



Housing Overdose Prevention and Peers Services Staff: Casual and on-call positions available.

OVERVIEW

Do you have lived experience with substance use? Do you love working with and learning from peer workers who use substances? Are you aligned with harm reduction models and have a non-judgmental approach? This job may be for you!

Peers Victoria is a multi-service grassroots organization that has been working by and for sex workers since 1995. Through direct service delivery and partnerships, Peers provides an array of outreach, harm reduction, group education and other support services. We maintain a welcoming and accessible service environment that promotes empowerment of current and former sex workers and other forms of peer leadership.

In response to COVID19, the overdose crisis, the housing crisis and the need for Indigenous-led programming, Peers Victoria has developed partnership for programming in Indigenous-led outreach and peer services (QomQem Coastal Connections) and supportive-housing based overdose prevention and response (HOPPS- Housing Overdose Prevention and Peer Services). **This posting is in the HOPPS program which is a program funded by Island Health to prevent overdose fatalities in supportive housing.**

Experience and evidence have demonstrated that an in-reach model for harm reduction services, utilizing peer staff, resident peers, and allied health staff, is effective at reducing risks for individuals choosing to use alone in their homes **and encouraging safer use practices and spaces within housing settings**. This “Housing Overdose Prevention and Peer Services” model (“HOPPS” model) is a model that is not solely dependent on a fixed space, rather, it also offers a range of overdose prevention options, including episodic in person, virtual, and by telephone witnessing. **Importantly, this model supports and upholds lived experience with substance use; this means that a large part of this position is to work alongside, learn from, and support people who use substances. The HOPPS model is rooted in education, mentorship, and support frameworks which support the leadership of people who use substances to act as educators and responders in their communities in response to the overdose crisis.**

With funding from Island Health, Peers Victoria operates four (4) HOPPS Teams in supportive housing locations. It is expected that the HOPPS Teams will continue to evolve given the need to engage in a continuous quality improvement process to ensure these services are provided in a way that minimizes harms related to substance use. The site assignments and hours of service may change in conversation with the funder, housing operator and other stakeholders. HOPPS support staff perform the following roles in housing and shelter sites:



The primary goals of the HOPPS model and specific duties for this position include, but are not limited to:



- i. Provide a range of options for individuals to safely use drugs, including providing access to trained staff who can monitor individuals in-person, virtually, and/or by telephone, and who will respond to overdoses as needed in order to reduce the number of deaths and harms related to overdoses.
- ii. Work alongside peer workers who may or may not be using substances to learn from and support them in doing this work.
- iii. Develop 'safer use' plans in partnership with residents
- iv. Develop and support a peer resident program including hiring, training, support, and supervision
- v. Reduce other harms associated with substance use through:
- vi. Provision of harm reduction supplies to reduce transmission of blood-borne infections, endocarditis, and sepsis.
- vii. Increased access to low barrier services.
- viii. Increased access to recovery services.
- ix. Increased referral pathways to local services related to substance use and/or other health or related social issues; and
- x. Increased opportunity for peer support networks and peer participation; and
- xi. Create safe and healthy communities by working in active collaboration with housing-based providers and the Site operator to collectively reduce overdose risks for residents of the site by sharing information, developing shared safety/care/tenancy plans, and providing educational resources.

Additional Duties:

- Deliver client-centered support to access safer supply and harm reduction supplies;
- Psychosocial support, including peer-based support;
- Provide client-centered advocacy;
- Education provision around hygiene and precautions in relation to Covid-19
- Provide prevention information re hand-washing and physical distancing;
- Provision of naloxone kits, overdose prevention and response information and individualized planning;
- Provision of the full array of harm reduction supplies and safe collection of used equipment;
- Information regarding how to access Drug Checking services with the Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project;
- Basic assessment and referral re symptoms of Covid-19;
- Ability to support peer-witnessed substance use for overdose prevention;
- Responding to crisis as needed and offering de-escalation support;



- Ensure residents' concerns are heard and that they understand supportive housing site expectations of residents;
- Support resident-based leadership and harm reduction support where possible;
- Collaborate with nursing and medical staff as needed;
- Adherence to Peers organizational policies;
- Completion of shift reports, utilization documentation and financial record submission;
- Attend weekly staff meetings and trainings as required.

Desired Skills and Qualifications:

- Knowledge and understanding of substance use, supportive housing models (Housing First) and ability to apply this knowledge to person centered harm reduction and overdose prevention supports;
- Self-awareness, an open mind and a non-judgmental approach to persons served that supports principles of accessibility for persons of diverse backgrounds;
- An ability to accept that all people make progress in their own way and at their own time;
- A capacity for forgiveness and empathy;
- An ability to de-escalate, promote autonomy and choices of person served and disengage should an intervention not be successful or welcomed;
- A willingness to work as a team, and to try something different if current approaches are not working; and
- Good personal support networks, wellness practices, and willingness to seek support in the workplace.
- Knowledge of harm reduction supplies and strategies in relation to different types of substance use;
- Understanding of trauma informed care;
- Approachable, non-judgmental, empathic, and calm in conflict or crisis;
- Sex work positive and able to provide safer sex information and supplies;
- Knowledge of local health and social service agencies and service access particulars;
- Collaborative, team-oriented service approach;
- Commitment to practices of confidentiality, ethical service delivery, and boundaries in helping relationships;
- Punctual, reliable and able to communicate service and advocacy information verbally and in written format;



- Understanding of social inequities, human rights, and ability to apply a social justice framework to health and social services, including addressing the ongoing impact of colonization.
- A degree in health or social service provision or equivalent experience in paid or volunteer service delivery (2+ years) is preferred, but consideration will also be given to lived experience of sex work and/or substance use in lieu of education and/or experience

Job details and Training Requirements:

- Wage is \$31/hour.
- Must have Basic First Aid and CPR and it is the employees responsibility to acquire and maintain this certification. Food safe is required to work in other Peers' programs and will be an asset in this position.
- Must complete a vulnerable sector criminal record check.
- Additional certification/training in therapeutic communication, conflict resolution, and occupational safety practices an asset.
- Based on skills and experience, people hired may be eligible to work casually in other Peers Victoria programs such as the night outreach and drop-in programs.

If you are interested in these opportunities, please send a resume and cover letter outlining your relevant skills and experience to peershiring@gmail.com. Interviews will begin May 19th and positions will remain open until filled.

Applications from individuals with direct experience with substance use and/or in any aspect of the sex industry are especially welcome. Our group welcomes Indigenous people, people of colour, and people of diverse abilities, genders, and sexualities.