



Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services

Optimism Place Job Description

Position Title: Frontline Counsellor
Reports To: Residential Manager
Positions Managed: N/A

Salary Band: C
Date Last Modification: August 2023
Date Last Evaluation: August 2023

JOB SUMMARY

The Frontline Counsellor is responsible for the delivery of 24/7 confidential, non-judgmental immediate, and initial responses to women in crisis, including answering the crisis line, responding to walk-in clients, and engaging in a counselling relationship with women and children residing in the secure shelter. Individuals connecting with counsellors could include victims of woman abuse, sexual assault, workplace harassment, homelessness, substance use, and mental health. Acts as an ambassador and role model for the agency at all times.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

Commitment to Organizational Goals and Values

Acts and models behaviours aligned with the Mission, Goals, and Values of the organization to support women and their children to live free of abuse by providing shelter and confidential, empathetic, non-judgmental, and empowering services. Is committed to ending the cycle of abuse and violence by raising awareness through prevention, intervention, education, and advocacy.

Organizational Service / Support

Answers calls and provides prompt response and service to callers and walk-in clients. Performs assessments of potential clients' eligibility for Optimism Place programs and actively engages in shelter diversion. May be required to refer to and/or coordinate with other shelters and 24/7 service providers to create an appropriate immediate and/or individualized response for each client. In the event that the crisis line or walk-in program is deemed the most appropriate support, provides counselling in person, over the phone, or other virtual methods. In the event of situations outside the scope of experience and training, after 'typical' business hours, connects with On-Call Designate who is available for guidance, consultation, and support. Documents information from calls, assessments, steps taken, and, if required, referrals to alternative services are provided.



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In the event that the residential program is deemed the most appropriate support, completes intakes and orients women and children to become comfortable in the shelter environment. Works with clients to identify and meet their daily physical, emotional, financial, and scheduling needs. Provides support through individual and group counselling and completing safety planning, case planning, crisis management, harm reduction, and risk assessments. Engages in housing-focused, action-oriented case planning. Facilitates the gathering of information for housing and income applications and supports in market rent housing searches. Assists women in the transition from residential support to internal and external community-based programs, including advocacy, referrals, and warm transfers, as appropriate.

Team Membership

Is a positive, approachable, respectful, and committed member of the Optimism Place team. Demonstrates personal excellence in technical competence, bringing knowledge, expertise, and personal credibility to immediate colleagues, contributing to collaborative team decisions and processes. Proactively develops understanding and shares information. Makes and lives up to commitments and follows up with team members to ensure satisfaction of commitments made to others.

JOB SPECIFIC ACCOUNTABILITIES

Administrative Responsibility

Prepares reports and records on clients who use programs and receive services.

Facilities, Equipment, and Materials

Helps to maintain the shelter in good order and cleanliness.

Legislative Compliance

Adheres to all required legislation and standards.

People Leadership

May provide assistance with onboarding of new staff and ongoing supervision of volunteers and placement students.

JOB KNOWLEDGE

Education & Experience:

- College diploma from a registered institution in a Social Service Worker or comparable program. BSW or BA in Social Work would be an asset.
- Minimum of six (6) months of related experience in the field of violence against women services, sexual assault services, residential services, or housing and homelessness services. Volunteer or placement student experience is welcomed.



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Knowledge & Skills:

- Demonstrated knowledge and skills in the following areas:
 - De-escalation and crisis response
 - Individualized engagement and assessment of clients
 - Risk assessment and safety planning
 - Individual and group counselling
 - Housing-focused case planning
 - Goal setting and case management
 - Problem-solving
 - Mediation
 - Advocacy
 - Recovery orientation
 - Non-judgemental and active listening skills
 - Trauma-informed approach
 - Understanding of housing and homelessness tools and systems is an asset
- Demonstrated commitment to the women's anti-violence movement.
- Continued commitment to ongoing education and professional development, keeping up with current trends and research in the Violence Against Women field and its intersection with homelessness, harm reduction, and mental health.
- Proven ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing, including the ability to generate professional documentation (note-taking, preparing letters, and reports).
- Understanding and welcoming of diversity and equity.
- Computer literacy in various applications (e-mail, word processing).
- Ability to operate with independence and as part of a team.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- Position provides 24/7 support; therefore, ability and willingness to work day, afternoon and midnight shifts, any day of the week is required.
- At times, the individual in this role may be working alone in a safe environment; however, may encounter high-risk situations.
- Requirement for training in CPR/first aid certification upon hiring.

The above job description reflects the major aspects of the job and is not to be construed as a detailed description of all work requirements inherent in the job. All positions may be assigned other job-related duties as required from time to time.