

HOMELESS HEALTH CARE LOS ANGELES

JOB DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Harm Reduction Outreach Specialist	Classification: Non-Exempt
Reports to: Director of the Center for Harm Reduction	Prepared by: Director of the Center for Harm Reduction
Department: CHR	Date: August 3, 2022

Homeless Health Care Los Angeles (HHCLA) is a nonprofit, community-based organization that provides comprehensive behavioral health and holistic health care to address the unique challenges of people who are experiencing homelessness. Driven by socially conscious Angelenos for fellow Angelenos, HHCLA has been providing a pathway to health, recovery and emotional well-being without bias or judgement for more than 30 years. With a continuum of services that includes counseling, substance use treatment, syringe exchange, overdose prevention, and housing with supportive services, HHCLA seeks to improve the quality of life and capacity for stability of the people they serve, and help them secure and stay in permanent housing.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

In response to the unprecedented surge in overdose occurrence and death in the Skid Row community, HHCLA has established an Overdose Outreach Team (OOT), whose primary purpose is to provide frontline overdose response and reversals in the community. The OOT will consist full-time Harm Reduction Outreach Specialists who will conduct overdose outreach throughout the Skid Row community and a full-time Team Lead who will work closely with the Director of HHCLA's Center for Harm Reduction (CHR) to oversee the project. The OOT will also seek regular guidance, support, and leadership from a Community Advisory Board composed entirely of people who use drugs in the community. The OOT will extend the geographical reach and volume of clients served by HHCLA's current Harm Reduction services, which have been offered for over 25 years via the agency's Center for Harm Reduction.

POSITION OVERVIEW:

The Harm Reduction Outreach Specialist works under the direction of the Overdose Outreach Team Lead and the CHR's director. The defining duty of the Harm Reduction Outreach Specialist position is rapid, frontline response to overdoses as they occur in the community. The ability to calmly respond to and reverse overdoses in Skid Row for the duration of the Harm Reduction Outreach Specialist's shift will be the primary skillset of this position. Other duties expected of the Overdose Outreach Specialist are as follows: Daily site visits to areas of concentrated drug use; overdose prevention and response and safer drug use education; distribution of harm reduction supplies including syringes, cottons, cookers, tourniquets, sterile water, alcohol swabs, fentanyl test strips, naloxone, condoms and lubricant; syringe clean up in the community; daily cleaning and sanitation of areas of concentrated drug use; and sex work outreach and safer sex/sex work education; referral

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to other services in the community provided by both HHCLA's CHR and external community partners.

PRINCIPAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Conducts street outreach and frontline overdose response to overdoses as they occur in the community
- Conducts overdose reversals – a process that includes, but is not limited to, an appropriate combination of the following practices: administration of oxygen via ambu-bags and pony masks, administration of intramuscular and intranasal naloxone, mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing, monitoring of blood oxygen levels and cardiac activity, CPR, use of an AED, and activation of the Emergency Response System (911)
- Monitors clients following overdose reversals
- Transports clients to and from the agency's CHR in agency vehicles
- Works collaboratively with, and under the guidance and instruction of, the CHR's Client Advisory Board, who will lead and assist all OOT activities
- Works collaboratively and respectfully with co-workers at the CHR using a democratic, team-based model toward the achievement of daily tasks and the broader mission of the CHR
- Engages relationship building and establishes rapport with people who use drugs and/or are experiencing homelessness in the community
- Conduct daily site visits to areas of concentrated drug use
- Offer community members who use drugs overdose prevention and response and safer drug use/safe injection education
- Distribute harm reduction supplies to people who use drugs including syringes, cottons, cookers, tourniquets, sterile water, alcohol swabs, fentanyl test strips, naloxone, condoms and lubricant
- Develop and maintain advanced knowledge of harm reduction supplies and the appropriate uses of them
- Conduct used syringe clean-up (AKA Needle Brigade) in the community
- Conduct daily cleaning and sanitation of areas of concentrated drug use
- Conduct sex work outreach and safer sex/sex work education for people who do sex work in the community
- Track and inventories harm reduction and other program supplies
- Coordinate and execute referrals to other services in the community as appropriate - provided by both HHCLA's CHR and external community partners.
- Coordinates referrals to community resources to best support client needs
- Participate in community events offered by both HHCLA and its community partners
- Develop relationships with representatives in other agencies to support individuals in attaining services as needed
- De-escalate situations involving escalated individuals and behave in a manner appropriate to limiting the risk of situations becoming escalated
- Attends all team meetings, case conferences, and in-service trainings.

