

# Outreach Worker – Supportive Housing

Effective: 10 October 2018

Revised:

## SUMMARY

Provides outreach support to existing and potential clients of the designated Supportive Housing services.

Identifies and assesses vulnerable individuals who are homeless and works with them to achieve long term housing stability through the designated Supportive Housing service or elsewhere in the community.

Builds relationships with health and community service providers and assists clients to connect with them.

Builds and maintains relationships with landlords and assists clients to understand and practice good tenant behaviour.

## QUALIFICATIONS

### *Education and Experience*

1. A degree in social services or an equivalent combination of education and experience;
2. Minimum of 2 years' experience providing outreach and case planning services to individuals who are homeless, including the maintenance of case files in a paper or electronic format;
3. Versed in the use of the case planning software;
4. First aid: "Emergency First Aid – Community Care" or higher;
5. Foodsafe;
6. Managing Hostile Interactions (offered by HSABC), Non-violent Crisis Intervention, or similar training a significant asset;
7. Listening and feedback training (Motivational Interviewing, Non-violent Communication) a significant asset
8. Suicide prevention training a significant asset;
9. Courses in women's studies and women's health an asset.

### *Skills and Knowledge*

#### INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

1. Remains calm when faced with challenging or disruptive behaviour;
2. Maintains empathy, kindness, and a friendly disposition;
3. Maintains healthy personal and professional boundaries (see ICCS code of ethics);
4. Performs effective conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques;
5. Possesses both assertiveness and tact when offering cues and reminders;
6. Notices behaviour, body language, verbal and non-verbal cues that suggest decompensation, drug use, and mental or emotional decline;
7. Speaks frankly and sensitively about harm reduction and sexual health and safety;
8. Resists offering counselling, therapy, and advice;
9. Works as a member of a team and senses and contributes to the programs therapeutic culture;

10. Practices self-care.

## TASK RELATED SKILLS

1. Proficient at maintaining a clean and well-ordered environment;
2. Follows protocols and procedures consistently and faithfully, remembering the spirit and intention behind them;
3. Proficient at time management, including the ability to prioritize and multitask;
4. Demonstrates professionalism, including the understanding and practice of professional ethics;
5. Adapts to changes in the work environment, including changes in technology and best practices;
6. Learns and acquires new skills to maintain competency on the job, including skills related to office tasks, client care, and professional development.

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Says “no” politely but firmly to clients when necessary;
2. Adept at objective descriptions, especially regarding client behaviour and behavioural changes;
3. Communicates well verbally and in writing and masters the required technology and applications;
4. Adept at providing objective descriptions of changes in client’s skills, functioning, behaviour and emotional state;
5. Able to consistently follow guidelines for documentation, such as those related to a daily log, client binders, and files;
6. Proficient at typing and interacting with computers to enter data on a daily basis.

## KNOWLEDGE

1. Understands outcome-based reporting;
2. Understands the role and uses of anecdotal, evidence based, and scientific information;
3. Familiar with the full spectrum of housing options in Nanaimo, and the way people can move through the various options (shelter, transitional, supportive) within and outside the Samaritan House Integrated Housing Network;
4. Understands the “Housing First” model and the concept of “barriers,” to housing;
5. Knowledgeable about technologies used to collect and maintain accurate data and other common office tasks;
6. Possesses knowledge of theories, principles, and practices in the field of mental health and addiction services;
7. Understands the needs of individuals with concurrent disorders;
8. Is familiar with common health issues and is sensitive to cultural and ethnic taboos and teachings related to gender;
9. Maintains awareness of “street culture” and the strategies used by street entrenched individuals to obtain services;
10. Knowledgeable of community resources;
11. Understands the defined role, scope, and limitations of an Outreach Worker in the wider spectrum of social services.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

