

Job Description



Job Title:	Peer Support Specialist
Department:	Housing Services
Reports To:	PSH Program Manager
FLSA Status:	Non-Exempt, Hourly, Full-Time or Part-Time

Caritas of Austin Values

Respect

We believe in the inherent dignity of all people, and we celebrate every person's uniqueness and contributions to our work.

Equity

We are committed to fairness and impartiality in the way we provide services and opportunities for service.

Commitment

We are resolute in our mission to build wellbeing and end homelessness for the people we serve.

Excellence

We have high standards for every aspect of our work, continuously raising the bar to provide the best experience and outcomes for everyone we serve.

Innovation

We are leaders in meeting the most pressing needs of the Austin community, continually learning and improving to affect positive change.

Position Summary

The Peer Support Specialist has experience as a recipient of mental health services for severe and persistent mental illness and is willing to use and share his or her personal practical experience, knowledge, and first-hand insight to benefit the team and its clients. The peer specialist functions as a fully integrated team member to provide expertise about the recovery process, symptom management, and the persistence required by clients to have a satisfying life. Collaborates to promote team culture that recognizes, understands, and respects each client's point of view, experiences, and preferences. Responsible to maximize client choice, self-determination, and decision making in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of treatment, rehabilitation and support services.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

1. Provides peer counseling and support, drawing on common experiences as a peer, to validate clients' experiences and to provide guidance and encouragement to clients to take responsibility and actively participate in their own recovery.
2. Serve as a mentor to clients to promote hope and empowerment.
3. Act as an interpreter to non-mental health consumer team members to assist them in better understanding each clients' unique and subjective experience and perceptions.
4. Provide expertise and consultation from a mental health consumer perspective to the entire team concerning clients' experiences on symptoms of mental illness, the

Essential Duties and Responsibilities (cont.) effects and side-effects of medications, clients' responses to an opinions of treatment and clients' experiences of recovery.

5. Help clients identify, understand, and combat stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness and develop strategies to reduce self-stigma.
6. Help other team members identify and understand culture-wide stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness and develop strategies to eliminate sigma within a team.
7. Increase awareness of and support client participation in consumer self-help programs and consumer advocacy organizations that promote recovery.
8. Serve as a liaison between the team and consumer-run programs such as self-help groups and drop-in centers.
9. Assist in the provision of ongoing assessment of clients' mental illness symptoms and client's response to treatment. Suggest appropriate changes in treatment plans to ensure that immediate and appropriate interventions are provided in response to changes in clients' mental status or behavior which puts clients at risk (e.g., suicidality)
10. Provide ongoing assessment, problem-solving, side0by-side services, skills teaching, support (prompts, assignments, encouragement), and environmental adaptations to assist clients with activities of daily living.
11. Help clients to access reliable transportation.
12. Assist and support clients to have and effectively use a personal primary care physician, dentist, and other medical specialists as required.
13. Provide side-by-side support, coaching, and encouragement to help clients socialize (going with a client to community activities, including, activities offered by consumer-run peer support organizations).
14. Assist clients to plan and carry out leisure time activities on evenings, weekends, and holidays.
15. Facilitate discussion and training in peer groups, as determined with the case management team.
16. Monitor and document participation, progress, referrals, and services provided to participant.
17. Attend agency, community, and supervisory meetings as needed.
18. Attend in-service trainings and outside conferences/workshops, as requested by the Program Manager.
19. Complete paperwork and data reports as requested by the Program Manager.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Complies with all applicable training requirements.
- Complies with all company safety, personnel and operational policies and procedures.
- Complies with work schedule to ensure effective operations of Agency programs.
- Contributes positively as a member of a productive and cooperative team.
- Performs other duties as necessary to fulfill the Caritas

