



ARAFEMI

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title	Carer Advocate
Time Fraction	.8 EFT (4 days)
Award	SACS Award, Social Worker, Class II & ARAFEMI Enterprise Bargaining Agreement 2009 – 2012
Reports to	Manager Family Services
Tenure	2 year fixed term
Location	Auburn Road, Hawthorn

1. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

ARAFEMI's mission is to promote the well being and recovery of people affected by mental illness. ARAFEMI is an incorporated association and a registered community support service under the Mental Health Act 1986.

Core values held by ARAFEMI include a strong belief in recovery for both people with mental health issues and their carers. We believe in the right for all to live with respect and dignity in a society that provides equality of opportunity. Central to these values is providing opportunity for family / carer involvement and advocating for family sensitive practice across mental health.

The services provided by ARAFEMI include home based and intensive outreach support, respite, mutual self-help & support groups, information provision, counseling and telephone support for carers. ARAFEMI also works in partnership with Eastern Health to manage a Prevention and Recovery Care service based in Mont Albert and COPES program at Koonung and Upton House.

SCOPE OF THE POSITION: CARER ADVOCACY

ARAFEMI has a thirty-year history of dynamic and innovative advocacy to improve the wellbeing of people with a mental illness, their families and friends. The Carer Advocacy position continues the organisation's history of providing accurate up-to-date information, compassionate and empathetic support, and timely referral, whilst also offering carers and families the additional support of a 1:1 skilled advocate.

In 2007, ARAFEMI conducted a carer consultation to evaluate current services, explore areas of carer need and to identify opportunities for further carer linkage and advocacy. The results revealed that carers did want to engage in supporting other carers and in advocacy, but often felt constrained by their caring duties. Therefore involvement in advocacy and in supporting other carers needed to be respectful of their own demands as carers. Carers identified that they wanted individualised face-to-face and telephone support that assisted them with complex advocacy issues; someone to advise them or to walk with them when needed.

The second area identified was that carers perceived ARAFEMI as having a pivotal role in state-wide systemic advocacy, as the lead support service for mental health carers in Victoria. They believed ARAFEMI had a strong role to play in highlighting carer issues and educating professionals about their needs as carers.

The development of the Carer Advocate position within ARAFEMI is part of a broader multi-faceted project that incorporates existing core services (Helpline, Support Groups & Carer Education) and builds on multiple levels of carer involvement. A speakers bank of mental health carers, media monitoring, advocacy networks, peer mentoring and the use of innovative technologies such as the on-line carer chat room and message board are currently in development as part of this exciting new phase of carer support.

We are seeking a highly motivated person with a sound knowledge of advocacy, the mental health system and the issues that impact on carers and families of people with a mental illness. Our Advocate would be able to enthusiastically research, develop and implement sustainable models of both individualised and systemic advocacy within ARAFEMI's growing suite of services to families and carers. In addition, the role will involve investigating and collating information on carer groups (support and advocacy) and support the implementation of a carer advocacy reference group. This group will act as a grass roots conduit to existing peak advocacy services in Victoria.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREAS

The role is divided into two components, with the majority of role spent in the delivery of face-to-face or telephone support to carers seeking advocacy. It is anticipated that the advocate be based largely in the community acting as an advocate at the place of carer need (ie. attending mental health review, family meeting etc). This role whilst State based is envisioned to offer support to carers in the Metro Melbourne region in this pilot period, although telephone support and broader advocacy representation to regional or rural Victoria would be conducted in consultation with the Manager Family Services. The position is provided with a motor vehicle.

The advocate would be competent in:

- Dealing with complex and sensitive issues.
- Providing detailed advocacy responses.

- Effectively triaging complex carer issues and ensuring referral is made to additional appropriate carer supports.
- Representing carers and ARAFEMI in a professional and appropriate manner

The Advocate will also be engaged in developing and delivering broader strategies for systemic advocacy. The incumbent advocate would be expected to develop a detailed positioning brief for ARAFEMI as a state-wide representative for carers that reflects the following key areas:

(1) Representation

Maintain and provide ongoing development of relationships with key advocacy, mental health and carer organisations in Victoria.

(2) Education

The advocate will be responsible for coordinating the delivery of the Carer Advocacy Skills Training (CAST) program throughout Victoria, with the support of skilled sessional trainers through ARAFEMI. This training provides carers with self-advocacy skills within a community development model

ARAFEMI has developed considerable expertise and resources in delivering education to professionals about supporting carers and supporting best practice for families and peer support. It is anticipated that this role would compliment the work of Family Services in advocating for greater skills development of the mental health workforce.