1. Required to work independently with a case load of clients who exhibit a wide range of behaviours and experience emotional distress;
2. Required to possess and maintain a moderate level of physical fitness;
3. Required to fill out and submit the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General’s “Criminal Records Review Program Consent to a CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK” form #PSSG10-031 (for working with children and/or vulnerable adults) prior to training or working a shift;
4. Required to understand the philosophy of ICCS and adhere to and reflect the Society’s code of ethics to the community;
5. Must sign and comply with the following:
  - i. ICCS confidentiality pledge
  - ii. ICCS professional conduct agreement
  - iii. ICCS acknowledgement of policies;
6. All Outreach Workers shall, as a condition of continued employment, become members of the Union, and maintain such membership, upon completion of thirty (30) days as an employee;
7. Required to have a class 5 drivers licence and a dependable vehicle, with a minimum of \$2 million liability ‘business class’ insurance, and to submit kilometrage reports for trips taken in the fulfilment of daily duties;

8. Required to provide a drivers abstract.
9. Required to drive clients to appointments, services, etc. and demonstrate skills in public places such as on the bus, in banks, and doctor's offices;
10. Required to use a client-centred and strength-based approach to meet people where they are at.

## DUTIES

### WITH CONSENT

1. Builds relationships with potential and existing clients;
2. Assists clients to find safe affordable housing;
3. Assists clients to access government ministries and programs, community resources, food banks, and similar services;
4. Performs financial reviews to help establish eligibility and apply for a variety of financial assistance;
5. Performs assessments of needs, strengths, abilities and vulnerabilities;
6. Refers clients to Island Health when clinical assessment is required;
7. Creates a case plan with client that include sufficient supports to enable them to remain housed;
8. Regularly checks client's rooms, apartments, and living spaces to ensure cleanliness, safety, security, and tidiness;
9. Confidentially gathers insight and information about the client's circumstances, problems, and issues;
10. Uses motivational interviewing and related techniques to continually help clients:
  - a. clarify and communicate their goals, challenges, and needs,
  - b. uncover concerns, fears, and other emotions related to goals and the tasks required to meet them,
  - c. explore options for personal development that will empower each person to realize and develop their potential,
  - d. debrief and assess their experiences,
  - e. motivate continual effort through objective validation;
11. When clients require more direct involvement:
  - a. mentor or coach clients on ways to be a good tenant or room-mate,
  - b. demonstrate and teach methods of cleaning, grooming, organization, and tidiness,
  - c. aid with tasks such as housing searches and applications,
  - d. communicates on their behalf with landlords, ministry workers, and case managers;
  - e. Coordinates client moves, storage, clean-up, damage repairs, and painting, within approved budgeted amounts;
12. Provides clear relevant information including information about services offered in the community;

### CASE PLANNING AND DOCUMENTATION

1. Identifies objective and subjective markers of client's mental health and general wellbeing;<sup>i</sup>
2. Observes, documents, and reports client's behaviours and health;
3. Maintains client case plans and files and coordinates documentation with other shelter staff;
4. Ensures case plans meet the outcome requirements of ICCS and BC Housing;
5. Ensures case plan data is entered in appropriate databases;
6. works to fulfil the output and outcome requirements of the program;
7. Updates and maintains designated databases, client files, and other formats;

### LANDLORD RELATIONS

1. Creates and maintains beneficial relationships with landlords;
2. Mediates between landlords and tenants when necessary;
3. Responds quickly to issues that might jeopardize a tenant's housing stability, such as damage to the unit, problems with hygiene, bed bugs, and hoarding

## ADDITIONAL DUTIES

4. Where possible introduces clients to house mates and staff members, providing orientation and instructions on pertinent rules, household duties, and services that are available;
5. Arranges for community members to provide clients with training and instruction on a variety of life skills;
6. Provides objective and professional debriefing and support for clients contemplating and planning difficult interactions with community services, clinical and medical appointments, government offices, and institutions.
7. Develops or appropriates assessment tools when no official ICCS tool exists;
8. Provides first-aid;
9. Adheres to the Society's standards, protocols, and policies;
10. Works according to the framework outline in the "Goals of Outreach Workers" document;
11. Other duties as assigned.

## *Working with Other Staff*

12. Meets regularly with other team members for a Case Conference.
13. Meets monthly with her supervisor and others to review Outputs and Outcomes, data collection, reporting, and anecdotal stories appropriate for communication to funders, members, and others.

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<sup>i</sup> See the Outreach Worker Documentation Guidelines for more details on regular evaluations and documentation.