

## **Professional profile (of an) adventure therapist**

Adventure therapy is an experience- and action-oriented approach. It uses experience- and nature-based methods to achieve positive effects in healing, recovery and development processes.

Adventure therapy thereby addresses in a holistic way cognitive-intellectual, practical-actional as well as affective-emotional levels in processes of prevention and bio-psycho-social recovery. It can take place in different fields of work, either as a specialised therapy or as a complementary therapeutic procedure, both on an outpatient basis or in an inpatient setting.

### **Tasks and activities**

Adventure therapists design experience-, adventure- and action-oriented settings that initiate or facilitate developmental and self-healing processes.

Anamnesis and diagnostics are necessary for the adventure therapy process. Based on this, objectives for the intervention are developed and agreed with the client. This includes formulating a therapy goal and providing information about the framework. The planning and implementation of the intervention are then orientated towards the therapy goals. The therapy process and goals are regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed. A transfer into the client's everyday life settings is initiated.

The quality of the therapeutic process is defined in particular by a needs-based selection of methods and tools, support for the client during their process, and needs-based interventions. If necessary, this also includes crisis intervention.

For quality assurance, adventure therapists conduct self-reflection and evaluate the process. In doing so, they fulfill their duty of documentation.

Adventure therapists create a therapeutic relationship with their clients in order to build trust for cooperation and also to develop an understanding for the subjective reality of the clients.

They are responsible for planning, designing, implementing and evaluating adventure therapy processes, taking into account physical and psychological safety. If necessary, they work in multi-professional teams and interdisciplinary.

Adventure therapists create opportunities for experiences in natural spaces that contain a potential for challenge and development, which is attuned to the subjective emotional world of the client.

Adventure therapists include socio-cultural and ecological issues into their work. This implies that they assess and weigh off therapeutic methods with regards to their negative impact on nature versus the expected therapeutic benefit. Their actions follow the ethical principles of environment and climate protection.

### **Therapy environments and activities**

Adventure therapy takes place predominantly in natural and near-natural spaces. However, therapeutic work is also carried out in urban settings. The choice of activities and therapy locations is made in response to individual needs, existing resources and possibilities, as well as the anamnesis and diagnostics.

The adventure therapeutic repertoire includes concepts and activities from experiential education, motor skills training, nature-based, resource-oriented and systemic approaches. This results in intersections with other forms of therapy. Diverse methods of reflection and promotion of transfer support sustainable therapeutic impact.

In this sense, adventure therapy is characterised by process depth, relationship design and duration. Therefore, offers usually take place over a longer period of time and/or several days in a row. When implemented as complementary addition to other forms of therapy, they can further vary in time.

### **Fields of work and action**

The roles and tasks of an adventure therapist are dependent on the contexts and frameworks of the fields of work and action in which they operate (e.g. as a specialist therapist or a complementary therapist, depending on case responsibility).

The areas described below are typical fields of application for adventure therapy.

In health promotion, adventure therapists conduct to prevention and rehabilitation. Examples include medical recovery, vocational social rehabilitation and reintegration.

In the field of psychotherapy and psychiatry, adventure therapists work as complementary specialized therapists, for example, in addiction and trauma therapy.

As part of therapies such as *occupational, speech and physiotherapy*, adventure therapists work as a supplement to the primary treatment focus – e.g., the promotion of psychomotor development and the treatment of speech development disorders.

Adventure therapists accompany therapy processes in the field of *child, youth and family welfare* to treat psychosocial indications. They promote mental health, self-determination, personal responsibility and social participation.

In the area of *social therapy*, adventure therapeutic offers promote the treatment of physical, mental and psychosomatic illnesses, as well as to mitigate psychosocial crises or limitations. When working with persons with criminal records, they act towards in prevention and resocialization.

In the context of *sociotherapy*, adventure therapists support clients in taking up further therapies and medical aids.

Adventure therapy is also offered for persons *with disabilities*. Objectives include rehabilitation, social participation and the promotion of practical life skills.

Adventure therapists can furthermore be active in the areas of *counseling, supervision and coaching*.

### **Qualifications and training**

Adventure therapists have acquired competencies in experiential education and adventure therapy (according to the standards of the *Bundesverband Individual- und Erlebnispädagogik e.V., be*).

A typical access route for this is an experiential education qualification (corresponding to the title 'Erlebnispädagoge be®') in combination with an adventure therapy qualification.

Adventure therapy competencies include:

- Knowledge and skills regarding clinical disorders, abnormalities and dysfunctional behaviors, and their treatment options, including their possible impacts during adventure therapy interventions.
- Knowledge of theoretical and practical therapeutic concepts
- A professional attitude related to the professional field. This includes therapeutic self-experience in nature, self-reflection and the ability to resonate.
- Process design and process support for individuals and groups within the therapeutic relationship, including the therapeutic atmosphere. This includes knowledge, skills and competencies for interdisciplinary cooperation and collaboration; risk and safety management; and a knowledge and understanding of relevant legal matters.
- The technical, activity-specific, nature and experiential education qualifications that are required for safe facilitation and process guidance.

Adventure therapists have acquired stability, stress resilience and professional reflection skills and can draw on professional as well as life experience. The minimum age is set at 25 years.