

Job Descriptions for Community Bridge-builders



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Community Connections Team Leader

Job Summary: The Team Leader coordinates the work of the team and ensures that it grows at a sensible pace and fits in with other developments.

1. In liaison with the line manager, to be actively involved in the recruitment of staff and to ensure the provision of induction for each new staff member and volunteer.
2. To respond to requests for service by ensuring that assessment, matching and support are available to clients.
3. To prepare reports and represent the Team to colleagues and officers of other agencies to establish and maintain a high profile for the team.
4. To represent the employing organisation when required. To work collaboratively with colleagues in order to contribute to the formulation of policy, forward planning, and service monitoring.
5. To deploy staff in order to achieve the aims of the team. To coordinate the work of the team to ensure it is both efficient and effective. To identify common themes affecting two or more staff and ensure that they are properly addressed. To ensure that members of the team meet together for support, goalsetting and to share information.
6. To ensure that staff receive regular supervision and an annual performance review, identifying training and development needs and facilitating provision of training. To evaluate the competencies of staff, to delegate tasks appropriately and provide support to ensure their completion.
7. To be aware of all the activities of the team. To relate well to a diverse staff team and make necessary decisions without undue reluctance.
8. To support Bridge Builders in their development work with other agencies.
9. To identify the factors which make community participation a success and to ensure they are adopted by everyone in the team.
10. To liaise with similar projects and keep abreast of relevant literature to ensure that best practice is identified and adopted.

11. To take responsibility for funding applications in order to promote the project. To operate within the service budget, monitoring out-turns and reporting to the line manager.
12. To maintain a quality control programme within the Team in order to ensure that the service maintains and wherever possible exceeds quality requirements. To establish and maintain routines and programmes for safe working practices and compliance with policies and procedures. To investigate incidents, grievances and disciplinary matters as required and report to the line manager.

Bridge Builder

Job Summary: There is a Bridge Builder for each of the identified life domains in the Community Connections Project. Each Bridge Builder takes responsibility for the development of access routes (“bridges”) into a range of activities in that life domain and ensuring that the values and priorities of the project are adhered to, as set out in the Operational Philosophy. Mental health professional supervision and support is available to all Bridge Builders.

1. To demonstrate an understanding of people with mental health problem, particularly as this relates to access to community inclusion in the specific life domain. To support people with mental health problems in making informed choices about their own community participation. To negotiate opportunities for people with mental health problems to participate in community life in the assigned life domain.
2. To demonstrate experience and knowledge of a wide range of opportunities in the life domain. To be responsible for the compilation of an up-to-date database of opportunities available in the life domain. This involves detailed research and networking into the statutory, voluntary and commercial sector. It includes specific searches for resources which are targeted at minority and under-represented groups. Incoming information is to be recorded and categorised in such a way as to offer quick and easy access to the Bridge Builder and others.
3. To advertise and market information about current opportunities to potential and existing clients. Material will be presented to clients and staff in an attractive and accessible manner.
4. To build partnerships with other agencies working in the assigned life domain in order to foster understanding, access resources and create a wide spectrum of opportunities for clients. This will include identifying, challenging and working with fear or prejudice about people with mental health problems. The Bridge Builder will promote awareness of people’s rights to access all services and provide support to the agency to facilitate successful placements. Support may include encouraging agencies to develop new arrangements. It will often be necessary to visit potential venues for community placement in order to assess their suitability and make arrangements for support.
5. To be approachable and able to build rapport. To demonstrate good communication skills with users, staff and agencies in the life domain, and an ability to work across agencies which may have different aims and value systems. To ensure that ongoing support is available for clients and host agencies.
6. To receive referrals and respond as appropriate to achieve the goals as laid out in the Operational Philosophy of the team. To undertake individual assessments and together identify needs in relation to community inclusion and the assigned life domain.

7. To utilise a thorough knowledge of how to become involved in community groups and how relationships are built and maintained. To review clients' progress in the placement environment and in consultation with others involved in the placement.
8. To work as part of the Community Connections Team and be creative, flexible, innovative, tenacious and supportive. To be flexible in working hours in order to achieve the Team's objectives.
9. To assist the Team Leader in making funding applications in order to promote the project.

Community Connector

Job Summary: Work with identified clients to support them in accessing a wide range of community resources.

