Lead Therapist

Outpatient Counseling Services | Job Description | Working Draft

Department	Clinical Services – Outpatient Counseling
Reports To	Clinical Director
Key Collaboration	Medical Director, Executive Director, APRN, Chief Operating Officer, Utilization Review, and clinical team
Classification	Full-time, salaried direct-service clinical position
Typical Schedule	Monday-Friday, generally 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.; adjusted as needed to support outpatient counseling group schedules; Saturday rotation and flexible availability during startup
Compensation	Starting salary TBD. Salaried and exempt from overtime; expected to perform at least 40 hours of job-related duties per week
Direct Reports	None
Departmental Oversight	None. Serves as the lead clinician for outpatient direct services

About Valor Ridge Health

Valor Ridge Health is the military specialization program of Teen Challenge Adventure Ranch (TCAR), a Christ-centered nonprofit that helps adolescents overcome substance use disorders, mental health challenges, and behavioral struggles through clinical care, spiritual formation, and experiential therapies. Building on the success of that program, TCAR is launching Valor Ridge Health in Branson West, Missouri, to serve active-duty military members and veterans facing addiction, trauma, depression, anxiety, and related life-controlling issues.

Valor Ridge Health is launching in phases. The first phase is Outpatient Counseling Services for active-duty military members, veterans, and first responders. First responders are served through the outpatient service only. A Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) and short-term residential treatment will follow. Across its levels of care, the program incorporates:

- Evidence-based clinical treatment
- Trauma-informed care
- Christ-centered counseling and discipleship
- Adventure-based therapy
- Fitness and recreational activities
- Brotherhood and peer support
- Ongoing aftercare support services

Valor Ridge Health promotes a culture of honor, brotherhood, accountability, and restoration for those who serve our nation.

Position Summary

The Lead Therapist is the primary clinician for Valor Ridge Health Outpatient Counseling Services, which serves active-duty military members, veterans, and first responders. This is a direct-service clinical role focused on assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, individual and group therapy, crisis response, and clinical documentation. The Lead Therapist helps ensure that mental health treatment, substance use disorder services, supervised therapeutic activities, documentation, risk response, and interdisciplinary care are coordinated, ethical, clinically appropriate, responsive to military and first responder culture, and consistent with organizational mission, payer expectations, accreditation standards, and applicable law.

At launch, the Lead Therapist is the primary therapist for the outpatient service, carries the full direct-service caseload, and helps build the clinical program under the direction of the Clinical Director, or the Executive Director until a Clinical Director is in place. The initial team includes the Executive Director, Medical Director, APRN, Utilization Review, Chief Operating Officer, administrative support, and the billing team. There is no nursing or case management staff at launch. Medical direction remains with the Medical Director and APRN.

As census grows, Valor Ridge Health anticipates adding Primary Therapist positions. The Lead Therapist will serve as the senior clinician among outpatient therapists, modeling clinical standards and serving as a first point of contact for clinical questions, but does not hold supervisory authority over other staff. This description addresses outpatient services and will be revised as PHP and residential services are implemented.

Essential Responsibilities

Direct Clinical Services

- Serve as the primary therapist for outpatient counseling clients, carrying the full outpatient caseload at launch and a full caseload as additional therapists are added.
- Provide individual therapy and clinically indicated family therapy or family sessions.
- Provide evidence-based trauma treatment, including Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART), as clinically indicated and within training and scope.
- Provide crisis sessions, stabilization, post-incident follow-up, transition sessions, and discharge sessions as clinically indicated.
- Facilitate the core outpatient counseling group schedule, with group-hour expectations adjusted as census and staffing change.
- Complete intake, biopsychosocial, diagnostic, suicide-risk, and discharge assessments; establish diagnoses; and develop and update individualized, person-centered treatment plans with specific, measurable goals that reflect each client's strengths, needs, and preferences, along with safety plans.
- Lead clinically appropriate groups such as trauma stabilization, moral injury, emotional regulation, military identity and transition, first responder stress and critical-incident exposure, co-occurring disorders, family systems, crisis prevention, leadership, relationships, and other services within professional scope.
- Monitor caseload capacity and advise clinical leadership when an additional Primary Therapist is needed to maintain quality, access, and required service intensity.

Clinical Coordination and Decision Support

- Participate in multidisciplinary decisions concerning admission, continued stay, level-of-care placement, safety planning, emergency intervention, referral to a higher level of care, clinical discharge, and administrative discharge.
- Serve as a clinical escalation contact during regular operating hours and participate in after-hours clinical on-call coverage, escalating to clinical leadership, the Medical Director, or the APRN as appropriate.

- Serve as a first point of contact and clinical resource for other outpatient therapists as they are added, including consultation on complex, high-risk, co-occurring, trauma-related, military-connected, and first responder–connected cases.
- Maintain appropriate separation between clinical authority, medical authority, pastoral leadership, and administrative authority.

