



North End COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Internal/External Opportunity Brief

Position:	Peer Support Specialist
Reports to:	Manager of Housing First
Location:	May Street + Outreach based
Pay Scale:	\$23.25/hr + benefits
Work Term:	1.0 FTE (37.5 hours/week), 6 month term
Deadline:	August 1, 2024
<i>This is a unionized position under NEGEU Local 102</i>	

To ensure our organization represents the diverse people and communities we serve, this posting is designated for those who identify as Two- Spirit, Transgender or gender diverse.

About NECHC

The North End Community Health Centre (NECHC) was established in 1971 in response to an absence of primary health care and other health services in Halifax’s North End. Located on Gottingen Street, we are in the heart of a unique and culturally diverse community. Today, governed by the North End Community Health Association, the NECHC is viewed by area residents as a “beacon of hope” in the community. Much more than a Primary Care Clinic, the NECHC has expanded in response to unmet needs of community members and is highly-valued by its patients and clients and their families. NECHC provides services to those living on the margins of society, through MOSH, Housing First and a wide range of community outreach initiatives.

Vision

Strong community - healthy people.

Mission

We support health and well-being in our community through quality primary health care, education and advocacy in an environment in which people are treated with respect and dignity and there is equitable access to services and programs.

Values

Respect. Community. Compassion. Excellence. Innovation

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commitment

The North End Community Health Centre is committed to being an inclusive organization. We are working to ensure our organization represents the diverse people and communities we serve. Our position postings encourage members from the following communities to apply:

- 2SLGBTQIA++
- African Nova Scotian and/or people of African Descent

- Indigenous
- People with disabilities
- Language minorities
- People of Colour and/or racially visible minorities
- Immigrant and refugee
- Connected to the North End of Halifax

Job Purpose

Housing First is a program of the NECHC. The Housing First team supports folks through place-based and scattered-site caseloads to secure and maintain their housing and achieve individualized goals. Participants will often have serious mental illness that is often accompanied with substance use, history of involvement in the criminal justice system and chronic physical illness. As members of a multi-disciplinary team, staff provides case management services based upon the principles of Housing First, harm reduction, assertive engagement. We prioritize individuals and couples with multiple barriers (struggles with substance use, chronic health and mental health) who are African Nova Scotian, Indigenous and/or Two-Spirit, transgender and/or gender diverse.

The Peer Support Specialist strives to connect with peers through shared experience in ways that strengthen hope, reduce power imbalances, and provide social and emotional support for those who may be experiencing challenges in their unique journeys. to maximize their independence and potential and promote their recovery. The HF Peer Support Specialist will bring their lived experience and expertise to the work. The peer support specialists will provide daily support, programming/groups, and mentoring to participants in various housing and community locations. The peer support specialist collaborates with participants to provide individualized and flexible support to engage and integrate them into the community and helps to facilitate their access to resources and supports.

Major Responsibilities

- Provide one-to-one support and/or group support with +participants of the Housing First program that is consistent with the program framework and peer-centered philosophy and approach.
- Provide a level of support for peers in their journeys that allows for self-determination, personal empowerment, growth, safety, and wellness.
- Maintain and develop a strong level of understanding and initiative in support and connection with peers for local resources, support, and services that they may benefit from, and wish to seek out.
- Demonstrate a strong level of comfort and adaptability in providing support for individuals from diverse backgrounds, life experiences, and for those who may be at varied stages of their healing journeys around experiences with homelessness and/or substance use.

- Demonstrate and uphold strong knowledge of personal self-care practices, and personal and professional boundary-setting.
- Be responsible for knowing when to seek assistance within the team and with the manager and/or other members of staff when specific challenges arise in relation to working with peers, in the workplace, or out in the community.
- Coordinate programming activities with housing first participants and housing first staff for further engagement purposes and community integration which could include arts & crafts, hiking, cooking meals, drop in's etc.
- Participate in overdose prevention, recognition, response and post-intervention practices.

Other Duties

- Maintain relevant, timely and accurate documentation as required
- Attend team meetings
- Communicating well with the multidisciplinary team of intensive case managers, case managers, occupational therapist, mosh nurses, community organizations, etc
- Maintain client confidentiality and clear boundaries
- Adhere to the standards set out in the mosh housing first procedures manual
- Share learning, challenges, successes, community connections, and resources with the team
- Provide feedback and share knowledge toward best practices for service delivery and ongoing program development
- Ensure daily contact with the MOSH Housing First Manager

Education, Knowledge and Experience

- Experience with the mental health system
- 1-2 years' experience working in a community setting with community members who use substances, have mental health challenges, and/or other vulnerabilities
- Has gone through the process of at least 12 months of recovery
- The person is able to act ethically, demonstrate competence in effective communication and team building, demonstrate effectiveness in working in a collaborative environment, and demonstrate confidence in decision-making and in building relationships.
- Strong understanding of harm reduction principles and approaches, and social justice
- Strong skills related to: adaptability, time management, problem solving, judgement, communication, interpersonal relations, and healthy boundaries
- Values diversity with a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
- Ability to observe boundaries, engage in appropriate emotional regulation, refrain from dual relationships with participants, maintain confidentiality, and engage in

reasonable self-care strategies designed to reduce stress by balancing work/life responsibilities

- Extensive knowledge of supports and services in the community, including formal and informal resources

Working Environment:

- Work with the Overlook staff in support of the development of culture-based plans that best support program and service design and provision for urban Indigenous individuals
- Work with local stakeholders within non-Indigenous community service organizations and institutions to promote cultural humility and awareness
- Create and maintain a trusted traditional Knowledge Keeper and/or Elder network
- To provide insight and support in the development of protocols and agreements with internal and external stakeholders as directed towards organizational cultural competency, safety and cultural sustainability

Unavoidable Hazards:

- Exposure to usual hazards of health care centre.
- Exposure to unpredictable experiences including but not limited to participant/landlord/stakeholder hostility, exposure to inclement weather, bed bugs, cockroaches, second hand cigarette smoke, dirty needles, substance use, and other occupational hazards.

Additional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Knowledge and experience working with marginalized populations experiencing homelessness, poverty, substance use, sex work, and other communities including African Nova Scotian, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Proven knowledge and ability in critical thinking, problem-solving, and conflict resolution and/or reconciliation
- Proven ability to work within a team environment with respect, sound judgement, cooperation, sensitivity
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Solid organizational abilities, including leadership, program development and time management
- Highly motivated, proactive and creative with the ability to be adaptive and resilient
- Ability to speak, understand and/or learn an Indigenous language is considered an asset
- Valid driver's license and the ability to travel is an asset

Working Environment

- Supportive, exciting and challenging environment
- Constant interaction with marginalized and vulnerable people, some reactive, aggressive or verbally abusive
- Moderate effort is required to perform this role indoors and outdoors including lifting, standing, reaching, sitting, pushing/pulling

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How to Apply

Those interested in applying for this position should email a cover letter and resume to employment@nechc.com by August 1, 2024. We thank all applicants for their interest, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Please note that a vulnerable sector criminal record check is required for all NECHC employees working directly with clients, participants and patients, however we acknowledge that criminalization occurs disproportionately in some communities more than others, and a clear record is not required. Any items that come up on such a record check will be discussed confidentially during hiring.