**Community Outreach Workers[[1]](#footnote-1) - Employment Contract**

**Name of Employee:**

**Date of Employment:**

**Duration of Employment Contract:**

**Starting Wage:** Recommended $15 - $25 hourly based on experience and workplace requirements. (See Guide for paying peers: <http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Educational%20Materials/Epid/Other/peer_payment-guide_2018.pdf>)[[2]](#footnote-2)

*Adherence to expectations and follow up:*

The following expectations have been developed through consultations with peers working in overdose response settings, management staff at organizations involved in overdose response, as well as the Harm Reduction team at the BC Centre for Disease Control. The expectations are laid out based on the Policies and Procedures of [Organization], as well as the [Guide for Organizations Employing People Who Use Substances](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/170e646d-bcc0-4370-96d7-7cf2822a1869/work-harmreduction-20110314.pdf) developed by International Harm Reduction Development Program at Open Society Foundations in 2010.

The organization is committed to supporting employees negotiate and adhere to expectations with a strengths-based and harm-reductive approach, and it is expected and encouraged that employees will be in regular contact with the management to ensure they are well-supported and able to meet expectations, especially in situations of ethical complexity and ambiguity.

[Note: This contract was developed by individuals with lived experience currently working in these roles. Organizations may tailor this contract as per their needs.]

1. **Organizational Accountability**
   1. [Organization] will have policies in place to address violence and discrimination, with intent and consideration for the person experiencing the harms of violence and discrimination.
   2. Management will focus on behaviour and “fitness for duty” rather than suspicion of illegal substance use.
   3. Management will not conduct substance testing to determine substance use by employees
   4. Management and staff will not comment or share judgements, positively or negatively, on an employee’s apparent increased or decreased substance use.
   5. Management will not require staff or clients to disclose confidential information about other clients or staff
   6. Management will be cognizant and tolerant of physical reactions that an employee who uses substances has no control over, and that do not, by themselves, compromise the job. Examples:

* Profuse sweating
* Pinned or enlarged pupils
* Itchy skin and/or what might look like exacerbated scratching
* Feeling tired or sleepy during methadone acclimation periods (so long as this does not affect their ability to work)
  1. Management has a responsibility ensure the safety of clients and staff, and may intervene in the event that anyone is:
* Are exhibiting signs of agitation or irritability which may put themselves or others at risk.
* Are exhibiting signs of disorientation which may put themselves or others at risk.
* Are exhibiting uncontrolled/erratic movements or other signs of impaired motor control which may put themselves or others at risk.

1. **Fitness for Work**
   1. Regardless of substance use, while representing the organization employees are expected to perform their professional duties in a reliable, competent, and respectful manner.
   2. [Organization] does not require abstinence in order for employees to perform professional duties. This means employees may use or be under the influence while on site, however, employees must use substances in a way that has been agreed upon between [Organization] and employee.
   3. [Organization] expects employees to determine their own fitness for work, and to discuss with leadership if they feel unable to perform professional duties.
   4. [Organization] may intervene in the event employees are:

* Exhibiting behaviors related to fatigue which may impair their ability to assess and maintain environmental safety for clients and co-workers (e.g. “nodding”, napping, etc.).
* Exhibiting signs of agitation or irritability which may impair the safety of clients and co-workers.
* Exhibiting signs of disorientation.
* Exhibiting impaired ability to communicate (i.e. heavily slurred/ incomprehensible speech, delayed or absent response)
* Exhibiting uncontrolled/erratic movements or other signs of impaired motor control which may put themselves or others at risk.

