



Mental Health Advocate Job Description

About DEWC

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) exists to support and empower women and children, living in extreme poverty in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, who are particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation, injustice and injury. Through low barrier Drop-In Centers and Emergency Shelters, DEWC provides basic need services, programs, and specialized supports to over 700 women and children daily to help them survive the conditions that surround them.

Job Summary

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 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.

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

- Provide information, referral, accompaniment, and advocacy to women in the areas of Income Assistance, Residential Tenancy, Housing, and Ministry for Children and Families
- Support women to obtain housing including emergency housing
- Advocate for reform on behalf of women living in the downtown eastside by making submissions to government and other agencies
- Assist women through the referral process to internal and external services such as counseling, victim's assistance, housing, legal aid, education, etc. ensuring a successful transfer of service
- Develop and maintain links with other community agencies that work in the areas of poverty, and housing by attending relevant meetings and community events
- Develop and facilitate educational workshops and programming related to advocacy issues
- Maintain resource files on related advocacy issues
- Maintain statistics and activity reports as per the funders reporting requirements
- Act as an ambassador for DEWC by representing and modelling DEWC mission and values
- Work collaboratively with other DEWC programs and service providing support and coverage were needed, including the Drop In and/or Shelter
- Other related duties not specified that may be assigned from time to time

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 gender based violence, 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, volunteers, and center members
- Ability to work within a chaotic environment and with a diverse community of women
- A First Aid certificate and NVCI is required
- Candidate must undergo a criminal record check
- Women with addiction issues need to be at least 2 years clean and sober
- Hourly position that requires some work outside of normal business hours to undertake position responsibilities, meet deadlines, and ensure delivery of high-quality programs and services

Reporting to: Specialized Services Manager

Organizational Status

The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre operates on the unceded & ancestral Musqueam, Squamish & Tsleil-Waututh Territories (*xʷməθkʷəy̓əm*, *Skwxwú7mesh*, and *səlílwətaʔ*), to provide a safe, non-judgmental environment for women from all walks of life, who live and/or work in the Downtown Eastside. To achieve this goal, the Centre provides supportive surroundings with meals, counseling, advocacy and programs which nurture and empower members. The Downtown Eastside (DTES) as a neighbourhood is well-known within Vancouver and even across Canada for its disproportionate levels of poverty and extreme marginalization. Home to populations made vulnerable including those who are homeless, mentally ill, and/or with addictions, it is also a place known for its creativity, community activism, and tenacity in the face of tremendous stigma.

DEWC staff are called to enhance connections and collaboration and promote an atmosphere of safety in all aspects of their work. DEWC acknowledges that our work environment is directly impacted by all forms of oppression and the impact of colonialism where staff will be witness to women's trauma and the consequences of injustice.