RESPECT. We value ourselves and other people, the earth and all creation. We seek to listen and learn from each other and build relationships with respect, being proud of what we hold in common and with understanding and tolerance of our differences. ***We seek to act with respect with regard to each other, the earth and all creation.***

Our Sanctuary Commitment

Our values are brought to life through our commitment to the Sanctuary Model. Sanctuary is an evidence-supported, whole-of-organisation framework that guides how we practice as an agency. Sanctuary enables a shared language, knowledge, and response to the impact of trauma and loss on all of us.

Our seven Sanctuary Commitments are as follows:

- Non-Violence - Mean what you say and don't be mean when you say it
- Emotional Intelligence - Look out for yours and other people's feelings
- Social Learning - We all learn from, and teach each other
- Democracy - Everyone is heard
- Open Communication - Be honest and share information
- Social Responsibility - We all help each other ... It takes a village to raise a child
- Growth and Change - Open to new ideas and ways of thinking

Position purpose

The Therapeutic Specialist role reports through to the Senior Therapeutic Specialists / Principal Practitioner. The position works closely with the Managers and Coordinators of the local region to deliver clinical and therapeutic services for children, young people, families and carers who are clients of the programs.

The Therapeutic Specialist is responsible for guiding and supporting carer and staff interactions with children and young people, conducting assessments, developing therapeutic treatment plans and leading reflective practice to support carers and staff to develop their therapeutic skills. In addition, the Therapeutic Specialist will as required provide therapeutic services including Family Therapy directly to the children, young people and families who are clients of our services.

The Therapeutic Specialist works closely with the Manager, program staff and other service partners in the management of complex cases and practice quality issues. This includes the provision of specialist expertise and assistance, case consultancy and review and the promotion of reflective and evidence based practice.

Primary objectives

The primary objective of this role is to provide critical clinical and therapeutic support for and with the casework teams working from MacKillop's offices and as part of those programs. MacKillop is delivering Out of Home Care, Homelessness Services, Family Therapy and other programs as developed. The Therapeutic Specialist will bring their experience, skills and qualifications in Psychology, Social Work, Family Therapy or their equivalents, to the challenge of delivering clinical services for the vulnerable children, young people and families, who are clients of our services, many of whom have experienced trauma, abuse or violence. The Therapeutic Specialist will work alongside our teams, as well as part of the NSW Clinical Services team, to deliver the desired outcomes for the program's clients using the best evidence-based practice, determined by MacKillop and its Clinical Services team.

Key result areas and responsibilities

The ITC Therapeutic Specialist will:

- Provide therapeutic leadership and trauma informed interventions, based on sound practice expertise, contemporary research and program guidelines that deliver positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families.
- Ensure that appropriate assessment procedures, risk assessment, therapeutic planning processes and outcome measurements are undertaken for each child or young person in the programs as required.
- Facilitate the development of Behaviour Support Plans and Therapeutic Care Plans.
- Facilitate group work and provide training for foster carers and staff especially in the areas of trauma and its impact on the child or young person.
- Facilitate regular reflective practice sessions for program staff.
- Provide intensive support and guidance to foster carers.
- Participate in the assessment of foster carers and contribute to annual carer reviews, as agreed.
- Collaborate with members of the care team to support children and young people to develop and maintain positive links within the local community.
- Work co-operatively with staff the Department of Family and Community Services, and other services; and provide secondary consultation concerning the mental health needs of MacKillop clients.
- Report regularly through clinical supervision to the Principal Practitioner.
- Participate in organisation wide service provision, training, quality assurance mechanisms and service development.
- Assist in the development of quality assurance and quality improvement frameworks for trauma informed service delivery.

- Develop and maintain effective relationships with key internal and external stakeholders.
- Represent MacKillop Family Services as required.
- Undertake other duties and responsibilities as required.

Key selection criteria

- A knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and values and an awareness of the current issues faced by Aboriginal children, young people and their families
- An appropriate tertiary qualification in Psychology, Social Work or a related discipline is essential.
- Current registration as a psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia and a higher degree in psychology at Masters level is preferred.
- Post Graduate training in relevant child, adolescent and family clinical practice, family therapy and systemic thinking is strongly preferred.
- Experience in completing assessments for children and young people and using the findings to complete a comprehensive therapeutic written report/care plan designed to inform staff and child interactions and the Care Team's planning
- A knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and values and an awareness of the current issues faced by Aboriginal children, young people and their families in OOHC
- Practice knowledge relevant to working with traumatised and vulnerable children, young people and families such as: child development and the impact of trauma; including the ability to provide therapeutic clinical assessment and trauma informed interventions.
- A well-developed understanding of Attachment and Trauma Theories, their relationship to child abuse and neglect, together with an understanding of social, emotional and cognitive disabilities and an ability to assist others to understand their associated implications.
- Experience in providing supervision, secondary consultation, training and advice to clinicians, other professionals, staff and carers
- Proven highly developed interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and excellent engagement skills, especially in engaging children and young people who have experienced significant trauma, disrupted attachment and demonstrate extreme emotional and behavioural dysregulation.
- A track record of working collaboratively and the demonstrated capacity to negotiate and liaise with internal and external stakeholders including, DCJ, other agencies and the community.
- Demonstrable analytical problem-solving skills, the ability to assess options and identify and implement creative, innovative and flexible solutions.
- Evidence of a holistic understanding of the complexity of the child protection and out-of-home care service system and the issues involved in providing services to statutory clients.
- Evidence of personal values consistent with the values of MacKillop Family Services including a willingness to embrace the Sanctuary Model and Principles.

Other information

The incumbent is required to:

- Sign and actively abide by MacKillop's Code of Conduct.
- Observe and actively support MacKillop's P.8 People and Workplace Policy.
- Observe and fulfil health and safety responsibilities as contained within 'WHS-P-001 Responsibility Statements' document.
- Attend mandatory and other training as required.
- Actively participate in MacKillop's Bid Management process as required.
- Participate in and promote continuous quality improvement processes.

- Promote an environment that is culturally safe and strengths focussed.
- Abide by principles and commitments of the Sanctuary Framework.
- Incorporate cultural safety into your practice with Aboriginal families.

The incumbent must possess a:

- Valid and current Driver's Licence.
- Valid and current Working with Children Card.
- Valid and current NDIS Worker Check (for NDIS risk assessed roles).
- Satisfactory criminal history check conducted by MacKillop Family Services.

Approval

Director or General Manager's full name:	Kerry O'Sullivan	Date:	2/11/22
Director or General Manager's position title:	Director Clinical Services		
Incumbent's full name:			
Incumbent's signature:		Date:	



MacKillop Family Services acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge all Aboriginal children, young people, families and staff who are a part of MacKillop Family Services.



MacKillop celebrates and draws strength from diversity and respects the dignity of all people. Every person at MacKillop has the right to be safe and to be treated justly. We value every person's cultural or linguistic background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, intersex status, relationship status, religion or spiritual beliefs, socio-economic status, age, and abilities.