

COMPEER VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

Importance of Position:

Befriending a person managing a mental illness, and offering regularly scheduled, supportive companionship is vital for those recovering from mental illness; you help them to enjoy a more productive life, prevents costly rehospitalization, and promotes their recovery. Your time is very valuable to Friends recovering of mental health services.

Qualifications:

Positive motivation to be of help to another person
Good listening skills
Reliable - keeps commitments
Sensitive to needs and characteristics of mentally ill people

Responsible to: Compeer Program Director

Responsibilities:

Complete one Compeer Orientation session
Establish & maintain friendship with matched friend of the same gender
Submit required monthly reports to Compeer Office

Training Provided:

Orientation to persons with mental illness, types of disorders and treatments, communication skills (listening, empathy, etc.), limit setting and expectations.

Benefits of Volunteering:

Make a new friend while being of service
Make a real difference in the life of a mentally ill person
Opportunity to achieve personal goals

Time Commitment:

Four (4) hours per month, at least weekly contact with friend, in person or by phone

Length of Commitment:

A minimum of one year

Contact Person:

Compeer Program Director at (610) 541-0790

The Compeer Process

1. Compeer recruits volunteer applicants through media, speaking engagements, colleges, churches, informational events and other means.
2. A potential volunteer calls the Compeer office to inquire about the program. Initial screening occurs in this conversation, as the person decides whether to proceed.
3. A Compeer Volunteer Application is mailed out with an explanatory letter, a brochure, a Volunteer Job Description and an invitation to the next Training Session.
4. Volunteer applicants return their completed Application with references. Some individuals may opt not to pursue Compeer Volunteering and do not return their Application. This is seen as a natural screening process.
5. Compeer checks references, including one from an employer.
6. Compeer calls the applicant to schedule an interview. Compeer conducts an in-depth interview to further orient the person to Compeer. The volunteer makes a reservation for the next Compeer Training.
7. The volunteer attends the initial Compeer Training, held monthly for all new volunteers. If someone cannot attend this regularly scheduled training session, a one to one session is held instead.
8. Compeer staff calls the referring mental health professional to:
 - confirm their client's interest and current location
 - explain the professional's role in the Compeer Process
 - schedule a personal interview with the Compeer staff, professional and client
9. If the professional confirms the above, the Compeer staff meets with the consumer and the referrer to go over the program and assess the consumer's level of functioning. After this meeting, the Compeer staff calls the volunteer and advises him/her to schedule a meeting with the professional. Special Note: Please *do not* share the volunteer's availability until the final in-person screening is completed. The match may not work out and Compeer never wants to set a person up for disappointment. The mental health professional has the final screening responsibility for the volunteer's suitability for matching with their client.
10. If the therapist and the volunteer agree to proceed with the match, the professional makes an introduction of the two.
11. After the two new friends have met, and decided to continue, the Volunteer calls the Compeer office to confirm activation of the match. Compeer sends the Volunteer a confirmation letter, Monthly Report Forms and information about the Compeer Activity Fund (helps clients pay their own way on outings).
12. Volunteers submit Monthly Reports to Compeer, sharing activities, hours and observations. As needed, Compeer will share concerns from these reports, requesting discussion between the volunteer and referrer. Volunteer monitoring also includes periodic phone calls to and from the Compeer office.
13. The best matches are those in which the Volunteer feels supported by the mental health professional, Compeer staff and other volunteers who make themselves available to answer questions or help with problem-solving.