

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title:	Drug & Alcohol Counsellor (Forensics)
Business Unit/Department:	Adult & Specialist Community Programs
Division:	Drug Health Services
Award/Agreement:	Allied Health Professionals (Victorian Public Sector) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement; Medical Scientists, Pharmacists & Psychologists (Victorian Public Sector) (Single Interest Employers) Enterprise Agreement
Classification:	Social Worker - Grade 2 Community Development Worker - Class 2A; Psychologist - Grade 2
Reports To:	Team Leader - Specialist Services Community Programs Manager Director
Direct Reports:	N/A
Date Prepared/Updated:	23 December 2025

Position Purpose

The Drug & Alcohol Counsellor (Forensics) provides high quality, innovative and evidence-based therapeutic interventions to clients referred through the criminal justice system, though may maintain a small caseload of voluntary/self-referred clients. A key aspect of the role lies in engagement and provision of a positive therapeutic experience to a complex, often marginalised and disenfranchised client cohort. The Forensic Drug and Alcohol Counsellor works to reduce harms attendant upon substance use and associated criminogenic needs across the individual, family and community spectrums.

This position requires a commitment to collaborative practice with a range of stakeholders, both within the criminal justice system, as well as across other internal and external health and welfare systems. To this end the Counsellor requires the use of excellent written and verbal communication skills in order to manage at times competing imperatives, while remaining client-centred in the provision of care.

Business Unit Overview

Drug Health Services delivers care within the Operations Directorate and is the main provider of integrated, multidisciplinary treatment and support services to people with substance use disorders in Melbourne's west. Key features of this service include inpatient and outpatient specialist clinics, community residential withdrawal, dual diagnosis residential rehabilitation, consultation and liaison services, community adolescent and adult services, and specialist women's programs. The service's innovative, person-centred programs include specialist support for adults, women, and children, many of whom have dual diagnoses and/or complex needs associated with trauma, family violence, poverty, and homelessness. The service is

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strengthened through co-location with Western Health metropolitan hospitals, enabling the provision of care across the continuum from acute settings through to community-based treatments and recovery support.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide information, psycho education and therapeutic counselling interventions to adults affected by substance use with Forensic involvement. This role may also involve working with voluntary service users requiring counselling
- Complete Comprehensive AOD Assessments where required and/or directed, through either the forensic or voluntary pathways
- Deliver counselling interventions which consider consumer goals and complexity of issues
- Work collaboratively with the Australian Community Support Organisation – Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (ACSO COATS), Catchment Intake and other service providers to achieve desired outcomes for the organisation and our patients/clients and their families
- Collaborate with WIDAN partner agencies to ensure partnerships facilitate seamless service coordination and enhance the patient experience
- Provide therapeutic interventions that are evidence based and consistent with current best practice standards in the area of substance use treatment.
- Adhere to relevant clinical guidelines and professional ethical standards in the provision of services.
- Ensure the maintenance of client confidentiality and maintenance of comprehensive client records in accordance with funding requirements and Western Health policy and procedures.
- To benefit Forensic clients, maintain relationships with the Courts, Victoria Police and ACSO COATS, notifying them of client attendance, referral and treatment progress, any treatment variations and completions
- Work collaboratively and transparently with Community Corrections Victoria or the Court Integrated Services Program (CISP) staff when identifying and managing client risk in order to reduce risk of harm to both clients and the community.
- Work proactively to ensure that Child Safe Standards are realised in practice, making timely and appropriate notifications where risk of harm to children has been identified.
- Ensure all Duty of Care obligations are met in practice.
- Facilitate referral to appropriate services, including provision of advice & recommendations to clients, linkages with COATS and other drug treatment services, and with relevant community based agencies.
- Competently utilize the ACSO COATS Community Care Portal to report on attendance, motivation, treatment goals, clinical and financial TCA completion
- Be familiar with legislation relevant to the service (e.g. Severe Substance Dependence Treatment Act 2010; Mental Health Act 2014; Health Information Act; Health Records Act).
- Maintain up to date progress notes, case files and data entry in a highly proficient and confidential manner.
- Complete all clinical (e.g. court reports, support letters) documentation as required in a timely manner.
- Contribute to routine data collection and report writing for funding bodies as required.
- Contribute to the achievement of quality improvement, both in terms of individual and program performance by encouraging an environment where high quality work is achieved and supported by the adherence to/development of quality systems documentation.
- Build effective relationships with the client's family and significant others, relevant self-help and mutual aid groups, and other health and welfare services to support and enhance positive outcomes for clients.
- To participate as a member of the Adult and Specialist Services multidisciplinary Team, contributing to the development of collaborative approaches to the development and review of client case plans.
- Foster collegial and collaborative relationships with members of the Drug Health Services multidisciplinary teams, and with practitioners from agencies within the Western Integrated Drug & Alcohol Network (WIDAN) Consortium as well as other organisations.
- Ensure respectful communication and behaviours inline with Western Health values, policy and procedures.
- Ensure relationships with colleagues, patients and consumers are professional and ethical and that cultural differences are respected.

