INDEPENDENCE HOUSE, INC.
JOB DESCRIPTION

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER ADVOCATE

Hours: Various Day and Evening Shifts & Weekend Shifts Available
Salary: To be negotiated, but highly competitive
Benefits: Holiday, Sick & Vacation Time

Independence House, Inc. (IH) is a comprehensive domestic & sexual violence community based agency and shelter program in Barnstable County that focuses on meeting unique and cultural needs of survivors and their children. The IH Emergency Domestic Violence Shelter is a fully inclusive pet and therapeutic animal friendly environment. We provide safety, food, shelter, advocacy, counseling and other resources to assist survivors in rebuilding violence-free lives for themselves and their children. IH is committed to the values of inclusivity, equality, anti-oppression, non-hierarchical structure, and a non-judgmental and empowerment framework. IH works closely with other agencies in the community, to provide a comprehensive network of resources for survivors of violence and their children. IH works with these agencies and other community groups to provide education, prevention and training about domestic & sexual violence toward community transformation and change. Please see our website at www.independencehouse.org for more information.

The Shelter Advocate is responsible for providing support and advocacy to victims of domestic and sexual violence and their children in the emergency shelter. The Shelter Advocate works closely with shelter children advocates to offer and provide services for parents and children at the shelter, including intakes, assessments, advocacy, case management, safety planning, educational and recreational activities, crisis counseling, and ongoing emotional support. The Advocate also collaborates with the Children Exposed to Domestic Violence staff, the IH Clinical Director & Shelter Director and to provide comprehensive services to families at the shelter. The Advocate represents IH through participation in community and statewide meetings, collaborations, and coalitions; documents as appropriate, prepares rooms/units for new survivors, assures safety and attend supervision and team meetings. The Shelter Advocate is an awake position. Work shifts may include days, evenings, weekends, overnights, and holidays to ensure adequate coverage of the shelter program. Full-time Shelter advocates are scheduled to work designated shifts Monday through Friday. Regular Part-time, Variable part-time/Relief Shelter Advocates provide weekend and overnight coverage in addition to weekday and holiday coverage as needed.

RESPONSIBILITIES / SPECIFIC JOB DUTIES

Provide Comprehensive Advocacy, Case Management and Support Services to Adults Who Have Been Impacted By Domestic & Sexual Violence, Including:

- Trauma informed crisis intervention, intakes, advocacy and safety planning, emotional support, to adults/youth in the shelter, including assessment and development of safety plans, parenting support, information, education & referral and individual action plans
- Make referrals and advocate for connections to community resources such as educational, housing, medical care, childcare, etc.
- Coordinate and facilitate weekly Support Group/Youth Group and various programming in partnership with survivors
- Maintain up-to-date information on survivors, intakes, and exits

- Coordinate with shelter team to provide childcare to parents as needed
- Coordinate with the Children Exposed to Domestic Violence Program Children's Advocate to provide ongoing parental support
- Address issues of child abuse and neglect in accordance with MA law, follow and work alongside appropriate agencies
- In partnership with survivor, develop and facilitate group activities

Provide Support to Adult & Parent Survivors:

- Offer weekly case management meetings with shelter survivors to focus on individual needs and link families to appropriate resources
- Promote parent-child relationship building, and offer parenting education and emotional support to parents including creative, non-violent approaches to discipline, child development, children's behavioral and mental health, transitions into and out of shelter, impact of violence on children, etc.
- Provide and coordinate language and cultural support as needed
- Work closely with Child Advocates to provide coordinated family case management services
- Provide support to single adult survivors as needed
- Assists with the daily living needs of shelter survivors
- Completes intakes (both direct service and paperwork) within 7 hours of survivor entering shelter
- Provides shelter orientations to survivors within 24 hours of client's entry into shelter
- Completes an exit survey with survivors leaving shelter as well as required exit paperwork
- Facilitates cooperative living, peer support, and resident participation in shelter programming
- Model and actively promote positive, nurturing interactions between adults and children in shelter
- Communicate shelter agreements and community living guidelines to survivors as outlined in the shelter intake. Promptly address difficulties or problems that arise per agency protocol, addresses any living concerns with survivors and maintains documentation of the discussions
- Model non-violent conflict resolution and uses non-violent forms of guidance
- In conjunction with the shelter director and the shelter team, the shelter advocate take appropriate steps to deal with emergency situations with the goal of maintaining the safety of all survivors
- Interacts sensitively with traumatized populations and handle crises appropriately
- Understands and utilize principles of trauma informed care and the empowerment philosophy of advocacy
- Provides direct service to survivors on the hotline. Hours may vary

Other Responsibilities:

