

Position Description

PEER SUPPORT CENTRE VOLUNTEER

EFFECTIVE: July 30, 2023 | SUPERVISOR: Peer Support Coordinator

POSITION OVERVIEW

Peer Support Centre Volunteers provide students with confidential, non-professional support that is rooted in the shared experience as students at Western University. The volunteer will create a safe space for their peers through upholding a welcoming, open, and inclusive nature.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Listen: the PSC is a space in which students can meet and chat with a Peer Support Volunteer. Such conversation may include sharing personal experiences, asking questions about resources on campus, sharing success stories, or any other matter of the student's concern.

i. The Peer Support Volunteer will employ appropriate listening and communication skills to provide support to students without judgement.

2. Affirm: the PSC is a space in which student visitors can have their experiences, questions, concerns, and/or stories validated by a peer.

i. The Peer Support Volunteer will affirm and validate the peer's liberty to experience emotions fluidly and will work to ensure that the peer knows that every emotional experience is valid.

3. Resource Recommendation: the PSC will be a space in which Peer Support Volunteers have the knowledge and skillset to explore resource and service options with students, including professional services on campus and in the wider London community.

i. After training, the volunteer will have extensive knowledge of the myriad services available to students at Western University and within London, and will be able to facilitate discussion about resources that may best fit their needs. Each volunteer receives a "Certificate of Completion" after successfully completing the mandatory training.

4. Abide by the Peer Support Centre Principles of Practice and Guidelines of Ethical Practice with respect to ethical issues, confidentiality and appropriate boundaries.

5. Work within the Peer Support Centre operating hours. Volunteers are required to provide a minimum of 8 hours of weekly availability (during operating hours) during which their shifts (totalling 2 hours/week) may be scheduled.

6. Attend all mandatory training and mentorship sessions.

7. Adhere to USC bylaws, policies, and procedures.

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualified candidates for this position must be a current undergraduate student of Western University and will have aptitudes in the following areas:

1. Interpersonal communication: A Peer Support Centre Volunteer is personable, friendly, and requires strong interpersonal communication skills.
2. Respect: A volunteer must demonstrate respect for others, foster inclusivity and contribute to an inclusive, equitable, and safe environment that respects diversity in all its forms.
3. High degree of empathy: Given the highly personal disclosures that may occur between peers in the Centre, a Peer Support Centre Volunteer must be able to empathize with the lived experiences of others.
4. Adaptability and critical thinking: A Peer Support Centre Volunteer should be able to think quickly on their feet and cater resources based on information received during interactions with peers.
5. Sensitivity: A Peer Support Centre Volunteer requires the utmost attention to confidentiality and ethical practice.
6. Value self-determination: A Peer Support Volunteer fosters, values, and respects self-determination in others and refrains from advice giving.

TIME COMMITMENT

Expected time commitment for the position will vary over the term:

1. Peer Support Centre Shifts: 2 hours/week.
2. Mentorship Sessions: 2 hours/ semester, totalling 4 hours/ year.
3. Programming: 3 hours/ semester.
4. Mandatory time commitment for training sessions:
 - i. Training: Dates TBD (ASIST)
 - ii. Virtual Training for all Peer Support Volunteers from August 28th - September 1st (3 hours each evening from 5pm - 8pm).

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

1. Volunteers will learn how to maneuver dynamic situations with confidence and care.
2. Volunteers will become familiar with the nuances of human interaction through working directly with students seeking assistance, all within a safe and inclusive space.
3. Upon program completion, volunteers will have knowledge of the services available on campus and in the greater London community.
4. Volunteers will learn about ethics and boundaries in their role, as well as how to maintain confidentiality and understand its limits.
5. Volunteers will expand their understanding of intersectionality, and will better know how to promote equity, diversity and inclusion inside the Centre and within their everyday lives.
6. Through supporting students in their experiences and learning about the many different elements of wellness, volunteers will play a meaningful role in fostering a culture that aspires to support peers.

If you have any questions about the position or the application process, please contact Nathalie Alaves, Associate Vice President Student Services, at avpss@westernusc.ca