1. **Confidentiality** 
   1. Employees will respect the confidentiality of service users. This includes but is not limited to disclosing the identity of clients, their HIV and/or HCV status, or whether they use or sell substances.
2. **Scheduling**
   1. Community Outreach Workers will be scheduled in pairs
   2. Each employee may work no more than 30 hours/ week (this includes 5 shifts of 6 hours each). Any work >30/hours would be marked as “overtime” and requires 1.5 times the usual hourly compensation (unless the additional hours are as a result of a shift switch, resulting in balancing of hours over the course of 4 weeks).
   3. Shifts must be assigned in a manner that allows for a 30 minute hand-over period between employees.
3. **Attendance**
   1. Employees must notify [Organization] if they are unable to attend any allocated shift. Although there is some flexibility surrounding missed shifts, failure to communicate about reasons for absence will result in removal from scheduled shifts.
   2. Employees who are sick or need personal time off will discuss with management, and may NOT switch their shift with their colleagues unless agreed upon between management and employee
   3. Three missed shifts without explanation will result in removal from the schedule. A meeting between employee and management may be warranted to be re-allocated shifts.
4. **Breaks at Work**
   1. Employees are entitled to two 10 minute breaks over the course of their six hour shift (one every 2 hours). Additionally, a 30 minute lunch/ dinner break may also be taken.
   2. Employees may use their own substances during breaks and are encouraged to inform site staff when they are using to ensure everyone’s safety.
5. **Inappropriate Behavior:**
   1. **Violent or Discriminatory Behavior**

* There is a zero tolerance policy towards any behaviour that could be considered harmful to service users. Anyone seen engaging in such behaviour will have their contract immediately terminated. These behaviours include:
  + - Use of violent and discriminatory language, including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, poor bashing, body shaming, substance use shaming, or any other language which a service user or co-worker has identified as making them feel unsafe.
    - Sexualized language and un-solicited comments about service users’ physical appearance.
    - Verbal threats, intimidation and baiting/escalation.
    - Non-consensual touching of any kind.
  1. **Purchasing/ Selling Substances and Dealer Referrals**
* Employees may not purchase or sell illicit substances within the immediate vicinity of the organization.
* Office equipment, including phone, fax, and email may not be used to purchase or sell illicit substances.
* Employees must separate their personal illicit substance use from their professional life.
  + - While it is the professional duty of employees to inform service users about the quality and purity of street substances, and warn them if there are dangers of overdose or adulterants, employees should not make referrals to other substance users/ dealers.
    - While employees may use substances on shift (during their breaks), they may not purchase from, sell to, or share substances with service users.
* Employees may not receive free substances or sex as tokens of appreciation from service users.
  1. **Borrowing/Lending Money and other Transactions:**
* Employees may not lend to or borrow money or other trade-able goods from service users.

1. **Anti-discrimination and Fairness in the Workplace:**
   1. Employees are expected to uphold the anti-discrimination and anti-violence policies of [Organization] and adhere to a harm reduction philosophy.
   2. Employees are required to serve everyone in an equitable manner, meeting context-specific needs based on services provided by [Organization].
2. **Substance Use and Triggering Issues**
   1. The organization strives to foster respectful working relationships between employees who use substances and those who do not. The organization will make maximum effort to support all employees, regardless of whether they use substances, to cope with any triggering issues.
3. **Dual Relationships/Professional Boundaries:**
   1. Dual relationships are to be expected in experiential-based work, meaning sometimes personal relationships overlap into professional settings, especially when working as a service provider in community. To mitigate the potential for harm caused to Employees and service users because of these dual relationships and the inherent imbalance of power created by a service provider/service user relationship, we ask that:

* Employees can, and are encouraged to transfer duties to a co-worker in the event friends or family are accessing a service. Especially in situations where confidentiality issues or conflict of interest may arise.
* Employees adhere to the expectations outlined in this document while on shift, regardless of pre-existing or dual relationships.

1. **Substance Treatment Programs and Withdrawal** 
   1. The organization commits itself to allocate time off from work for employees who enroll in experimental or established substance-related programs (maintenance, tapering, or abstinence).
   2. The organization will take a supportive position toward employees enrolled in these programs (i.e. understanding issues with punctuality or absences from work).

By signing below, the [Organization] and Community Outreach Worker agrees that they have read, understood, and are accountable to the standards outlined in this contract.

Employee:

*Signature*

*Name*

*Date*

[Organization]:

*Signature*

*Name*

*Date*

1. The job title should be determined with the individual with lived experience that is being hired [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It is also recommended that full-time employees (however the organization defines “full time”) get one paid personal day per month for their mental wellness. This may include a sick day or a vacation day. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)