

Immediate Opening for Peer Support Specialist (PSS)

Program/Position Overview:

Mental Health America of the Central Valley (MHACV) is the lead agency of a multi-agency collaborative implementing the Cultural-based Access /Navigation Program Specialist and Peer Support Program (CBANS), a Fresno County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention program designed to provide culturally appropriate mental health education, promotion, support, referrals and linkages to community resources among unserved and underserved residents of Fresno County. Populations targeted include, but are not limited to: African American, Hispanic, Native America, Southeast Asian, Homeless/Indigent and LGBTQ individuals and families.

The **PSS** will be based at MHACV, and will report directly to the MHACV Program Manager, Executive Director, and/or their designees.

The **PSS** will provide the above-referenced services for individuals and families at risk for developing mental health, behavioral and/or substance use disorders, in order to foster resiliency, self-empowerment, healthy activities and lifestyles, and de-stigmatize mental illness. Services will be delivered in culturally appropriate contexts across a variety of formal and informal settings, i.e., scheduled community meetings, informal gatherings, peer support groups, and planned (or spontaneous) one-on-one meetings. The **PSS** will access individuals and families *primarily* through local faith communities serving the targeted populations; however, outreach and activities will not be restricted to the faith sector.

Sample Duties/Responsibilities:

1. Participate in all training and group supervision sessions including (but not limited to) the role and responsibility of Community Health Workers and Peer Support Specialists, Mental Health First Aid training, HIPAA regulations, interviewing techniques, peer support group facilitation, data entry, etc.;
2. Schedule and assist with faith and other community meetings to raise awareness of and reduce stigma toward mental health disorders; educate about signs and symptoms of mental distress; promote healthy activities and life styles to reduce the risk of onset of mental health, behavioral and/or substance use disorders;
3. Provide small group and one-on-one education and peer support;
4. Identify and establish collaborative relationships with existing local and centralized community behavioral and/or social support systems (including programs at faith-based centers), such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Celebrate Recovery, Grief Share, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters' Anonymous, etc.;
5. Link individuals and families at risk for mental, behavioral health and/or substance use disorders with early intervention programs, provide referrals to more intensive mental health treatment and support when needed, and assist those referred in navigating programs and services;
6. Serve as a “cultural broker” between community members, community resources, private and public systems including, but not limited to mental health, social services, public health,

education, law and advocacy, criminal justice, and other public programs as needed;

7. Assist in the development and maintenance of new self-help and peer-support groups for depression, anxiety, addictive behaviors, etc.;
8. Collect required data and keep current and accurate records.

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:

1. Punctual, dependable and detail oriented;
2. Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
3. Proficient in Microsoft Word, email and Internet; data tracking experience
4. Comfortable with outreach to and communication with diverse faith communities represented within Fresno County which differ from one's own;
5. Intimate experience with one of the cultural/ethnic populations targeted by the Program, yet able to effectively communicate with individuals from other socio-economic-cultural-linguistic backgrounds;
6. Able to work both independently and as part of a team with other PSS's;
7. Able to take direction well, yet demonstrates initiative.

Minimum Qualifications:

1. Personal, family, or kin experience with mental health, behavioral health and/or substance use disorder and treatment;
2. Some experience with self-help and peer-support groups;
3. Fluent in English *and* in one of the threshold languages (i.e., Spanish, Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, etc.);
4. A.A. degree and minimum one year full-time paid or volunteer experience in the capacity of a Community Health Worker, Peer Support Specialist, Health Educator, Navigation Specialist, Lay Minister; or three year's paid full-time experience in one of the above careers.
5. Other: Holds a valid California Class "C" Driver's License, owns car, maintains active auto insurance and is able to drive extensively to sites throughout the county

Salary, Hours, Benefits:

\$9.00/hr, 30 hrs/wk at startup (first nine months), plus employer-paid health benefits. This position may be reduced to half-time (20 hrs/wk) in the tenth month; however, health benefits will be maintained at same coverage.

Application Process:

Fax resume and a minimum of three (3) references to David Weikel, Executive Director, at (208) 248.5976. References should include a minimum of two employer references and one personal reference. Qualifying candidates will be contacted for an in-person interview.