

PSYCHOLOGIST Job Description

Introduction to VAST:

In 1986, a small group of human rights activists and mental health workers gathered in Vancouver to support the flood of refugees arriving from the armed conflicts in South and Central America. They founded the Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST), and this dedicated group of volunteers built what would become BC's largest center for refugee mental health. Today, VAST works with refugees from over 100 countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Our programs and services are offered in over a dozen languages, including Arabic, Farsi, French, Mandarin, and Spanish. We support the mental health of refugees who arrive in British Columbia with psychological trauma as a result of torture, political violence, and other forms of persecution on the basis of race, religion, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

We facilitate the healing process for 1,000 survivors of torture each year, and their families, by providing accessible and culturally appropriate individual and group counselling and therapeutic services. We also provide psycho-legal documentation and support refugee claimants through the asylum process, and are called in to work with Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada when their particular situation requires our support. Canada is a signatory to the UN's Convention Against Torture (1985), and the Refugee Convention (1951), both of which oblige us to protect the rights of survivors of forced displacement, including the Right to Rehabilitation, and to provide safe haven to those who at risk of persecution. VAST is an active member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Victims of Torture (IRCT), the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), and the Canadian Network for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (CNSTT).

Founded on the conviction that 'healing is an act of resistance', for 35 years VAST has employed a province-leading model of trauma-informed mental health service provision. Our work has created and sustained a resilient, inclusive community amongst newcomers, and over More than half of our team identify as survivors themselves, and their voices are represented at all levels of our organization. We do not believe in working alone, and our mission supports a range of advocacy and capacity building activities to strengthen BC's mental health sector for newcomers, and encourage understanding of our work amongst government institutions. In so doing, we relieve demand on the BC healthcare sector, especially in dense urban and more isolated rural areas of BC. VAST is more than a healthcare provider and is known throughout BC as a convener of voices with lived experience of torture and trauma, and an influential advisor to multiple levels of policy makers and practitioners.

Job summary

As the clinical psychologist, you will provide trauma-focused assessments and interventions for individuals and families from a refugee background, who are located in British Columbia. This role also requires preparation of clinical reports for refugee claim processes and other legal matters.

The psychologist works within the multidisciplinary VAST clinical team (Clinical Counsellors, Expressive Arts Therapists, Psychiatrist, Occupational Therapists), as well as with the Executive Director, Intake Coordinator and Social Worker.

Qualifications - Essential

- Master's degree or higher in Psychology and professional membership with the College of Psychologists of British Columbia or other equivalent provincial accreditation body.
- Minimum of 5 years experience as a registered psychologist in a cross-cultural setting, preferably with forced migrants or refugees.
- Extensive clinical experience with refugees and/or refugee claimants. Experience with intake, assessments, treatment plan, and case management.
- Thorough knowledge of theoretical, evidence-based, and culturally appropriate approaches to trauma and recovery.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct assessments and develop treatment plans using standardized measurement tools.
- Demonstrated ability to prepare clinical reports for refugee claim processes and other legal matters.
- Knowledge and understanding of the social and psychological dimensions of forced migration and resettlement, and of the refugee claimant experience.
- Understanding of the Canadian migration pathways and refugee protection mechanisms, as well as the United Nations Convention Against Torture.
- Demonstrated ability to intervene in crisis situations using professional judgment and ethical practice.

Qualifications - Highly Desirable

- Demonstrated experience working with interpreters.
- Ability to speak multiple languages is an asset.

For any of the above that the candidate still needs to possess as skills and experience, they are expected to pursue pathways to inform and update.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Clinical Services and Community Development

- Provides direct high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive, trauma informed clinical services and interventions to best meet the needs of individuals and families from a refugee background currently residing in British Columbia. This includes conducting screening, assessment, trauma-informed individual therapy, and other interventions corresponding to needs. Clinical services may take place via telehealth. The focus is to reduce trauma-related symptoms and increase psychosocial functioning.
- Conduct assessments using clinical interviews and standardized measurements, to assess current symptomatology, psychosocial functioning and diagnosis as appropriate; and facilitate treatment planning and outcome monitoring.
- Establish and maintain a professional and therapeutic relationship within the standards of client profiles, confidentiality laws and the newest clinical research available.
- Writes assessment reports, progress notes and psychological reports to support asylum claims, as needed. Provide psycho-legal assessments and letters to lawyers for the refugee claim process.
- Participate in case allocation meetings with the Intake Team Leader, [and other relevant VAST staff]. Assist Intake Team Leader, [and other relevant VAST teams] in the efficient management and administration of the waiting list.
- Provide casework, referral and/or group work services to improve the health status of torture and trauma survivors awaiting treatment. This may include introducing wait list clients to the availability of group programs.
- Undertake regular case review and follow-up of clients with relevant staff from VAST and/or other agencies involved.
- Participate in case consultations and group and individual clinical supervision sessions.
- Maintain accurate and timely records of all client contact as appropriate within College of Psychologists of British Columbia and VAST guidelines.
- Provides advocacy, crisis intervention, and social support services and referrals when needed.

2. Liaison and Partnerships

- Ongoing development and maintenance of productive relationships and referral pathways between VAST and relevant Stakeholder partners who provide services to newly arrived humanitarian entrants.
- In conjunction with the relevant VAST team members maintain productive partnerships with services throughout BC relevant to the needs of refugees.
- Represent VAST at community consultations for the health and settlement sectors.

3. Reporting

- Provide statistical and narrative information on the clinical program for clinical evaluation, funding applications and reports, and research.
- Prepare other reports as required.

4. Administration and Training

- Gain thorough knowledge of refugee communities and services therein.
- Assist in the evaluation and effectiveness of the services provided.
- Identify gaps in services and develop relevant materials and new services in consultation with other staff.
- Provide input to the development of training materials relevant to the needs of services working with newly arrived refugees. Facilitate these trainings as required.
- Assist other health and welfare organisations to provide relevant service directions for torture and trauma survivors from refugee communities.
- Undertake training about the effects of torture and trauma and the approaches to service provision required by torture survivors.
- Participate in educational and professional development programs.
- Participate in relevant community development, research and/or documentation projects as required.

5. General Personnel

- Participate in VAST Performance Management programs and in the development of an annual Work Plan.
- Participate in VAST monthly team meetings and other relevant meetings.
- Be an active participant in team meetings to maximize contribution to the work of the clinical team and VAST.
- Participate in identifying quality improvement initiatives/strategies.
- Attend and participate in all training opportunities identified for the role.
- Liaise with and seek senior advice as required.

6. As a VAST employee you are expected to:

- Have a commitment to Human Rights, Anti-Torture and Social Justice principles.
- Carry out the role and responsibilities in line with VAST Code of Conduct.
- Maintain confidentiality and exercise discretion in relation to VAST matters.
- Actively seek to improve skills and knowledge that will benefit the organization.
- Project a professional image at all times in all situations.
- Undertake any other duties that may be required within the area of work.

Salary and Conditions:

To be determined in accordance with the Interim Federal Health Program billing process.

The review of this Position Description is due: until fulfilled