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- Ensure an excellent standard of service is offered by partnering with patients, consumers and the community at all levels of health care provision, planning and evaluation
- Liaise and network with Alcohol & Other Drug services and community based service providers within Victoria. Through these relationships raise the profile of the service and develop integrated service delivery approaches
- Collaborate with WIDAN partner agencies to ensure partnerships facilitate seamless service coordination and enhance the patient experience.
- Support and contribute to the mentoring and supervision of others.
- Complete all mandatory training by the due date.
- Participate in Drug Health Services approved Research projects, maintaining a high standard of ethical conduct, quality service provision and reflective learning
- Conduct external professional training and community education sessions.
- Develop, assist and/or implement innovative projects which are designed to reduce the harms associated with the use of substances.
- Participate in Operational & Clinical Supervision.
- Undertake other duties as directed by the Manager

In addition to the key responsibilities specific to your role, you are required to deliver on the [Key Organisational Accountabilities](#) which are aligned with the Western Health strategic aims.

Key Working Relationships

Internal:

- Drug Health Services employees
- Western Health Staff
- Individual consumers and their families
- WIDAN Consortium agencies staff, Cohealth and IPC Health

External:

- Courts and Corrections
- Centralised Assessment & Intake Service in Southwestern & Northwestern Catchments
- Care & Recovery Coordinators
- Catchment & Planning Function
- Counselling Service Functions
- Non-residential and Residential Withdrawal
- Australian Community Support Organisation – Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Service (ACSO-COATS)
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Drug and Alcohol Community Service Organisations and Community Based Organisations
- GP's, Psychiatrists, Psychologists and all other Allied Health Professionals.

Selection Criteria

Essential:

- Relevant qualifications such as Social Work, Psychology, and/or other equivalent Health or Welfare discipline
- Accreditation as a Clinical Drug Assessor with the Drugs Policy and Services, Department of Health and Human services, or eligible for accreditation
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and a proven capacity to negotiate with clients, staff and other stakeholders
- Demonstrated experience in the provision of Drug & Alcohol services clients and/or their families and groups affected by substance use
- Demonstrated telephone and brief intervention counselling skills
- Demonstrated comprehensive alcohol and drug assessment and counselling skills
- Knowledge of the biological, psychological and social effects of drug use and its impact on people, their families and significant others and the community
- Knowledge of contemporary practices in the drug and alcohol treatment field, particularly those related to drug and alcohol counselling

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- Crisis & Risk management /suicide intervention skills
- Demonstrated ability to effectively manage complex client issues
- Understanding of, and commitment to, the principles and practises of harm minimisation in the drug and alcohol field
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively and within a multi-disciplinary team
- Positive role model in Change Management processes
- Demonstrated sensitivity to the diverse needs of marginalised groups
- Current driver's license
- Computer literacy skills
- A police check and Working with Children's check will be required to be completed for this position
- Computer literacy skills

Desirable:

- Post Graduate qualifications in drug and alcohol treatment, therapeutic interventions or management
- Motivation to engage in further Education to develop Counselling knowledge & expertise
- Maram competencies or willing to undertake training
- An up-to-date knowledge of issues, trends and government policies in the delivery of Drug and Alcohol Services and in the Health industry generally.
- Crisis management /suicide intervention skills
- Awareness of the Alcohol and other drugs sector and the general health and welfare sectors

Additional Requirements

All employees are required to:

- Obtain a police/criminal history check prior to employment
- Obtain a working with children check prior to employment (if requested)
- Obtain an Immunisation Health Clearance prior to employment
- Report to management any criminal charges or convictions you receive during your employment
- Comply with relevant Western Health clinical and administrative policies and guidelines.
- Comply with and accept responsibility for ensuring the implementation of health and safety policies and procedures
- Fully co-operate with Western Health in any action it considers necessary to maintain a working environment, which is safe, and without risk to health
- Protect confidential information from unauthorised disclosure and not use, disclose or copy confidential information except for the purpose of and to the extent necessary to perform your employment duties at Western Health
- Safeguard children and young people in our care, by ensuring that your interactions are positive and safe, and report any suspicions or concerns of abuse by any person internal or external to Western Health
- Be aware of and comply with relevant legislation: Public Administration Act 2004, Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations 2017), Fair Work Act 2009 (as amended), the Privacy Act 1988 and responsibilities under s141 Health Services Act with regard to the sharing of health information, the Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes, Part 5A and 6A Family Violence Protection Act 2008, Safe Patient Care Act 2015, Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2023
- Be aware of and comply with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees and other Western Health employment guidelines

General Information

- Redeployment to other services or sites within Western Health may be required
- Employment terms and conditions are provided according to relevant award/agreement
- Western Health is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing for its employees a work environment which is free of harassment or discrimination. The organisation promotes diversity and awareness in the workplace
- Western Health is committed to Gender Equity

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- Western Health provides support to all personnel experiencing family and domestic violence
- This position description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work that is to be performed by the person appointed to the role. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required. Western Health reserves the right to modify position descriptions as required. Employees will be consulted when this occurs
- Western Health is a smoke free environment

I confirm I have read the Position Description, understand its content and agree to work in accordance with the requirements of the position.

Employee's Name: _____

Employee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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