



Volunteer Drug and Alcohol Counsellors' Training Program

Since 1989 a Volunteer Addiction Counsellors' Training Program has been running in Perth as a joint project between the Drug and Alcohol Office and Curtin University. Expertise from the Drug and Alcohol Office, the National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University and Edith Cowan University now combine to present this course. Participants who complete the program can apply for recognition of prior learning for Addiction Studies Unit ADS1151- Addiction Studies: Fundamental Concepts offered at Edith Cowan University.

The aim of the program is to train and supervise volunteer counsellors who are attached to specialist drug and alcohol services. Over 600 volunteer counsellors have been trained and have provided counselling services at range of agencies in the metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia.

In 2001 the program was awarded a National Organisational Excellence award from the Ted Noffs Foundation, Sydney. The program was also the winner of the prestigious WA 2001 Premier's Award for Public Sector Management, in the category of Social or Community Development.

All volunteers are placed at alcohol and drug agencies and supervised by experienced counsellors.

There are two major components to the program:

1. An intensive training program comprising eighteen 3½ hour workshops per week in both general and addiction counselling skills. Sessions cover general counselling skills including active listening, empathy, reflection of feelings, use of questions, supervision and confidentiality. Alcohol and other drug counselling skills include raising the issue of alcohol and other drug use, assessment, motivational interviewing, problem solving and goal setting, relapse and giving up. At the conclusion of the training program a weekend training workshop is held. All costs for the workshop are covered by the program.
2. A 12-month work period, in which volunteer counsellors provide a counselling service to one of the agencies taking part in the program. During this part of the program all counsellors are assigned to a supervisor who is responsible for the management of their cases. Volunteers are required to work a minimum of four hours counselling a week and will receive one hours' supervision twice a month.

On successful completion of the training program, participants will be awarded a Certificate through the Drug and Alcohol Office and National Drug Research Institute.. Graduates can also obtain a Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs Work (CHC40412) through the Central Institute of Technology WA.

People interested in applying to be a volunteer counsellor should possess:

- a non-judgemental and open minded attitude towards drug use problems
- a knowledge of, an interest, or background in the alcohol and drug field
- a commitment to working with people with alcohol and other drug-related problems
- excellent interpersonal skills
- an ability to work with people from diverse backgrounds and different needs.

People who have experienced recent alcohol and other drug related problems (i.e. within the past two years) are not eligible to apply.

Agencies offering placements include:

- Palmerston Association Inc.
- South Metropolitan Community Alcohol and Drug Service
- North Metropolitan Community Alcohol and Drug Service
- North East Metropolitan Community Alcohol and Drug Service
- Southeast Metropolitan Community Alcohol and Drug Service
- Mission Australia
- Cyrenian House

Training will be held at:

Drug and Alcohol Office
Training Room
1st Floor, 7 Field Street
MT LAWLEY WA 6050

Saturday,
9.00 am - 12.30 pm

All applicants will be advised on the outcome of their applications to be volunteers. Due to the large number of applications received each year, this may take up to four or five weeks before being notified whether you have been accepted. A shortlist of applicants will be determined and invited for an interview that will be held in May 2015. Training for successful applicants will commence in June 2015.

If you have any enquiries about the program please contact:
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