

Responses to Key Selection Criteria for Client Care and Support Worker Role

Qualifications

1. Tertiary qualifications in an appropriate discipline such as community development, health or social sciences or commensurate experience.

I am a Diploma of Community Services graduate. I have four years of experience in the community services sector, two years of experience volunteering at Thorne Harbour Health, and one year of experience volunteering at the Positive Living Centre during the pandemic.

Skills and experience

2. A demonstrated understanding of community organisations and commitment to the principles of community development and social justice. Clearly demonstrated ability to maintain confidentiality of clients, staff, visitors and volunteers, and the ability to maintain appropriate boundaries and relationships.

It took me years to realise that the reason I was deeply unhappy working in the corporate sector, despite being good at my job, etc., and the reason I felt this way was because, ultimately, the underlying purpose for everything I was doing, was to maximise the wealth of shareholders of financial institutions, which was increasing the already massive wealth gap between the rich and the poor. I realise now that the reason I wanted more was that I have a deep passion for the values of community work and social justice. Since this epiphany, I have volunteered with various community organisations to gain practical experience and knowledge.

As a Community Support Worker at Diamond Valley Community Support, I have developed a strong understanding of the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of clients, staff, visitors, and volunteers. I understand the sensitivity and seriousness of this work and take privacy responsibility very seriously. Additionally, I have experience maintaining appropriate boundaries and relationships with clients, staff, visitors, and volunteers, which is vital for building trust and maintaining professional relationships. Setting and keeping boundaries was a hard lesson for me to learn! Several clients have asked if I wanted to be friends with them and asked for my number. It took this happening for me to realise that it never should have gotten to this point and that I had overshared and been more of a friend to the clients rather than being professional.

My studies have taught me how to work with vulnerable and disadvantaged clients with complex needs. Units such as Analyse Impacts of Sociological Factors on Clients in Community Work & Services taught me about Intersectionality, Oppression, Community Disadvantage and Social Justice/Injustice. Regarding confidentiality, albeit not in community services, in my time in the corporate sector working for Coutts & Co, I was working on a compliance project that involved analysing a significant amount of confidential client information on a highly sensitive matter. I was responsible for maintaining accurate records and storing all documentation compliant with Coutts & Co's policies and procedures. I often had to have conversations with bankers about their customers, document them in a way

that didn't breach the customer's privacy, and redact personal financial information like tax returns and company financials. This enabled me to maintain the customers' right to privacy and progress the project in a way that complies with our ethical and legal responsibilities.

3. Demonstrated sensitivity to the issues of people living with HIV, gay men and other people and communities at risk, including an understanding of how the HIV epidemic impacts the daily lives of gay men and other men who have sex with men, injecting drug users and people living with HIV. Ability to work within a framework that is LGBTIQ+ affirmative and supports a stigma and discrimination-free community for all LGBTIQ+ people and those at risk of or living with HIV.

I have lived experience of discrimination as a queer, neuro-diverse, gender-diverse person of colour. I also have lived experience of addiction, homelessness, the recovery journey and lapsing/relapsing, barriers to seeking support, and family violence, and I understand the ways that stigma and discrimination contribute to health and social issues, including criminalisation and unstable housing. I have experienced shame, social isolation, judgment and ignorance navigating our healthcare and justice systems.

As a volunteer in the Outreach Program, I attended sex-on-premise venues to provide information on harm reduction, most commonly relating to exposure to HIV during sex and via substance use practices. This role included communicating with people who use drugs regularly, developing rapport and trust in a high-pressure setting, and balancing being visible with being discreet. This experience expanded my knowledge and understanding of harm reduction and my ability to communicate information effectively. And because of the complexity of health and social issues that people were experiencing, it opened my eyes to how hard it can be for some to access support.

4. Demonstrated ability to analyse needs, plan and develop services and manage quality within a service-delivery setting.

My studies have taught me how to work with vulnerable and disadvantaged clients with complex needs. Units such as Assess Co-existing Needs and Analyse Impacts of Sociological Factors on Clients in Community Work & Services taught me about frameworks such as Intersectionality and Oppression and how these can help us see how layered and varied client needs can be. An example that reflects the nature of what we learned was our "Sims" assessment, wherein Melbourne Polytechnic paid actors to play the role of the client, and we were assessed on how we applied what we'd learned to a client scenario. In my role play, the fictional client Kim was living in public housing, and this was at risk because of noise complaints arising from the family violence that the client was experiencing. She was struggling with her mental and physical health, and the income support she was receiving wasn't enough to feed her kids. The assessment required me to work with the client to prioritise needs, develop three relevant referrals, and give Kim access to information and resources to make an informed decision about the next steps, enabling self-determination and empowering her to move forward. The assessment also required us to submit case notes and a case plan.

5. Well-developed computer skills, including ability to learn new software packages as required and to use computer-based systems on a daily basis.

Computer literacy and proficiency in the MS Office suite were the core of my seven-year project management work. I had to create, edit and review hundreds of planning documents, PowerPoint presentations and spreadsheets. In my last role at Coutts & Co., I regularly ran and participated in group meetings with stakeholders, including preparing meeting agendas, documenting decisions and actions in meeting minutes, making and presenting PowerPoint slides, and completing all project documentation required by the organisation's processes.

6. Demonstrated organisational skills and an ability to handle a number of concurrent tasks, to prioritise, and to perform well under pressure.

Task and time management are critical to any role in project delivery and were particularly important in my role at Independent Television News (ITN). I was the lead analyst on a project centred on significantly upgrading the Finance team's accounting software. A large part of my role was developing a project plan, which quantified the effort and time required to complete the necessary tasks to deliver the project so that we could set realistic and achievable timelines for rollout to the business. I had to liaise with our tech suppliers and a variety of internal stakeholders and create a spreadsheet containing all of the required actions, who was responsible for each task, and when they were due to be completed. The planning document I drafted enabled the project manager to identify and plug resource gaps, get approval to proceed with the project, and, once in flight, track our progress and provide meaningful status updates to and on our stakeholders.

7. Good verbal, interpersonal and written communication skills, and the ability to work relatively independently without close supervision, to work in a team, and to work with a goal-oriented approach.

Verbal and written communication were at the core of my seven years working in project management. In all of the projects I worked on at NAB, ITN, and the Royal Bank of Scotland Group, I had to manage engagement with various stakeholders across each business. In my last role at Coutts & Co, to ensure relevant parts of the company were fully involved in the change process, I regularly ran and participated in group meetings, which included preparing meeting agendas, documenting decisions and actions in meeting minutes, making and presenting Powerpoint slides, and completing all project documentation that the organisation's procedures required. This enabled me to get the necessary approvals from the project sponsors to move forward with updating the bank's policies and procedures to comply with new government regulations.

My role as a Project Analyst at NAB involved working in a team environment at NAB's head office at Docklands and working independently and unsupervised with bankers at client-facing locations. When I worked on the Bank of the Future Program, my role required me to fly to Tasmania every week for six months. I mostly travelled by myself and worked on-site Mondays to Wednesdays to support bankers at our pilot locations in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. The rest of the week, my Project Manager required me to work closely with her and be accessible to her and

the rest of the project team because I was responsible for responding to technical queries. The outcome was that I learnt how to adapt to different working environments, complete tasks autonomously, and be flexible in getting things done. Additionally, I learnt the importance of regular communication with my manager to ensure adequate visibility and identification of potential risks and issues in my conversations with bankers on-site.