1. To provide support to individuals both inside and outside of normal working hours. Where individuals are building a timetable of activity, the general pattern of working during office hours and using evenings and weekends for leisure will be considered.
2. In the event of an out of hours emergency or any unexpected difficulties, the Social Services Emergency Duty Team or on-call psychiatrist may be contacted. During normal office hours support is available from the wider organisation.
3. To be responsible for maintaining up to date records of the work they do with individual clients.
4. To support people with mental health problems who wish to increase their community participation. To support clients in making informed choices about their own community participation. To build relationships with clients based on mutual respect. To participate in the referral and initial assessment process, making home visits where appropriate.
5. To work directly with identified individuals in community settings, supporting the client to participate to a maximum extent as a full and equal member of the setting.
6. To provide support to people in the host agency in order to facilitate successful placement.
7. To identify possible informal supporters amongst other participants, facilitating the development of relationships. To recognise, and, where practical, respond to the needs of informal supporters.
8. Where possible and in agreement with the client, to seek to gradually withdraw support by encouraging others to become involved, such as in offering lifts. To ensure a sensitive and supported exit from the Team.
9. To communicate regularly with others involved in support of the client, especially any developments, changes or observations which may be relevant. To participate in care reviews.
10. To support groups that are based in the community, away from mental health premises. To support clients to attend and actively take part in meetings.

Volunteer

1. The work of volunteers is based upon initial assessment, regular review, supervision and planned withdrawal. There is a purpose beyond building a friendship with the client. A friend aims to develop a relationship characterised by mutual transparency and openness, long term commitment, access to home, kin and social networks, and lack of formal boundaries, so that, in particular circumstances, a friend may develop into a sexual relationship. A friendship is not subject to the supervision or oversight of others. Whilst it is recognised that long term friendships and relationships of mutual support are highly valued, the goal of the Team is to support the client in finding and sustaining these outside of the service system, rather than with staff or volunteers.
2. To support people with mental health problems in making informed choices about their own community participation.
3. To communicate regularly with others involved in support of the client, especially any developments, changes or observations which may be relevant.
4. Volunteers must be interviewed and approved by a Volunteer Organiser before starting to operate. This provides protection through the approved risk management arrangements, such as insurance cover etc.
5. Volunteers should not be expected to cover their own expenses. The relevant budget holder will need to approve any expenditure before the volunteer starts. Expenses might include travel costs, admission or registration fees, subsistence and training costs.
6. Volunteers will not attend client reviews, be allowed to view client casenotes or be given detailed personal information about clients' personal circumstances in other ways. Staff and students have access to this kind of personal information in this way, as the organisation has substantial sanctions in the event of a breach of confidentiality, but there are no such controls upon volunteers. However, staff may obtain permission from the person to share information where disclosure will enhance the volunteers' ability to work positively with the client or where disclosure will protect the health and safety of both parties. If the person is not willing to share vital information, then staff may withdraw the volunteer from the relationship in order to keep everyone safe. Any personal information which volunteers do obtain must be treated with respect and appropriate confidentiality.
7. Volunteers will be offered regular support and supervision meetings with a suitably qualified or experienced staff member. This is to ensure that they continue to make a positive contribution to the service and also that they enjoy their placement and find it as personally helpful and fulfilling as possible. Permanent staff need to ensure that they are able to provide adequate support to the volunteer before initiating such an arrangement. A matching commitment from volunteers requires them to contact their placement area in the event of absence. A period of notice of termination of placement is normally expected on both sides.

8. Where a volunteer has personal needs, either for support or for learning opportunities, then these resources will be provided in proportion to the contribution the volunteer has made to the organisation. For example, a day centre may choose to pay costs of a visit to another project for an established volunteer, but not a newcomer. There is a difference between on the job training necessary for their role and more intensive work; there should be a clear indication at the outset of the placement of who will train and prepare volunteers. The financial and time costs should be clearly attributable. Where permanent staff have access to inhouse training, then volunteers can apply for approval to attend such courses, providing that they have support from their placement area. Course organisers must be informed that the applicant is a volunteer and will take this into account in the allocation of places.
9. Should the personal needs of the volunteer begin to reduce the benefit of the placement, or the volunteer be found to lack essential skills, then the staff supervisor will consider discharging the volunteer.
10. Volunteer placements should be time limited with review and renewal if appropriate and clearly defined with a written agreement between the staff supervisor and the volunteer. This agreement should be copied to the supervisor's line manager.
11. Clients should receive preparation before relating to volunteers. An explanation of the role of volunteers is needed, along with an agreement about the role boundaries and the difference between paid staff, volunteers and friends.
12. A volunteer may take responsibility for petty cash and keys with the approval of the team leader and service manager. Arrangements for signing out such items and for action to be taken in the case of loss or dishonesty need to be set out plainly.
13. Volunteers working with clients do not have to be accompanied by a permanent member of staff, but permanent members of staff need to be aware of the arrangement and ensure that proper safeguards are in place (e.g. the client and the volunteer have been assessed, plans have been made to deal with untoward incidents etc).