



Mental Health Advocate Job Description

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) is a drop-in centre and emergency night shelter offering a wide variety of services and programs to a diverse community of women and children living in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

The Mental Health Advocate is responsible for providing advocacy and assisted referral services to women with mental health concerns who live and/or work in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver primarily in the areas of BC Benefits and income assistance, Residential Tenancy, Housing, and the Ministry for Children and Families. Reporting directly to the Specialized Services Program Manager, the Mental Health Advocate will work in collaboration with other DEWC staff to promote integrated services to women. She will work from a feminist perspective and within an anti-oppression framework.

Primary Responsibilities:

Advocacy: Provides information, referral, accompaniment, and advocacy to women in the areas of Income Assistance, Residential Tenancy, Housing, and Ministry for Children and Families. Supports women to obtain housing including emergency housing.

General Advocacy: Advocates for reform on behalf of women living in the downtown eastside by making submissions to government and other agencies. Participate in political lobbying efforts concerning relevant issues such as poverty, housing, welfare, and MCFD.

Referral: Assist women through the referral process to internal and external services such as counseling, victim's assistance, housing, legal aid, education, etc. to ensure a successful transfer of service.

Outreach and Liaison: Develops and maintains links with other community agencies that work in the areas of women, poverty, and housing by attending relevant meetings and community events.

Education and Programming: Develops and facilitates educational workshops and programming related to advocacy issues.

Resources and Administration: Develops and maintains resource files on related advocacy issues. Maintain statistics and activity reports as per the funders reporting requirements. Submit quarterly activity reports to management team.

Required Qualifications:

- Minimum 2 years related experience working with low-income women, asset to have experience in a women serving or inner city drop-in environment
- Must have a strong working knowledge and analysis of the issues impacting women in the DTES, including violence against women, mental health, homelessness, and addictions
- Candidate must work from strong feminist analysis and within an anti-oppression framework
- Must have a strong working knowledge of and ability to interpret the BC Benefits Act & Regulations & Residential Tenancy Act and the Child Family and Community Services Act
- Excellent writing and research skills including the ability to write tribunal/arbitration submissions
- Understanding of and practices a trauma informed care response when working with women
- Efficient organizational skills including record keeping, scheduling, and problem-solving abilities

- Demonstrated computer and IT aptitude
- Experience providing outreach and accompaniment
- Skilled in program facilitation and development as well as working in partnerships with allied service providers
- Strong conflict resolution skills and practice
- Demonstrated crises intervention training and experience
- Experience providing assisted referral as well as familiarity with support services, agencies and community resources in the Downtown Eastside
- Excellent communication skills required, including the ability to work in a respectful and cooperative manner with co-workers, and centre members
- Ability to work within a chaotic environment and with a diverse community of women
- A First Aid certificate is required
- Candidate must undergo a criminal record check
- Women with addiction issues need to be at least 2 years clean and sober

Reporting to: Specialized Services Program Manager