Job Title
Mental Health Coordinator

General Overview
As mental health awareness gradually increases, so does the demand for better access to mental health services (Working in Mental Health). The Mental Health Coordinator is generally the first point of contact for people looking to access ongoing mental health care. The role of the Mental Health Coordinator may be occupied by any mental health professional; a nurse, social worker, or other mental health worker (Working in Mental Health). Generally, the Mental Health Coordinator works as part of the communities’ mental health team to coordinate mental health services for those identified as having different mental health needs, ranging in severity (Sutton, 2014). The Mental Health Coordinator can also get involved in mental health promotion by presenting at schools or community organizations and also participating in awareness campaigns while also coordinating networks of support within the community (Working in Mental Health).

Job duties and responsibilities
The main duties and responsibilities of a Mental Health Coordinator vary depending on the place of employment which can be a hospital, academic institution, or mental health organization. Typically, Mental Health Coordinators are the main point of contact for patients or clients who receive mental health care (Who's who in mental health?). Within hospital settings, the coordinators often perform assessments on patients to gain a better understanding of their changing mental health needs over time. One of the most important tasks of the coordinator is to ensure that the mental health services run smoothly both within individual and organizational level. Some of the services coordinated by a Mental Health Coordinator may include accommodation, medical treatment, counseling and psychotherapy. The coordination of these services ensures that the patient receives optimal help, ensuring their psychological well-being. The coordinator, for instance, could be responsible for a group of children with special needs within a school. They could also be assigned to work within an institution such as a prison, university or a particular geographical area (Sutton, 2014). Another main responsibility for many coordinators is to meet certain mental health objectives. One such objective can be mental health promotion within a university campus, where the goal could be to reduce stress by promoting exercise, nutrition, sleep hygiene etc. Another objective may concern helping people with mental health problems to reintegrate into society by helping them access work or education (Sutton, 2014).

Typical workday
The typical workday of a Mental Health Coordinator depends on the place of employment. Within academic institutions or large organizations, for example, the coordinators work collaboratively with parents, staff, mental health professionals, and the larger community in the delivery of mental health services where they are required. Their daily activities may include attending committee and clinical meetings, taking minutes and networking with outside agencies to increase referral services (Sutton, 2014). Within research institutions they are also responsible for the coordination of research activities and the programming responsibilities related to mental health. In some cases, the coordinators are required to travel outside their community for
conference and promotion purposes (Working in Mental Health). The hours of work usually vary depending on the location of employment. In hospitals, for example, there is a higher demand for overtime work due to emergency situations and patients who might require immediate help. In other cases, if the coordinator is responsible for a research project or a promotional campaign, it might be required for them to work outside their regular shift hours in order to meet the necessary objective. Typically, Mental Health Coordinators work with children, mental health patients, inmates and other mental health professionals. Their work requires the ability to adapt in different environments, communication, coordination of services and ideas, and the use of various administrative technologies (Mental Health Care Coordinator).

Educational requirements and other qualifications
The typical qualification requirement for a Mental Health Coordinator is a Bachelor Degree, and in some instances a Master’s Degree in Social Work, is also required (Mental Health Care Coordinator). Coordinators are required to have a strong background in Psychology and Social Work with several years of mental health related experience prior to obtaining the job (Mental Health Care Coordinator).

Related skills, interests, and abilities
Mental Health Coordinators need to have good interpersonal skills as much of their work involves interacting with clients, parents, staff and other mental health professionals (Who's who in mental health?). Excellent leadership skills are especially important if the job requires training other staff members about mental health services (Who's who in mental health?). In some cases, coordinators will be required to work with immigrant and low-income families, and for this reason it is important for the coordinators to understand their specific challenges and strengths in order to provide the optimal assistance (Working in Mental Health). Mental Health Coordinators are not only effective team members, but also have the ability to work in an environment with minimum supervision. Most job positions require knowledge of language other than English, and bilingualism, proficiency in both English and French, is an important asset (Working in Mental Health).

Relevance of Psychology undergraduate degree
There are many elements from the undergraduate training in Psychology that are relevant to the job responsibilities of a coordinator within the mental health field. Aside from the transferable skills that many Psychology students acquire in their studies, the particular knowledge of research methods and abnormal behavior are deemed to be especially necessary for a Mental Health Coordinator. In many instances, the coordinators are the first point of contact for people requiring mental health service (Who's who in mental health?) and for this reason, an excellent knowledge about mental illness is necessary to ensure the best service and referral. Furthermore, mental health coordinators have many administrative duties such as coordinating research projects and thus good training in statistics and research methods is imperative (Mental Health Care Coordinator).
Salary potential
The average salary of a Health Coordinator is around $53,728 and it may range between $47,000 to $60,000 in some instances even higher depending on education, experience and type of responsibilities (Salary: Coordinator, Health Care Services)

Job outlook
A study conducted by Stewart et al. (2012) demonstrated that mental health coordinators could play an important role towards better clinical outcomes, better service delivery and satisfaction among mental health patients. As mental health awareness continues to grow, more actions are taken by different institutions to ensure better quality and access to mental health services. This suggests that the job opportunities for mental health professionals, including Mental Health Coordinators, will likely see an increase in Canada.

To apply
To become a Mental Health Coordinator, one needs to first gain several years of experience with mental health and job postings are most often posted internally within the specific mental health organization, such as hospital or institution (Mental Health Care Coordinator). If one is interested in a career as a Mental Health Coordinator, they should first aim towards volunteering or obtaining an internship within a mental health institution or organization and then apply when a new opening is announced by their supervisor.

To know more
For more information on what a Mental Health Coordinator does, you may visit the following link: http://www.wisegeek.com/what-does-a-mental-health-coordinator-do.htm#
References

Mental Health Care Coordinator - Community Services, Housing, and Community Development.


Salary: Coordinator, Health Care Services. (n.d.).

http://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/coordinator-health-care-services-salary-SRCH_K00,32.htm


http://www.wisegeek.com/what-does-a-mental-health-coordinator-do.htm#


Working in Mental Health - Career Paths. (n.d.).

http://www.workinginmentalhealth.ca/forms/career.aspx