

Job Description

Alcohol and Drug Counsellor

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

(The main reason for the position, in what context and what is the overall end result)

The Alcohol and Drug Counsellor is responsible for providing confidential addictions counselling, education and support to individuals, families and the community and for promoting health lifestyles and healthy choices.

SCOPE

(The way that the position contributes to and impacts on the organization)

The Drug and Alcohol Counsellor provides counselling and support to individuals and families experiencing addictions. This may include confidential individual, family or group counselling about the causes and effects of addictions support for families dealing with addictions and/or referrals to treatment for individuals requesting this opportunity.

The Drug and Alcohol Counsellor will also provide education to individuals and groups in the community with a focus on high-risk populations including youth and pregnant women. The Counsellor will be familiar with other services and resources in the community and work closely to provide information and support when required.

Failure to provide adequate service will have a significant impact on persons faced with addictions, their families and the community as a whole. Promoting a healthy, addictions free lifestyle will ensure the health and wellness of individuals, family members and the community.

RESPONSIBILITIES

(Major responsibilities and target accomplishments expected of the position including the typical problems encountered in carrying out the responsibilities.)

1. Provide drug and alcohol counselling and support to individuals, families and groups in the community

Main Activities

- provide counselling to individuals regarding the use and effects of alcohol and drugs
- provide counselling to pregnant women about the effects of drugs and alcohol on the fetus, as requested
- accept referrals from individuals, families and agencies in the community
- provide group counselling, as requested
- ensure legislation, standards and guidelines are being followed
- maintain strict confidentiality guidelines regarding all clients, conversations and referrals

2. Provide community education and support, as requested

Main Activities

- provide community education and support programs, as requested
- access and collect relevant information and resources
- distribute relevant information
- access funding for alcohol and drug programs
- make visits and presentations to various groups and organizations including school aged children
- access or development promotional materials and information

3. Provide Treatment Referrals, as required

Main Activities

- assist individuals to identify their need for treatment programs
- liase with treatment programs
- assist clients to meet all requirements
- access funding for treatment programs
- evaluate the effectiveness of treatment programs

4. Liase with community agencies and supports

Main Activities

- ensure ongoing contact with agencies including the Health Centre, RCMP and school
- participate on interagency working committees
- conduct case conferencing with other agencies
- provide education by presentations and workshops, as requested
- lobby agencies and organizations for programs and support

5. Manage and administer the alcohol and drug program

Main Activities

- maintain confidential written records of client interactions
- create and maintain current and accurate records of the numbers of clients served and the issues
- create and maintain notes about community contacts, presentations and workshops
- maintain notes about suggestions for future presentations and programs
- maintain a resource library of information about addictions, prevention, FAS/E and other related topics
- secure the confidentiality of all interactions and records
- conduct all tasks with regard to any and all relevant legislation, policies and procedures
- prepare and monitor the program budget
- approve expenditures within established signing authority

6. Perform other related duties as required

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

(The knowledge, skills and attitudes required for satisfactory job performance)

Knowledge

The incumbent must have proficient knowledge in the following areas:

- ✓ the causes and effects of drugs and alcohol, and addictions on individuals, families and communities
- ✓ needs and risk assessment
- ✓ substance abuse
- ✓ FAS/E
- ✓ family dynamics
- ✓ the impact of trauma
- ✓ have an understanding of crisis management and the ability to deal with life threatening situations including the prevention of suicide
- ✓ case management and confidential record keeping practices
- ✓ generally accepted individual, group and crisis counselling methods
- ✓ the requirements of treatment programs available to residents of the NWT
- ✓ funding requirements for treatment
- ✓ the culture and traditions of Northern Peoples from the community of Fort Liard and area
- ✓ all relevant legislation, policies and practices
- ✓ program management and delivery
- ✓ program evaluation

Skills

The incumbent must demonstrate the following skills:

- ✓ emergency response skills
- ✓ financial management skills
- ✓ strategic planning skills
- ✓ analytical and problem solving skills
- ✓ demonstrate good decision making in dealing with safety issues and with aggressive and/or intoxicated clients, if required
- ✓ mediation and negotiations skills
- ✓ conflict resolution skills
- ✓ effective counseling skills
- ✓ effective verbal and listening communications skills
- ✓ computer skills including the ability to operate spreadsheets
- and wordprocessing programs at a highly proficient level
- ✓ effective written communications skills including the ability to prepare reports and policies
- ✓ effective public relations and public speaking skills
- ✓ research and program development skills
- ✓ stress management skills
- ✓ time management skills
- ✓ be able to manage his/her own case files on an independent basis
- ✓ be able to work cooperatively as a part of a team

Personal Attributes

The incumbent must maintain strict confidentiality in performing the duties of Drug and Alcohol Counsellor. The incumbent must also demonstrate the following personal attributes:

- ✓ maintain standards of conduct
- ✓ be respectful
- ✓ possess cultural awareness and sensitivity
- ✓ be flexible
- ✓ demonstrate sound work ethics
- ✓ be consistent and fair

These skills, knowledge and attitudes would normally be gained through completion of a Drug and Alcohol Counsellor Diploma combined with related experience.

WORKING CONDITIONS

(The unavoidable, externally imposed conditions under which the work must be performed and which create hardship for the incumbent including the frequency and duration of occurrence of physical demands, environmental conditions, demands on one's senses and mental demands.)

Physical Demands

(The nature of physical effort leading to physical fatigue)

The Alcohol and Drug Counsellor will be required to move throughout the community and beyond, so must be comfortable driving and walking in all weather. The Counsellor must be able to prioritize situations and manage time, and may find that they are needed at irregular hours causing fatigue and stress. The Counsellor may experience stress and stress related symptoms due to interacting with clients in crisis. The Alcohol and Drug Counsellor may be exposed to illness and unsanitary conditions so must take care to protect their own health. They may also have to manage physically threatening clients and be prepared to be responsible for their own safety, and the safety of others.

Environmental Conditions

(The nature of adverse environmental conditions affecting the incumbent)

The Alcohol and Drug Counsellor may find their office to be busy with both scheduled and unscheduled clients. They may also have to enter client homes. The Counsellor must be ready to respond quickly and effectively to many types of situations, including crisis situations. The Counsellor must also have a confidential recording system that can be quickly secured if the Counsellor is interrupted. The Counsellor will also be invited to other environments that are stressful. Response to crisis situations can be unpredictable, emotional and threatening. The Counsellor must also be prepared to manage their own stress. The Alcohol and Drug Counsellor may experience isolation because members of the community may not always agree with the decisions the Counsellor makes, and the commitment to confidentiality may not allow opportunity to respond. The Counsellor may also experience isolation because there is no one else in the community doing the same kind of work..

Sensory Demands

(The nature of demands on the incumbent's senses)

The Drug and Alcohol Counsellor will be in contact with individuals and families in crisis who may be ill, using substances and/or not attentive to personal health and safety for themselves or their homes. The Counsellor may experience a number of unpleasant sensory demands associated with the use of alcohol and drugs, and the lack of personal care.

Mental Demands

(Conditions that may lead to mental or emotional fatigue)

The Alcohol and Drug Counsellor must monitor their own time and stress levels to ensure that they are able to effectively assist clients. Workers may find that they are continually interrupted, and may have to quickly assess situations to respond appropriately. The workload may be unpredictable and difficult to manage at times. The Counsellor may be placed in a situation where his/her own life may be threatened as well as life-threatening situations for others such as instances of attempted suicide.