Outpatient Program Support

- Help design and launch outpatient counseling programming, group schedules, curricula, and client flow under the direction of clinical leadership.
- Apply established admission, level-of-care, continued-service, step-down, and discharge criteria consistent with medical necessity, ASAM criteria where applicable, TRICARE and other payer requirements, Missouri standards, and accreditation expectations, and recommend refinements based on clinical experience.
- Recommend step-down or referral to a higher level of care when clinically indicated, with coordinated transition planning.
- Support the intake and referral process with the Executive Director, Utilization Review, and community, military, and first responder referral partners, including timely screening, scheduling, and admission.
- Monitor attendance, engagement, and missed sessions, and complete appropriate outreach, re-engagement, and documentation when clients disengage from treatment.
- Provide clinical input to planning for the future PHP launch as requested.

Documentation and Compliance

- Complete required documentation within one business day unless a more restrictive standard applies.
- Ensure assessments, treatment plans, progress notes, continued-stay materials, and discharge documentation are complete, accurate, and support medical necessity.
- Collaborate with Utilization Review regarding authorization, medical necessity, treatment progress, continued stay, and discharge planning.
- Participate in chart audits and quality-improvement activities, and promptly correct identified documentation deficiencies.
- Participate in preparation for CARF, TRICARE, Missouri, and other regulatory or payer reviews, and report identified inconsistencies to clinical leadership.
- Deliver services within approved protocols and clearly distinguish licensed clinical treatment from supervised therapeutic activities and non-clinical or faith-based programming.
- Maintain ethical, legal, and professional standards, including professional boundaries and client confidentiality under HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2.

Risk Management and Emergency Response

- Assess and respond to suicidal ideation, self-harm, aggression, substance use, prolonged absence or loss of contact, significant deterioration, and other risk events, and report significant events according to policy.
- Coordinate emergency evaluation or higher-level-of-care recommendations with the APRN and other appropriate members of the multidisciplinary team.
- Follow approved safety and crisis policies and recommend improvements based on clinical experience.
- Ensure outpatient safety planning addresses the client's home and community environment, including crisis resources available between sessions and after hours.

Treatment Team and Collaboration

- Participate in weekly multidisciplinary treatment-team meetings with the APRN and clinical team.
- Participate in staff meetings, case reviews, required training, and ongoing professional development.
- Maintain effective collaboration with outside medical providers, emergency services, referral partners, military, VA, and first responder agency resources, including peer-support teams, and community resources, including clients' existing outside providers when appropriate releases are in place.

Qualifications

- Master's degree in counseling, social work, marriage and family therapy, psychology, or a related behavioral health discipline.
- Current independent Missouri mental health license in good standing, such as LPC, LCSW, LMFT, psychologist, or equivalent recognized credential.
- Two or more years of post-master's clinical experience with adults preferred.
- Experience with adult behavioral health, trauma-informed treatment, and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.
- Training or certification in Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) preferred, or willingness to complete ART training within an agreed timeframe.
- Ability to carry a full direct-service caseload while helping build the clinical program during startup.
- Experience with military, veteran, or first responder populations, and with outpatient, PHP, or residential treatment, strongly preferred.
- Knowledge of clinical documentation, risk management, treatment planning, utilization review, accreditation, and regulatory expectations.
- Maintain CPR/First Aid certification and complete crisis-intervention training at least every two years (training provided by the organization), along with other required training.
- At least 21 years of age.
- Valid driver's license and ability to meet organizational insurability requirements.
- Strong communication, judgment, conflict-resolution, technology, and interdisciplinary communication skills.

Faith and Mission Expectations

- Affirm and support Valor Ridge Health's Christian mission and statement of faith.
- Demonstrate mature Christian character, ethical leadership, and respect for client dignity and choice.
- Integrate faith into clinical work when clinically appropriate and desired by the client.
- Respect a client's right to decline explicitly religious participation and coordinate spiritual-care support when requested.
- Be prepared to lead a client to Christ when the client requests such guidance.

Role Boundaries and Other Expectations

Medical authority:
The Lead Therapist does not provide medical direction. Medical direction is provided by the Medical Director and APRN.

- This is a safety-sensitive position.
- Authority will be exercised within licensure, professional scope, organizational policy, and delegated decision rights.
- Major admission, continued-stay, level-of-care, emergency, and discharge decisions will use a multidisciplinary approach.
- This is a direct-service clinical position. It does not include supervisory authority or a promise of promotion. Any future leadership openings, including Clinical Director, are filled through Valor Ridge Health's normal selection process.
- As Valor Ridge Health adds therapists and launches PHP and residential services, duties may change and may include reasonable responsibilities not specifically listed when consistent with qualifications and program needs.

Benefits

- Mission-driven work serving military members, veterans, and first responders
- Opportunity to help build a new program from the ground up
- Competitive compensation
- Medical, dental, and vision insurance
- 403(b) retirement plan with employer match
- Generous PTO, including vacation and sick leave
- 75% of continuing education costs, up to $5,000 per year
- Annual CEU reimbursement up to $150
- License renewal fees reimbursed every two years
- Malpractice insurance reimbursed every two years, up to $150
- Clinical supervision and consultation support as applicable
- Christ-centered organizational culture, including optional chapel services, staff devotionals, and faith-based community events

Acknowledgment

Lead Therapist Signature	Date
Executive Director Signature	Date
Printed Name	Effective Date