



A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN



YWCA PETERBOROUGH HALIBURTON JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Shelter Counsellor – Permanent Full-time, Part-time, Relief

LOCATION: Crossroads Shelter

BARGAINING UNIT POSITION: YES NO

INCUMBENTS: 14-24

SUPERVISED: **Direct:** 0 **Indirect:** 0

SUPERVISOR’S TITLE: Shelter Supervisor

PURPOSE OF POSITION:

To provide safe, secure, confidential and supportive crisis line and shelter services for women and their children who are living in, or are leaving, an abusive situation.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Preamble: Shelter counsellors, with the support and guidance of the Shelter Supervisor, are responsible for ensuring that the YWCA’s MCSS and United Way funded and mandated outcomes are met. These outcomes are based upon the premise that Crossroads exists to keep women and their families safe from harm.

Specific mandated outcomes include:

- * Each woman who calls has the opportunity to find out her level of danger by way of an Initial Lethality Screen being done by the counsellor.
- * Each woman who calls has a safety plan for herself and her family created by a shelter counsellor.
- * Each woman who calls and asks to come into shelter is either admitted into shelter, or has an “Interview to Access” time scheduled, or is denied entry due to not meeting the mandate, in which case a “Denied Entry” form is filled out and filed.
- * Once resident at the shelter, each woman has a safety plan created appropriate to her changed circumstances while living at Crossroads.
- * Upon discharge from Crossroads, each woman has a safety plan created appropriate to her new living arrangements.

Specific responsibilities:

1. Understands and works within the parameters of Crossroads Procedures and YWCA Policies.
2. Uses brief solution-focused techniques in all facets of shelter counsellor work.
3. Conducts, usually over the telephone, Initial Lethality Screens, assesses for immediate danger, creates a safety plan and a plan to come into shelter. Provides telephone and one-to-one counselling and referral services for women and their children, using brief solution-focused therapy techniques. Upon intake, completes all required documentation, and ensures a safety plan is created to meet the woman's changed circumstances.
4. Meets with women, formally and informally, on each shift to offer support, a listening presence, or to provide information and referrals, as requested.
5. Meets formally with each woman each week to provide support as women work to achieve their goals.
6. The week before a planned discharge, meets formally with each woman to complete the "leaving interview".
7. Upon discharge, completes all required documentation and room cleaning.
8. Ensures that all documentation meets Crossroads Documentation Standards.
9. Responsible for the physical and social environment within the shelter, maintaining an atmosphere conducive to the well being of clients and staff.
10. Assists in training of students, volunteers and relief staff to ensure that work is carried out within YWCA Policies and Crossroads' procedures.
11. Performs a variety of related administrative tasks, such as statistical record-keeping, report preparation, & petty cash.
12. Attends staff meetings, training events and YWCA organizational meetings as required.
13. May accompany women to scheduled appointments with doctors, lawyers, and Peterborough Housing, and to court.
14. Co-ordinates, with Shelter Supervisor, Property Manager and other team members, day-to-day household cleaning & maintenance tasks.
15. Has a duty to understand and work within the Occupational Health & Safety Act and its regulations.
16. Other related duties as assigned by supervisor.

KNOWLEDGE:

Completed relevant post-secondary education (eg Social Service Worker diploma, Bachelor of Social Work, Addiction Counsellor Diploma) and at least 2 years relevant experience.

Demonstrates knowledge and ability to work with women and their families using brief solution-focused techniques.

Demonstrates knowledge, understanding, and ability to respond appropriately to women and their children as they deal with the short and long term effects of surviving trauma including: having lived in an abusive situation; having survived an abusive situation and dealing with the impact of leaving an abusive situation.

Incorporates knowledge and understanding of the impact of marginalization on women. Women may be marginalized by: living in a rural and/or isolated location; housing / homelessness; poverty; physical and mental health status; use of legal/illegal drugs &/or alcohol; racialization; immigration status; sexual orientation; gender identity; family status; physical & mental health status of their children; differing ability/disability; language; culture; religion; education; employment; source of income; socio-economic status; literacy and numeracy skills;, and so forth.

Demonstrates knowledge, commitment and ability to incorporate anti-oppression & anti-racist understanding into daily practice.

Knowledge of, and proven ability to use, Crisis Prevention & Intervention skills in order to diffuse and prevent crisis situations.

Demonstrates ability to be self-reflective and self-aware in the role of shelter counsellor.

Demonstrates awareness of the personal impact of VAW work, and creates and uses a personal well-being plan in order to deal with the impact of the work.

Demonstrates ability to adhere to professional standards in all facets of shelter work; with clients, with co-workers, and with the public.

Demonstrates knowledge, commitment and ability to create a healthy workplace environment for residents and co-workers.

Demonstrates the ability to incorporate training and professional development into day-to-day work.

DECISION-MAKING:

Constantly assesses complex variables in individual and group situations. Wrong decisions and inappropriate counselling could have serious results, leading to emotional or physical harm or poor public image for the YWCA. A variety of problems are faced which are generally complex and unique. Decisions involve gathering information and facts, consulting inside and outside the organization to generate ideas and solutions, interpreting many different factors and must generate appropriate solutions. May refer difficult problems and decisions to Shelter or On-Call Supervisors. at any time. Work directly affects the safety, interests or well-being of Crossroads' clients. Actions or advice have an effect on or consequences to clients and to the community as a whole. Situations are often of an immediate, emergency nature. Shelter Counsellors are held accountable for the actions and services provided by themselves.

SUPERVISION:

Receives: Direct supervision from shelter supervisor, including regular and periodic meetings. Receives direction from On-Call Supervisors

Gives: Guidance to volunteers, students and relief staff.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Contacts are within and without the YWCA. Often required to provide leadership, instruction, motivation, coaching, support and guidance on complex issues and materials; resolve difficult situations which could not be resolved or diffused by others; facilitate and create a climate of empowerment; anticipate and be proactive to prevent potential conflicts or difficult situations between clients; between clients and staff members; between staff members, or between the organization and other agencies or individuals. Must often represent the YWCA in a highly visible role and in controversial settings/situations. Has little opportunity to refer problem situations to others.

EFFORT:

Frequent to moderate effort required in lifting & bending.
Extended periods of sitting and standing while performing tasks.
Frequent degree of mental and visual concentration needed.
Crisis de-escalation within the shelter may be needed.

WORKING CONDITIONS:

Conditions may cause considerable and continuous (most of every workday, most days) emotional or physical discomfort due to continuous exposure to many environmental factors and disagreeable internal or external conditions.
Typical conditions are such that a high risk of injury, harm or illness to staff could occur. Conditions could be life-threatening or potentially disabling. More stringent safety measures may be needed to prevent harm, illness or injury; eg follow safety procedures when handling garbage, laundry, room search/room cleaning.
Many stressors result from the shelter environment. Resources are often strained. Atmosphere may occasionally be smoky, unpredictable, crowded, noisy and behaviours may warrant intervention and de-escalation. Potential for staff to be in physical danger due to internal and external variables (violent women and children, violent partners of women). Exposure to contagion (lice, communicable diseases, viruses and infections). Shift work is required. Shifts are continuous and planned breaks are usually not possible. Employee remains at work location for entire shift.

SIGNATURE OF INCUMBENT DATE

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR DATE

SIGNATURE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DATE

June 2009