



## Executive Summary for Education Partners

### *Behavioral Health Support Specialist (BHSS) Clinical Training Program*

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### Definition of a BHSS

The new workforce role of Behavioral Health Support Specialist was designed to alleviate problems in access to behavioral healthcare for common mental and behavioral health conditions such as depression and anxiety. The BHSS is a bachelor level provider type who is trained to provide culturally responsive, evidence-informed treatment strategies under supervision. BHSSs are part of a workforce pipeline situated between non-specialists such as behavioral health technicians and peer support specialists, and graduate level provider types, such as clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists. BHSSs may be credentialed and employed across a variety of settings where behavioral health service delivery occurs including, but not limited to crisis services, integrated care, and specialty mental health services.

### Education and Training

Four-year institutions offering bachelor's degrees in psychology, social work, behavioral healthcare or related degree programs may host a BHSS certificate or specialization. Programs may conduct a self-study using the BHSS Implementation Guide to determine if their program is a good candidate to prepare students with applied skills. It is expected that programs opting to adopt the BHSS Clinical Training Program will make necessary curricular changes to align with the BHSS competency framework. Likely, many programs align at least partially with many of the BHSS competencies. Needed changes may include the addition of learning objectives to existing courses, adding one or two elective courses, and adding or modifying a practicum experience.

### UW BHSS Clinical Training Program Role

The UW BHSS Clinical Training Program serves as a catalyst for statewide implementation of curriculum by consulting on the self-study process, providing academic resources designed to supplement new learning objectives or courses, and helping to shape common core training that helps create a professional identity for the BHSS. Additionally, the UW BHSS staff consult with the Department of Health and the Health Care Authority on rule making for SB 5189 and service recovery policy respectively.

### Employment

Employment of the BHSS may begin in 2025 when the credential becomes available to the public. It is expected that the BHSS will have opportunities in settings that are under-resourced for mental and behavioral healthcare. To learn more, please contact [bhsswa@uw.edu](mailto:bhsswa@uw.edu).