



ARAFEMI

ARAFEMI Victoria Inc

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE	Telephone Support Worker
PROGRAM AREA	Family Support
REPORTING TO	Volunteer Coordinator
DATE	January 2010
LOCATION	270 Auburn Road, Hawthorn

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

ARAFEMI's mission is to promote and improve the well being 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, mutual self-help & support groups, information provision, 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.

TELEPHONE SUPPORT WORKER

ARAFEMI Victoria operates a telephone support line Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Telephone support is a process of listening with care to callers concerns and providing relevant non-clinical information and/or referral as appropriate. Telephone support is not advice giving or counselling.

Callers are predominately people caring for someone with a mental illness (both diagnosed and undiagnosed) as well as people with a mental illness, allied health workers, academic staff and others.

The role of the support worker is to assist callers in understanding how they can best support the person with a mental illness, accessing community supports and mental health services as well as strategies for looking after themselves.

Telephone support workers work on a voluntary basis and are provided with specifically designed telephone training, orientation to the field as well as supervision and support to enable them to work effectively in this role.

KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREAS

- Provide a quality telephone/online support, information and referral service.
- Maintain relevant and up to date information about carer resources/services.
- Send information/brochures to callers in a timely manner as required.
- Maintain statistical records.
- Participate in training and supervision as required.
- Participate in program development and evaluation processes as required.
- Assist with administration functions as required.

QUALIFICATIONS/ EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Key Selection Criteria

Essential

- Excellent communication and listening skills.
- Ability to communicate effectively on the telephone.
- Ability to engage and work with families and other carers.
- An understanding of mental illness and its effects on families and other carers.
- A non-judgemental attitude towards people.
- Ability to accept constructive feedback and incorporate feedback into work practices.
- Ability to work in a busy environment.
- Computer literacy (Microsoft Office and email) and Internet searching skills.

Desirable

- Personal experience of supporting someone with a mental illness.
- An understanding of the mental health system.
- An understanding of carer issues and carer support services.
- An understanding of confidentiality and privacy issues.
- Previous experience in a similar role.

Expectation

Telephone support workers need to be able to commit to the role for a minimum period of 12 months and fulfil at least ten shifts during the probationary period and at least another ten shifts over the next nine months. Greater flexibility is available to telephone support workers who have been volunteering for more than 12 months. All telephone support workers are expected to attend group supervision at least once per year as organised by ARAFEMI.

Selection Process

- Applicants need to complete and submit a Volunteer Application Form. An interview may then be offered, which will occur on a weekday during office hours and be approximately half an hour in length.
- The selection process for telephone support worker includes a interview, training program and observation shifts.
- The probationary period is three months and will commence when the volunteer is ready to take on official telephone support worker tasks. At the end of this probationary period a meeting with the volunteer may take place if there is any concern about the suitability of the volunteer for the role or working at the organisation.
- ARAFEMI accepts volunteer services with the understanding that ARAFEMI Victoria may terminate such a service at any time.
- All prospective telephone support workers are subject to a satisfactory 100-point Police Criminal Records Check. This will occur at no cost to the volunteer.