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JOB POSTING: PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST HOUSING FIRST ASSERTIVE COMMUNITY TREATMENT TEAM

As part of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Research Demonstration Project on homelessness and mental illness, RainCity Housing and Support Society will be developing a 'housing first' recovery-oriented Assertive Community Treatment team (ACT).

The ACT Team is based on the *Pathways to Housing* model from New York which incorporates 'housing first' approaches into the Assertive Community Treatment model. Housing First is a recovery-oriented supportive housing approach that operates on the principle that homeless people living with mental illness should be offered immediate access to rent supplements so they can live in the same kinds of permanent independent apartments that are typically available to people without mental illness, and that the rent supplements should be provided without requiring participation in psychiatric or substance use treatment. Self-determination, choice and harm reduction are at the centre of all considerations with respect to the provision of housing and support services.

The team's clients will be offered the supports and clinical services of a full service ACT team including medical, counselling and community supports. ACT is a well researched evidence-based transdisciplinary model that has a client-staff ratio of 10:1, with 80% of the work occurring in the community. Crisis support is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Program staff are closely involved in hospital admissions and discharges.

Position Summary:

The Peer Support Specialist (PSS) shares their own consumer knowledge and lived experience of mental illness / substance use to assist ACT clients to live successfully in the community. The PSS collaborates with the client and the ACT team to determine appropriate care to meet individual needs and situational requirements. Provides clients with education, counseling, support and advocacy from a lived experience perspective in order to assist clients in effectively obtaining service from the ACT team staff, external service providers and community resources. Provides a variety of supports to assist clients living with mental illness / substance use such as emotional and social supports, life skills assistance, information, resources, and demonstrations.

The PSS also performs Service Coordination duties for a group of approximately 10 ACT clients, maintaining oversight to ensure that client's self identified goals for recovery and community integration are supported by appropriate services and practices, consistent with the values of self-determination/choice and harm reduction. Working in collaboration with the other members of the ACT team, the PSS coordinates the provision of ACT services for clients served by the team members in their area of specialization. Services are provided in any environment including: the streets, shelters, hospitals, apartments, office.

Qualifications:

- A Diploma in community social services.
- Completed a Peer Support Training program or have equivalent training or experience.
- Two years of recent, related work experience with an emphasis on mental health, addictions, homelessness and/or social services, including one year of service planning experience.
- Past or current recipient of mental health services.
- Or an equivalent combination of education, training and experience.
- Current First Aid and CPR certification.
- Class 5 Drivers License preferred

For complete job description see www.raincityhousing.org



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We welcome applications from members of a visible minority, aboriginal persons, or people with lived experience of mental illness or addictions.

Compensation: \$20.11 per hour, 3 weeks vacation, employer paid benefits, pension plan

Apply: by noon August 25, 2009 with cover letter and resume to jobs@raincityhousing.org or fax 604-254-3703 attention Human Resources.

Start Date: Sep 1, 2009 or as soon as possible

End date: March 31, 2013. This is a Research Demonstration Project with a defined term. Unless otherwise agreed, the position expires at the end of the term without further obligation by either party. The parties may agree to negotiate an extension of the term and conditions of employment. Efforts to secure ongoing funding will occur through the duration of the project and will be supported by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the commission's Vancouver Project Team.

Hours of work: Initially Mon – Fri 8:30am – 4:30 pm for 2009 as the team builds a full compliment of staff, does training and develops processes. In 2010 the schedule will become 7 days a week, with some positions having a weekend day shift. All staff will be required to work one evening shift a week from 12pm – 8pm. All staff will have on call responsibilities, shared with other staff. Schedules are subject to change to meet operational requirements and client needs.

Training: required training Sept 16, 17,18 in Toronto. The Mental Health Commission of Canada and RainCity Housing will pay costs associated with wages, travel, transportation, accommodation, food and other reasonable expenses.

For direct enquiries: contact ACT Team Co-leaders
Colin Sanders 604-720-2659 or csanders@raincityhousing.org
Stephen Madigan smadigan@raincityhousing.org

For background information see:

- <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/homelessness.aspx>;
- <http://www.pathwaystohousing.org/> (the New York Housing First ACT model)
- <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/CommunitySupport/toolkits/community/>
- www.raincityhousing.org