(3) Promotion

Support the activities of family services and communications team to raise profile of carer issues across Victoria

3. DUTIES

3.1 Intake and Information Systems

- Accept referrals from the telephone helpline and other services, both internal and external to ARAFEMI
- Maintain and operate quality information resources to ensure provision of accurate and current information
- Set and maintain clear procedures regarding the operation of the advocacy services and develop appropriate data recording.
- Liaise with staff responsible for intake and referral, to implement and operate a coordinated and accessible entry procedure for the Advocacy service including liaison with the Telephone Helpline Staff and Counsellors to ensure appropriate triage and routing of incoming requests.

- Apply skills in supportive counselling to assist callers needing affirmation and support.

3.2 Individual Advocacy

- Ensure that carers understand their rights and responsibilities under relevant legislation and service policies and procedures.
- Advocate effectively on behalf of carers through negotiation and representation as required.
- Ensure that the advice and assistance provided is legally correct and in accordance with mental health practice.
- Provide referral to complimentary services for carers with other needs
- Identify and report on systemic issues.
- Undertake casework and case recording for individual advocacy cases.

3.3 Co-ordination

- Liaise with the Volunteer Coordinator to recruit, support and develop a small team of Advocacy volunteers to support broader advocacy activities within regions.
- Coordination of CAST trainers to deliver training throughout Victoria.
- Coordinate the implementation of advocacy referral processes within ARAFEMI with key staff and volunteers.

3.4 Representation

- Maintain and provide ongoing development of relationships with key advocacy, mental health and carer organisations in Victoria.
- Attend meetings and other for a as a representative of ARAFEMI
- Respond to media / enquiries in an advocate of carers.
- Develop clear position papers in response to advocacy issues.

3.5 Education

- Form key relationships across metro and regional Victoria and facilitate the scheduling of CAST program throughout Victoria.
- Liaise with CAST trainers to coordinate delivery and support educative outcomes.
- To advocate and raise awareness of the need for greater education of workers across the mental health sector.
- Promote opportunities for ARAFEMI to engage in workforce development and training.

3.6 Project Management / Report Writing

- Develop detailed project brief to guide the implementation and evaluation of the advocacy strategy for ARAFEMI.
- Be able to provide public stakeholder briefs and detailed program analysis and reporting.

3.7 Promotion

- Support the activities of family services and communications team to raise profile of carer issues across Victoria.

3.8 Other

- Ensure program processes meet best practice standards and are evidence-based.
- Establish and develop strategic partnerships to ensure long term program viability.
- Other duties, consistent with the role classification, as directed.
- The individual undertaking this position is required to carry out all duties in a safe working manner in accordance with ARAFEMI policies and procedures, and legislative frameworks.
- In addition, it is expected that the individual will maintain their professional knowledge and qualifications, and be aware of statutes that may have special pertinence for their individual practice.

4. Selection Criteria

Essential:

A commitment to social justice and the rights of Carers of people with a mental illness

Experience interpreting legal material preferably familiarity with mental health legislation

Advanced knowledge of the Victorian mental health system

Demonstrated experience providing advocacy advice and information and provision of direct casework

Experience dealing with a diverse client mix including carers with complex needs

Ability to identify a range of issues requiring referral to other agencies

Demonstrated experience of systemic advocacy and the ability to represent issues within the service and public arenas

Ability to work collaboratively and develop key relationships with State-wide stakeholder groups

Demonstrated project management experience including the development of project briefs, reporting, project implementation and evaluation

Advanced computer skills preferably use of Microsoft Office applications

Excellent written and verbal communication skills

A current Victorian Drivers Licence

5. REMUNERATION & CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Hours:

This is a part - time position (30.4hrs over 4 days per week) Monday to Friday for a contracted time of two years from appointment. The incumbent must be able to work outside these hours, including weekend work as required.

Salary and Conditions:

Conditions of employment are based on the SACS Award Social Worker Yr 2 plus additional benefits which are provided by the ARAFEMI Collective Agreement 2009-2012 (which is currently being finalised) and include additional xmas leave days, 4% salary increase at 1 July each year, and carer leave) and attractive salary packaging benefits.

A motor vehicle is allocated to the position, and private use may be negotiated. Applicable Fringe Benefit Tax liabilities are paid by the user.

Additional Requirements:

A probationary period of three months will apply.
Criminal record checks are mandatory for all new appointments.

6. APPLICATIONS

You are welcome to discuss this position with Frances Sanders, Manager Family Services on 9810 9300 or frances.sanders@arafemi.org.au

To make an application you will be required to –

- Send a copy of your Curriculum Vitae
- A response to the Selection Criteria provided above
- Names and addresses for three referees

Written applications marked confidential should be sent to:

Jane Henty
HR and Communications
ARAFEMI Victoria Inc
PO Box 83
HAWTHORN
Vic 3122
Or direct by email to jane.henty@arafemi.org.au

Closing date is Friday February 27th 2009