



Counsellor – Freeman House

Position Description

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Position Title	Counsellor – Freeman House
Responsible Council	NSW State Council, Support Services
Reports To	Clinical Director – Treatment and Services Freeman House
Base Location	Freeman House, Armidale
Primary position objective	The Counsellor will apply their skills to counselling residential and community based clients who are currently in treatment for substance use disorders. As a part of the inter-disciplinary team of treatment practitioners, the Counsellor will be involved in the development of evidence informed case conceptualisation and treatment planning for clients presenting with problematic substance use. Delivering group work including therapeutic and psychoeducational groups is a significant component of this role.

St Vincent de Paul Society

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a member and volunteer based organisation that has been assisting people experiencing disadvantage in NSW for more than 130 years.

The Society was founded by a 20 year old man named Frederic Ozanam in 1833, who with a group of friends, wanted to make a difference to the poverty and disadvantage that he saw around him in post-Revolution France. Leading by example and with boundless energy, Frederic started what is now a world-wide movement in just 20 short years. The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has around 16,000 members and volunteers and 1,400 staff. Our local member networks, referred to as Conferences, are present in over 420 communities across NSW.

Our members and volunteers provide assistance to people experiencing disadvantage including food parcels and vouchers, financial assistance, assistance with energy bills and other debt, budget counselling and the provision of other material items such as furniture, clothing and bedding and any other household items. Importantly, our members also provide vital emotional support and referral services as needed.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a leading provider of community support services and has close to 100 Special Works across the State in the areas of homelessness, mental health, disability, financial counselling, supported accommodation, food provision, refugees and migrants and addiction counselling. Our work is funded by all levels of government, the generous support we receive from the community and our 250 Retail Centres across NSW.

Organisational Overview

SVDP NSW Support Services provides support for people experiencing need in NSW. It is a Special Work of the St Vincent de Paul Society of NSW and is comprised of more than 40 different programs across the state. SVDP NSW Support Services provides programs across areas including drug and alcohol, gambling, homelessness, disability, mental health, community development and refugee support.

Program Overview

Freeman House and its associated programs are committed to minimising the harm related to homelessness, drug and alcohol use, mental health, cognitive impairment, contact with the criminal justice system and other associated issues and is part of the St Vincent de Paul NSW Specialist Drug and Alcohol Network, which includes the Freeman House Centre in Armidale, the New England Drug and Alcohol Outreach Program, the Maayu Mali centre in Moree, Rosalie House in Tamworth, Rendu House Day Program in Campbelltown and Rendu House AOD Services in South West Sydney. SVDP NSW is committed to providing high quality, innovative and flexible responses to drug and alcohol, homelessness and other areas of complex need in the New England region

The nature and level of support differs according to individual needs, with a range of services offered including drug and alcohol case management and counselling in the community and in residential rehabilitation, access to psychological and psychiatric care, education and therapeutic group work, harm minimisation, living skills, withdrawal management and holistic health care and homelessness case management.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Counsellor will apply their skills to counselling residential and community based clients who are currently in treatment for substance use disorders. As a part of the inter-disciplinary team of treatment practitioners, the Counsellor will be involved in the development of evidence informed case conceptualisation and treatment planning for clients presenting with problematic substance use. Delivering group work including therapeutic and psychoeducational groups is a significant component of this role.

The Counsellor provides the following services:

- Participating in inter-disciplinary case conferencing, case review and staff meetings
- Conducting case conceptualisation based on relevant information provided by clients and AOD and Mental health assessments.
- Applying evidence informed treatment planning
- Delivering individual counselling to clients based on trauma informed best practice, and applying counselling approaches based on empirical evidence
- Conducting risk assessments and negotiating emergency risk management contracts
- Delivering group counselling to clients of the community, accommodation, and residential rehabilitation services
- Providing counselling across a range of modalities including face to face, videoconferencing and telephone, where required.
- Delivering Psychoeducational Groups in line with the program model of care
- Ensuring timely documentation including case notes, referral letters and other client records
- Participation in quality improvement process
- Participate in clinical supervision
- Attend training and development opportunities where identified and in line with the program model of care
- Participate in the SVDP 'Stronger Together' staff performance and development program

The position holder is responsible for implementing evidence based best practice based on the overarching policies of Freeman House. It is the role of the position holder to ensure that practices implemented or recommended to comply with the requirements of legislation, policy, current literature/research and professional bodies' codes of conduct.

The Counsellor/Group Worker will also be required to:

- Ensure that actions pertaining to allocated cases and the keeping of records concerning those cases comply with Freeman House / legislative and standards as measured by quality improvement processes.
- Periodically present case examples of best practice to the Freeman House/Societies state network and other stakeholders.
- Liaise and negotiate with a diverse range of stakeholders and other providers of services to this population. These stakeholders may be involved in current interventions or may be seeking more general advice/consultancy.
- Collect demographic, service provision and outcomes data specific to allocated clients and the service systems that support them.
- Abide by their organisations and peak body's code of conduct at all times when providing clinical services.

The Counsellor/Group Worker will be a registered and/or practicing member of their relevant professional body (e.g. AHPRA, ACA, PACFA, AASW).

Regular clinical supervision is provided as a part of the role.

Essential Criteria

- Minimum Bachelor Degree in a recognised Psychology, Counselling, or Social Work field.
- Current AHPRA registration, or:
- Professional and practicing membership of the relevant peak body (e.g. ACA, PACFA, AASW)
- Demonstrated understanding of trauma informed practice
- Demonstrated skills and experience in providing counselling and evidence based interventions for grief and loss, and complex trauma
- Demonstrated significant experience in developing, delivering and evaluating psychoeducation and therapeutic group work
- An understanding of legislation and policies relevant to the Alcohol and Other Drug sector
- Highly developed written and oral communication skills
- Well-developed organisational, time management, computer literacy and project management skills
- Demonstrated ability to work in an inter-disciplinary team environment

Desirable Criteria

- Postgraduate training in a related discipline
- Demonstrated understanding of homelessness, mental health, alcohol and other drug-related issues
- Sound understanding of the needs, rights and expectations of those with complex social problems
- Demonstrated experience in providing support, professional opinions and evidence informed judgments on clinical issues affecting people with complex social problems.

The successful applicant will be required to undergo a criminal record check and a Working with Children Check. All employment is subject to a 6 month probationary period.

The St Vincent de Paul Society is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.