



northwest
youth services

job description: youth counselor

organization information

Position Title: Youth Counselor

Location: Whatcom and Skagit County

Reports to: Director of Clinical and Ecotherapy Services

Hours: Full-Time, exempt position

Starting Wage Range: \$26.59 - \$29.64 per hour; depending on relevant qualifications, education, and experience

Individuals fluent in Spanish, and women, people of color, transgender individuals, and members of other underrepresented populations are strongly encouraged to apply.

Mission: At Northwest Youth Services, we affirm youth experience and autonomy, as we work together to foster collective healing and justice, in order to dismantle the systems of oppression that perpetuate youth homelessness.

Core Values:

Community – We promote interdependence and recognize that everybody needs a community to thrive. We know that we are stronger together.

Justice & Liberation - We believe that it is critical to acknowledge, name, and actively work to dismantle the historic systems and societal structures that fuel crisis and poverty.

Humanity - We work with respect and compassion for each other and believe that everyone deserves to belong: to be safe, heard, and valued.

Accountability – We believe that no one is done learning; as a community we hold each other to a high standard, and work to educate, grow and heal together.

Vision: Guided by our core values and commitment to becoming an Anti-Racist organization, Northwest Youth Services envisions a community in which all young people are seen as catalysts in creating a just and liberated society that supports each of our unique journeys through life.

job mission

The Youth Counselor is responsible for developing and maintaining a collaborative relationship with young participants at all stages of readiness. Youth Counselors work to develop and implement effective counseling strategies for engaging youth at all stages of engagement. Counselors work to help participants transition into adulthood in a manner that helps them thrive and grow.

core competencies

To perform job successfully, the individual should demonstrate the following competencies:

Change Agility: Able to embrace needed change; able to provide and implement feedback; effective in the face of ambiguity.

Integrity: Must be honest and take responsibility for actions.

Positive Impact: Have a passion for NWYS' mission and vision; display a positive attitude.

Learning Agility: Seeks to improve knowledge, skills, and abilities in related service areas; accept instruction and supervision in a positive way and integrate the feedback into their daily practice.

Creativity: Resourceful in finding ways to improve and advocate for change when necessary; fosters creativity in others.

Active Listening: Ability to effectively work independently and in partnership with team members; ability to communicate effectively with youth and others.

Communication: Articulate ideas clearly and organize ideas effectively. Must provide clear and coherent written (electronic) document interactions with youth in a timely (by end of day) manner.

Organizational Knowledge: Understands operational procedures; demonstrates an in-depth understanding of what the organization does.

Initiative: Proactive; act without being prompted.

Team Player: Effectively partner with people across the organization. Must be willing to collaborate with others. See both staff and youth participants as customers worthy of respect.

Sensitivity: Communicates empathy and respect of individuals; ability to be appreciative of diversity.

key responsibilities

Micro responsibilities

- Serve as an initial point of contact for youth who are interested in engaging in Community & Healing services and act as a service bridge from engagement and housing pillars into Queer Youth Services.
- Provide care navigation for youth who are seeking to connect with services offered through the Community & Healing pillar, with a specific focus on youth who are enrolled Samaritan members.
- Conduct outreach and engagement across Northwest Youth Services' sites and service areas to identify and enroll eligible youth into Samaritan platform.
- Engage with youth across Northwest Youth Services' sites and service areas for the purpose of building relationships and supporting youth in obtaining self-identified goals related to their health and wellbeing.
- Act as a liaison both internally and externally for the Samaritan platform, this can include informing others of the resources available through the platform, the functions and goals of the platform, and how youth can obtain a Samaritan membership.
- Document in the DAP or SOAP note format client progress to maintain a permanent record of client activity according to established policies and procedures.
- Build and maintain youth caseload of at least 25 Samaritan memberships.
- Assist clients with gaining resources and education to support their autonomy and basic needs.
- Effectively identify trauma and have an understanding of secondary trauma.
- Understand adolescent and young adult psychological development stages and needs.

Meso: Agency Responsibilities

- Participate in daily staff organizational meetings and treatment planning review meetings as relevant.
- Attend organizational gatherings, consults, and events such as town halls, along with all other group activities for purposes of team building and communicating.

- Knowledgeable and experienced in evidence-based practices such as Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioral Therapies, Trauma-Informed Care.
- Work closely with agency partners and community resources to implement Housing First and Harm Reduction models.
- Support clinical team in implementation of core principles and evidence-based practices including, but not limited to: Positive Youth Development, Trauma Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing, Right Response and Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- Support activities of the NWYS Art Hive in collaboration with fellow clinical team members.
- Assist in developing and implementing continuum of care from service intake to service exit as it pertains to the Samaritan platform and other Community & Healing Services.
- Provide consultation to individuals and organizations serving LGBTQ+ youth according to WA state laws and best practices using OSPI and WPATH guidance.
- Along with Youth Counselor (Clinician II), collaborate with local agencies and school districts to coordinate service delivery for LGBTQ+ youth, this can include trainings, presentations, consultations, group facilitation for youth & families, in addition to other forms of collaboration.
- Organizes and implements administrative systems and procedures performing necessary support duties.

Macro: Community Responsibilities

- Educate and support clients' families and advocate for clients' rights and preferences when appropriate.
- Collaborate with other Community & Healing services staff to develop materials and content for community trainings, workshops, and other educational events.
- Work in partnership with other Community & Healing services staff to facilitate trainings, workshops, and other educational events.
- Along with Youth Counselor (Clinician II), collaborate with local agencies and school districts to coordinate service delivery for LGBTQ+ youth, this can include outreach to organizations, attending community coalition/work group meetings, trainings, presentations, consultations, group facilitation for youth & families, in addition to other forms of collaboration.
- In addition to the above, any other responsibilities appropriate to the position and not specifically listed in the job description.

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 50 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, and depth perception. While performing these job duties, the employee is regularly required to listen to others and provide verbal feedback. The employee is required to frequently sit for extended periods of time, stand, walk, climb, or balance.

qualifications

Minimum Qualifications:

- Master's degree in Social Work or related field that included coursework in mental health and addiction;
- Two years' experience working directly with adolescents and young adults who have significant behavioral health/trauma issues in inpatient, residential, and/or group living settings;
- Two years' clinical/programmatic experience of direct service staff in similar settings;
- Experience/training in harm reduction, trauma, and/or motivational interviewing;
- Proficient with Word, Excel and general office machines;
- Must be 21 years of age or older;
- Proof of Washington State Driver's License, driving record, and auto insurance; and
- Requires background checks.

Required within first 30 days of employment:

- CPR/First Aid/Blood borne pathogens certifications required.
- Food Handler's Card.
- Must have a negative TB test.
- Full understanding of the CPS reporting requirements.

Preferred Qualifications

- Demonstrated experience working with young people in crisis.
- Demonstrated experience building trust with key community partners.
- Demonstrated experience working with people experiencing homelessness.
- Demonstrated experience working in a Medicaid billable clinical behavioral health setting; or equivalent relevant life experience.
- Master's degree in Human Services, Social Work, Education, Psychology, or other related fields.
- Spanish, Russian, or ASL speakers preferred.
- Previous training in Positive Youth Development, CSEC, Domestic Violence, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Motivational Interviewing, Harm Reduction or Trauma Informed Care.

Northwest Youth Services is an Equal Opportunity employer. Employment is based upon individual qualifications without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, marital status, veteran status, disabilities, political ideology, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status. Alumni of foster care and those who have experienced youth homelessness are encouraged to apply.