



JOB TITLE: **Peer Support Specialist**  
STATUS: **Full-time, Exempt (40 hours/week)**  
BASE SALARY: **Starting at \$58,240 annually**  
REPORTS TO: **Peer Support Director**  
DEADLINE TO APPLY: **July 31, 2024**

### **ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW:**

Founded in 2005, Heart and Soul Inc. is a 100% peer-founded, operated, and governed organization hosting over 6,000 program visits per year. Our Drop-In Center/Office, Self-Help Centers, Wellness Programming and Anti-stigma Project offer a variety of mental health inclusive and recovery-oriented support opportunities for youth, young and adults within San Mateo County, and beyond.

Heart and Soul operates two main programs and one anti-stigma project.

The Peer Support Program, called **Helping Our Peers Emerge (H.O.P.E.)**, is transforming the lives of adults who have a high rate of repeated admission to acute psychiatric care facilities and are at high utilization of mental health care. All too often, these vulnerable individuals are caught in a revolving door of being released into an environment where they have little or no support network and lack any substantive connection to their family or community, which sets them up in short order to be admitted to a locked facility once again. Our service helps break this cycle by providing one-on-one peer support to these individuals, often starting before they even leave the hospital. The H.O.P.E. Program, consisting of a team of Peer Mentors, is a part of San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) and contracted with Heart and Soul, a peer-founded, operated, and governed organization. All H.O.P.E. Program participants must be referred through the County's BHRS Liaison. Also offered our unique peer support groups in both virtual and in-person format.

Other peer support is mainly provided through the **Total Wellness Clud Program** and **Seeing Through Stigma Project**. It is important that all the Heart and Soul staff are properly trained (including new employee on-boarding) not only in compliance with BHRS and Grantor requirements but also to ensure consistency, standardization, and the highest level of professional peer support.

Seeing Through Stigma (STS) is a long-standing Anti-Stigma Project of Heart and Soul. STS highlights the voices of people who have experienced mental health challenges to combat stigma in our community. The program pushes against stereotypes and shares hope through real stories of recovery and journeys towards wellness. STS is changing the conversation from "diagnosis" to "dialogue," and from "mental illness" to "mental resilience."

The Total Wellness Club Program supports clients with rehabilitation and recovery activities such as attending socialization activities, group meetings, and improving the skills of daily living.

### **PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

A Peer Support Specialist for the H.O.P.E. Program is an individual who utilizes their lived experience with mental health and/or substance abuse challenges and recovery to help people reintegrate into the community following discharge from an acute psychiatric hospitalization. The H.O.P.E. Peer Support Specialist meets regularly with individuals they support before and after discharge to support them during transitions between different levels of care.

The H.O.P.E. Peer Support Specialist provides **mainly in-person** one-on-one support (i.e. provide guidance, motivation, emotional support, role modeling, mentoring, and WRAP planning) in a way that cultivates personal empowerment of the individual and an environment of mutual peer support. The H.O.P.E. Peer Support Specialist will identify and provide linkages to available San Mateo County support resources (i.e. whole health care services, housing, education, employment, benefits and other community resources).

The H.O.P.E. Peer Support Specialist attends recurrent and ad hoc work meetings as needed. Must also complete, as per set timeline, administrative tasks required by the Program, grants, contracts or the Organization such as (but not limited to) Program Participant interaction notes, timecards, expense reports.

The H.O.P.E. Peer Support Specialist also supports other Heart and Soul programs, events, activities as needed (e.g. Open Houses, Total Wellness and Peer Support Groups, Conferences, Trainings and more).

### **SPECIFICATIONS, QUALIFICATIONS, AND COMPETENCY FACTORS**

**Personal lived experience of mental health and/or substance abuse challenge and recovery and willingness to strategically share their own life experiences through peer support.** A recovery-based orientation is provided that encompasses the understanding of person-centered care; the belief that a crisis can be transformational, and that people develop wisdom from their experiences and can be empowered to find new ways to keep themselves well and achieve their life goals.

**Peer Support Specialist training/certification. Experience with one-on-one mental health peer support. W.R.A.P. facilitator training a plus.** Ability to deliver services in a culturally responsive manner and comfort working with people from diverse backgrounds, lifestyles, and worldviews. Knowledge and skills using trauma-informed and recovery model, peer values, core competencies and code of ethics.

**An openness to learning and flexibility to modify practices and approaches.** Strong communication (written and verbal) and interpersonal skills. Team player with an open attitude.

**Strong organizational skills, attention to detail, ability to prioritize tasks and manage time effectively.** Ability to manage multiple tasks, schedule meetings, organize work/files, be punctual.

**Ability to collaborate effectively with other staff, clinical providers and community partners.** Knowledge of San Mateo County support services (i.e. whole health care services, housing, education, employment, benefits and other community resources) is preferred.

**Ability to perform some physical tasks, including assisting clients with public transportation.** Ability to be comfortable working in a variety of environments, including hospitals, social service agency facilities, group homes, and other community locations.

**Computer/Mobile device skills:** Basic of Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook), Internet. Ability to learn new software (e.g. Data Collection/Interaction Notes Logging)

**Bilingual in English and Spanish or Tagalog or Chinese languages preferred,** but not required and a pay differential will be applied.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

All staff must identify as having personal lived experience of a mental health and/or substance use issue(s) and recovery and be willing to establish and maintain nurturing relationships with peers/participants, supporting them sometimes in crisis or distress. Peer Support Specialists must possess a valid California driver's license, personal car insurance, and have an excellent driving record. Staff will be required to use their own vehicle to drive to various geographical locations **within or beyond San Mateo County** (mileage reimbursed based on Heart and Soul Inc's policy). Occasional travel to conferences, events or trainings may be required.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS & PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

The work is performed at various community locations and/or in an office environment and requires local and/or out of County travel. The position requires driving to meetings +/-25% of the time, sitting for in-person or virtual meetings +/-50% and office desk work +/-20% of the time. Ability to perform routine bending, stooping, twisting, and reaching. Lifting may be required occasionally, of no more than 20 lbs. at a time. On a daily basis, the employee uses a laptop computer, keyboard, mouse, camera, mobile phone, fax machine, copier, and video conferencing equipment/software. The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

## **EMPLOYMENT STATUS/DETAILS**

- This is a full-time position, salaried
- Typical weekday schedule (may vary based on business and participants needs).
- Weekends and evenings work may be required as needed
- Mostly remote work (to meet peer participants in their living environment). Home office work.
- In-person meetings, trainings, events may occur
- Full benefits package 100% company paid eligible after a 30-day introductory period is successfully completed. Accrued paid time off and sick days, Observed Holidays, Wellness Days/Trainings.
- COVID-19 Precaution(s):
  - Remote interview/outreach process (phone, text, Zoom)
  - Personal protective equipment provided or Sub ii
  - Social distancing guidelines in place
  - Virtual meetings
  - Sanitizing, disinfecting, or cleaning procedures in place

Disclaimer: The above information on this description has been designed to indicate the general nature and level of work performance by employees within this classification. It is not designed to contain or be interpreted as a comprehensive inventory of all duties, responsibilities, and qualifications required of employees assigned to this job.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Statement:**

Heart and Soul strongly supports the philosophy of equal employment opportunity in its hiring, training and promotion practices. The recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity in Heart and Soul provides a source of strength by fostering a spirit of inclusiveness, cooperation and collaboration. Heart and Soul proudly shares in the wealth of perspectives that cultural diversity brings to the agency, defining diversity broadly, including the variables of disability, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national origin and veteran status.