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- Maintains familiarity with policies and procedures and other applicable regulations.
Documents all required information as required by OOT funders and local and federal governments
- Demonstrate competence and effectively apply Harm Reduction and Trauma Informed Philosophy in all interactions with clients
- Coordinates, prepares, and maintains required charting and documentation in a timely and thorough manner.
- Able to serve a diverse client population and communicate effectively in a culturally competent manner
- Uphold integrity of team-based care through firm commitment to team work, emotionally intelligence, and open and respectful communication with all team members and other HHCLA staff
- Maintain solution focused, strength-based and client-centered discussion with managers, co-workers and clients of HHCLA.
- Maintains client records according to HIPAA and adheres to all client confidentiality requirements and standards.
- Participates in the overall evaluation of program services and data collection for reporting by maintaining accurate information in program participant files.
- Attends and participates in supervision, staff meetings, conferences, workshops, special projects to provide input towards program development and staff training.
- Attends and participates in all required contractual, agency, and professional development trainings
- Represents the mission and philosophy of HHCLA to the community in relevant coalitions and advocacy efforts.
- Complies and maintains familiarity with HHCLA policies and procedures and other applicable regulations required by funding sources.
- Ensures performance management standards are met through ongoing supervision addressing barriers as they arise.
- Models HHCLA approach, mission and core values in all communication, correspondence, community events, coalitions and advocacy efforts.
- Assists with maintenance and janitorial duties as required – including maintaining sanitary bathrooms and common areas, which may include cleaning and keeping areas free from bodily fluids and excrement
- Reports to work on time and maintains reliable and regular attendance
- Maintains current licensing and/or certification as required for position.
- Other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS:

REQUIRED:

Education and Work Experience:

- Bachelor's degree in social work, public health, psychology, sociology or other related field;
OR a minimum of four years' experience in counseling and/or human services arena; OR lived experience with homelessness, incarceration, sex work and/or substance use

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Knowledge and Skills:

- Basic knowledge of Harm Reduction Programming and Harm Reduction as a philosophy of care
- Be able to administer naloxone and conduct rescue breathing in response to a life-threatening opioid overdose (employee training provided)
- Firm commitments to: a) undoing the criminality and stigmatization associated with people who use drugs; and b) an ethical and humane engagement with people who use drugs that is consistent with the core tenets of Harm Reduction.
- Experience working with culturally diverse communities and vulnerable populations
- Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from clients, office personnel, other employees and the general public
- Ability to work in fast-paced, high energy environment
- Ability to define problems and use critical thinking skills to identify solutions
- Ability to work independently and with others – including other employees, clients and members of the public -- in face-to-face and telephonic contexts
- Ability to multi-task, establish priorities and manage time, meet deadlines and perform duties under time constraints
- Ability to be flexible and adapt to changing work demands
- Maintain high level of concentration and attention to detail for extended periods of time
- Ability to respond effectively to sensitive inquiries or concerns
- Maintain a high level of ethical and professional standards in accordance with agency policies
- Computer literate (basic working knowledge of Microsoft WORD, Excel, and Outlook) and data/electronic records
- Must possess a valid California Driver's License and auto insurance

Certificates, Licenses, Registrations:

- CPR/AED (provided by agency if not already certified)

PREFERRED:

- Street outreach experience with homeless community
- Strong de-escalation skills
- Overdose response/reversal experience
- Cultural fluency with Skid Row community
- Bilingual in Spanish and English

SUPERVISION RECEIVED:

Staff success and professional development is a priority at HHCLA. Staff will receive regular individual supervision with their direct supervisor. Additionally, direct service staff will have the opportunity to participate in group supervision, which provides a learning and supportive environment to promote quality client care, self-care and a healthy work environment.

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ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS/INTERACTION:

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily; help maintain a health work environment, initiates and maintains professional interactions and communication with HHCLA employees and/or others, and interacts with all levels of organizational staff and management; outside auditors, community partners and/or vendors.

LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS:

Communication – Effectively and consistently communicates contract and compliance directives to staff. Encourages interactive discussions and maintains an open-door policy. Ensures that all staff within the program are properly educated and informed about matters relating to the agency.

Relationships and Attitude – Models professionalism by maintaining effective working relationships, following all policies and procedures and approaching challenges with a proactive and positive attitude. Also develops strong, trusted relationships with colleagues and customers.

Attendance – Models good attendance by adhering to the regular work schedule and at times works additional or varied hours to accommodate workflow.

Problem Solving – Ability to analyze problems and implement acceptable solutions.

Confidentiality - Maintains the confidentiality of all business documents and correspondence.

WORKPLACE CULTURE:

As the name implies, the CHR maintains a firm commitment to a philosophy of care rooted in the principles of Harm Reduction. This approach aims to dignify people who use drugs with programming that seeks to improve quality of life and re-enfranchise people who use drugs into communal life.

As such, CHR programming serves as a counter to more traditional abstinence-based treatment programs, whose punitive structures tend to reinscribe the very stigmas that inhibit recovery and discourage willingness to pursue continuity of care, especially among the population of people who use drugs. CHR programming also maintains broader commitments to fundamentally transforming the way in which US society deals with addiction, by approaching substance use as a humanitarian and public health concern, rather than an issue to be stamped out through criminal justice interventions. As such, all CHR activities aim to undo the social disenfranchisement produced by the War on Drugs.

As part of this dignifying approach that aims to enfranchise people who use drugs into communal life, the CHR maintains a firm commitment to low threshold programming. Low threshold programming aims to reduce barriers to access to HHCLA services for all clients, with an emphasis upon undoing the stigmas and barriers that have traditionally placed people who are actively using drugs beyond the scope of quality of life interventions. As such, the CHR's approach places an emphasis upon building relationships with clients who present challenging and escalated behaviors, rather than exiting or barring them from programs and facilities. The benefit of low threshold programming can be found in HHCLA's ability to care for highly vulnerable clients who have been exited from, or otherwise

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dismissed by, other systems of care, while the challenge of this approach is the expectation of staff to find creative ways to care for, and build relationships with, clients who frequently present challenging and/or escalated behavior.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

While the Harm Reduction approach allows HHCLA to care for members of the highly vulnerable population of clients who use drugs and have been largely dismissed by other agencies and programs, this approach also entails caring for clients with co-occurring substance use addiction and complex mental health conditions who present more challenging behaviors. The work environment at the CHR thus includes clients who frequently present in an escalated state. Staff with a low tolerance for escalated behavior or minimal experience with de-escalation may find the work environment of CHR programming challenging and/or inconsistent with their standard for a suitable workplace environment. The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is occasionally exposed to moving mechanical parts and outside weather conditions. The noise level in the work environment ranges from moderate to elevated. Community outreach and local business travel is required.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPECTATIONS:

Employee and client safety are top priority at HHCLA. While the Harm Reduction approach has proven highly effective in providing preemptive techniques for ensuring non-confrontational and dignifying engagements with clients, low threshold programming lends itself to employees that have a higher threshold for working in high stress environments with clients who present escalated behavior.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS:

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to stand, sit and kneel on ground and floor. The employee is required to use hands to produce records and/or documentation in manual or electronic format. The employee must possess ability to ensure significant communication with HHCLA's community members. The employee must regularly lift and/or move up to 25 pounds and occasionally move or lift up to 40 pounds.

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY SPECIFICATIONS:

There is street-level entry at the Center for Harm Reduction location. The CHR only operates on the ground floor of the building.

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A review of this description has excluded the marginal functions of the position that are incidental to job performance of the fundamental job duties. All duties and requirements are essential job functions. This job description in no way states or implies that these are the only duties to be performed by this employee. I will be required to follow any other instructions and to perform any other duties as requested by my Supervisor. I understand that nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time. This document does not create an employment contract, implied or otherwise, other than an "at-will" employment relationship.

I have received, read and understood this Job Description and have been provided a copy for my personal information.

Employee Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Date

Employee Signature

Supervisor Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Date

Supervisor Signature