

# Promoting a Recovery-focused Workplace:

## Job Descriptions

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Every organization has its own structure for writing job descriptions, but most job descriptions include:

- An overview or brief description of the organization
- A list of job responsibilities
- A list of essential and desired qualifications

Each of these components offers an opportunity for organizations to highlight their commitment to recovery-oriented, trauma-informed, person-centered, integrated care.

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### Organizational Overview

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Typically, job descriptions lead off with a brief description of the organization. To highlight your commitment to these principles of care, make sure the language used in your organizational description speaks to an approach centered on recovery, trauma, person-centered care, and integrated health. For example:

- Direct statement: Good Hope Services is a leading provider of housing and other residential supports to people with substance abuse and mental health challenges, offering a broad range of trauma informed, recovery oriented, person-centered services with a constant focus on integrated physical and behavioral health.
- Indirect statement: At Catalyst for Success, services are delivered in a way that maximizes each service participant's opportunities for self-determination and success in achieving the goals of their choice. Catalyst for Success believes in every person's right to determine their own goals and to achieve a full life of recovery in the community.

Any statement included that provides an overview of the position itself is a chance to further emphasize this approach:

- The Care Manager helps service participants actively pursue their own meaningful life in the community as independently as possible including assisting with housing, employment, physical and behavioral health needs.

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Job  
Responsibilities  
.....

In listing job responsibilities, organizations should again incorporate statements that underscore the organization’s guiding philosophy. Of course, it is essential that the wording throughout the job description uses person-centered, recovery-oriented language. For example, words like collaborate, facilitate, and partner reinforce the idea that program participants are driving services, rather than “provider will do X for participants.”

Some examples:

- Collaborate with service participants to identify and develop their own life goals and a timeline that works for them in reaching those goals
- Work together with clients to help them develop coping skills that will help them manage trauma triggers more effectively
- Partner with program participants to track health metrics that promote health and wellness
- Ensure all service plans consider culture and ethnic backgrounds, customs, needs, beliefs, and preferred language

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If you are seeking someone committed to the principles of recovery, person-centered care, trauma-informed approaches, and integrated health, you should state this clearly in the listing of essential and desired qualifications. For example:

- Commitment to person-centered, recovery-focused and trauma-informed treatment strategies, upholding participants’ rights and self-determination in service provision.
- Minimum three years experience working with people using a recovery perspective

Then list specific skills that speak to these issues, such as:

- De-escalation techniques (trauma)
- Partner with individuals to develop skills to help manage strong emotions
- Ability to assess and explore drug and alcohol use with substance users non-judgmentally
- Familiarity with strategies to manage chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension

- Understanding of behavior change techniques, such as motivational interviewing
- Ability to engage people in their own healthcare and wellbeing, using strategies to increase their motivation and desire for improved health<sup>1</sup>

If specific education and licensing standards are not required for your program, you may want to be flexible in your requirements to further demonstrate your commitment to this approach. Most position descriptions focus on academic credentials, but having a specific degree is not necessarily an indication that a job candidate is committed to the principles of recovery, growth, and well-being. Consider expanding the requirements to allow experience to substitute for education, when possible. For example:

- Master's in Social Work preferred but a combination of experience and education will be considered.

And if you are an agency that values the contributions of people with lived experience (both in roles as peers or as other kinds of providers), you might include a statement at the end of your Job Description:

- Our organization strives to provide reasonable accommodations for any known physical or behavioral health challenge or limitation for qualified employees with disabilities to the extent that the requested accommodation will not impose an undue hardship on the operation of our services.

*This Supplemental Resource was written by Edye Schwartz, DSW, LCSW-R, as part of the Workforce Priorities project, ©2020*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: EMConsulting