- Work closely with shelter and IH Community Based Team as necessary
- Attend weekly on-site individual clinical consultation meetings and other direct service related meetings
- Attend collaboration meetings
- Submit monthly reports and request forms with collaborative agencies & funders as appropriate
- Assist with training and supervision of volunteers and interns in providing support to families
- Create and contribute to daily log entries to facilitate communication with co-workers regarding client or program updates
- Review daily log entries, emails, and memo log at the start of shift
- Consults regularly with team of advocates, shelter director and clinical director
- Maintains client files, agency files, statistics, forms, and other record keeping as required
- Completes all paperwork by the end of each shift
- Completes facilities check for safety to ensure the safety and security of the shelter
- Packs client belongings as needed; cleans/sanitizes rooms after survivors exit; prepares room for the next client

General Shelter Support & Program Development (all full-time staff responsibilities):

- Performs routine chores and cleaning tasks assigned to ensure the safety and cleanliness of the shelter facility. Addresses emergency facilities issues as they arise
- Assists with stocking, food and other supplies meant for client use
- Maintain shelter office space in accordance with shelter program procedures

- Completes and file appropriate request forms to address maintenance and security issues as they arise
- Maintain strict standards of confidentiality
- Effectively manages priorities and tasks to meet deadlines
- Utilize critical thinking skills, exercises appropriate personal responsibility, and retain a positive outlook amidst challenging circumstances
- Provide a welcoming and supportive environment for survivors
- Be responsible for 24 hour sexual assault and domestic crisis line shift(s) and share emergency cell phone coverage with all IH staff
- Help with answering phones and shelter door
- Do general upkeep of office and shelter space
- Respond to emergencies and conflict resolution meetings as needed (possibly including some weekends and evenings)
- Adhere to agency policies and work rules, including strict adherence to IH confidentiality policies and code of ethics
- Maintains agency forms as required
- Attends agency meetings as required, including monthly mandatory shelter team meeting and weekly supervision meetings
- Attend trainings and continuing education activities as appropriate
- Participate in team meetings
- Participate in shelter staff retreats and other all-staff retreats and trainings
- Facilitate or participate in community education presentations as appropriate
- Help take care of minor repairs
- Performs other duties as assigned

Work Environment and Physical Demands:

- Work is primarily performed in a secured residential facility setting with communal areas, as well as in an office setting
- Work requires the ability to ascend or descend stairs, as well as the agility to move about and position self efficiently to perform physical tasks and address emergency situation
- Position requires the ability to monitor and observe the activities of survivors, and children of survivors, within the facility
- Regularly exposed to cleaning products, chemicals and solvent. Occasionally work in outdoor weather conditions
- Routinely requires the ability to move or transport supplies or equipment weighing up to 30 pounds unassisted, while ascending or descending stairs
- Some exposure to pets/therapy animals (small dogs, cats, fish, hamsters)

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's Degree Preferred
- Experience and ability to work with individuals of all ages, races, culture, gender, sexual orientation and abilities and their parents
- 3+ years of experience with case management and/or working with survivors of violence of diverse communities (i.e. based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender identity, class, education, immigration status, etc.) highly desired
- Knowledge of trauma & manifestations
- Knowledge of and sensitivity to issues of domestic violence; commitment to social justice
- Commitment to and practice of non-violence, including non-corporal discipline of children
- Ability to deal with crisis situations effectively and calmly
- Ability to be flexible to accommodate immediate survivor and agency needs
- Ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously
- Availability to work evenings and occasional weekends
- Familiarity with community and social service agencies/resources locally and statewide
- Experience in creatively advocating and providing support to families
- Some knowledge and experience with program development

- Ability to offer emotional support / excellent listening skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to address conflict and contribute alternative solutions in a direct, constructive and positive manner
- Ability to participate in collective, non-hierarchical decision making within the small team and all staff environments
- Ability to work both independently and as a team member
- Ability to work well with a variety of people -- including staff, interns, language advocates and volunteers, both at IH and in other organizations (social service, government, legal, etc.)
- Computer proficiency

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Completion of the IH Domestic & Sexual Violence training in addition to shelter training
- Satisfactory Criminal Background Check
- Must possess a valid MA driver's license and proof of vehicle insurance, and have access to a vehicle during work hours
- Bilingual/bicultural LGBTQ and/or persons of color encouraged to apply
- Must obtain or maintain account with a financial institution for direct deposit of paychecks

To Be Considered: Please send a resume and a cover letter to: Joaniew@indhouse.net
Please write "IH Application- [Your Last Name]" in the subject line.
No phone calls, please.

Independence House, Inc.is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition, or disability and denial of family medical leave and pregnancy leave. This search is being conducted by Independence House, Inc.