Qualifications

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- College degree in a human services field, or in another area, have high school diploma, or have at least two years of paid or volunteer work experience with adults with severe and persistent mental illness.
- Preferred: Certification as a Peer Support Specialist in either mental health or substance abuse or; will also accept LCDC or equivalent qualification.
- Knowledge of 12-step programs for substance abuse.
- Experience or education with human services and homelessness

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Must be proficient with data management and information systems and have basic knowledge of Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Must be sensitive to and respect cultural diversity amongst clients, staff, and volunteers and able to work with diverse racial, ethnic, and economic groups.
- Flexible work schedule including evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays.
- Ability to set appropriate limits, work under deadlines, and multi-task.
- Ability to organize, prioritize, self-motivate, and deliver results.
- Excellent communication and listening skills.
- Possess strong work ethics.
- Successfully pass Law Enforcement background screening.
- Valid Texas driver's license, ability to drive and have reliable transportation.
- Mission-driven attitude supplemented with integrity and passion.
- Adherence to the highest ethical standards, personally, and professionally.
- Openness and willingness to receive feedback and suggestions from superiors and others, and to learn new skills to improve job performance,

ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Basic knowledge of the resources in the community available for the clients with serious and persistent mental illness and homelessness.
- Have basic knowledge of severe and persistent mental illness and substance abuse.
- Ability to form partnerships in the community and seek out community resources.
- Strong oral and written communications.
- Strong organizational, time management, and data management skills.
- Proven ability to work effectively both individually and as a part of a team.
- Ability to multi-task and problem solve under pressure.
- Ability to provide positive customer service to challenging populations.

Competencies

Job Knowledge/Technical Knowledge: Demonstrates a sound working knowledge of current role and the technical systems, applications and equipment used in performing this role, and understands the impact this role has on other business functions within the organization

Communication: The ability to write and speak effectively using appropriate convention based on the situation; actively listens to others, asks questions to verify understanding, and uses tact and consideration when delivering feedback to others

Organization: Uses time efficiently by prioritizing and planning work activities

Integrity and Respect: Demonstrates upmost level of integrity in all instances, and shows respect towards others and towards company principles

Judgment: Demonstrates ability to make independent and sound decisions in all situations

Teamwork: Shares key information with others involved in a project or effort, works in harmony to accomplish objectives, responds with enthusiasm to directives, and shows support for departmental and organizational decisions

Quality: Sets high standards and measures of excellence to ensure quality assurance in every aspect of work performed

Accountability: Takes personal responsibility and ownership for adhering to all company policies and procedures while also completing work timely and in accordance with performance expectations

Customer Service: The ability to demonstrate a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction.

Interpersonal Communication: Writes and speaks effectively based on the psychological, relational, situation, environmental and cultural dynamics within the situation

Manages Change: Demonstrates effectiveness and flexibility with changing environments, responsibilities, tasks, and people

Attention to Detail: Follows detailed procedures to ensure accuracy in the entry and reporting of data.

Problem Solving: Identifies and resolves issues timely by gathering and analyzing information skillfully

Physical Demands

- Substantial movements (motion) of the wrist, hands, and/or fingers in a repetitive manner
- Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally to lift, carry, pull, or otherwise move objects
- Bending, stooping and reaching several times through a shift.
- Must be able to see clearly with or without corrected vision.
- Ability to drive to and from locations, this may involve sitting for extended periods of time.

- Manual dexterity sufficient to reach/handle items and work with the fingers

- Close vision (clear vision at 20 inches or less); distance vision (clear vision at 20 feet or more); color vision (ability to identify and distinguish colors)

Work Environment

- Well-lighted, heated and/or air-conditioned indoor office setting with adequate ventilation
- Moderate noise (examples: business office with computers and printers)

Work Hours/Schedule

- Regular – Normal work hours and days assigned based on a work week of 40 hours, no overtime. Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm. Board Meeting days may be longer; will adjust schedule to work less hours on a different day
- May be required to assist Development Department with Special Events and Community Advisory Board activities outside of normal business hours.