

BLACK DOG INSTITUTE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR

Are you motivated to help individuals with mood disorders in their journey towards self-management and wellbeing? The Black Dog Institute is looking for skilled volunteers to facilitate a support group for people with depression and bipolar disorder in your community.

What does a Support Group Facilitator do?

A Black Dog Institute Support Group Facilitator is a person interested in improving mental health, and is trained to facilitate the Institute's 9-week psycho-educational program for people with mood disorders in their local area. The aim is to generate connectedness, and help individuals manage their illness by providing practical skills, information, support and self-care strategies.

Selection Criteria

- Qualifications/experience in counselling, psychology, welfare or social work (or equivalent).
- Experience in group facilitation or training.
- Understanding and knowledge of mood disorders and/or general mental health issues.
- Ability to recognise own boundaries and limitations.
- Demonstrated capacity for empathy and non-judgement.
- Experience working with vulnerable individuals.
- Willingness to recruit and organise group members through own community networks.
- Availability to facilitate one 9-week support group (2 hour weekly sessions) in your local area.

How does the Institute provide support?

- Regular de-brief from Black Dog Institute staff during support group facilitation period.
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.
- Ongoing training and development opportunities.
- Opportunity to share your time with like minded people motivated to making a difference in mental health.

To access the position description and to apply, please go to: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au (Get involved). For enquiries, contact Sarah Connor, Volunteer Coordinator, on 02 9382 9250 or email sarah.connor@blackdog.org.au



BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

The Black Dog Institute is an educational, research, clinical and community-oriented facility offering specialist expertise in mood disorders - a range of disorders that include depression and bipolar disorder. The Institute is attached to the Prince of Wales Hospital and affiliated with the University of New South Wales.



R.E.A.C.H.

RESPONSIBILITY . EDUCATION . ACCEPTANCE . CONNECTION . HOPE



Position Title	Support Group Facilitator
Department	Community Programs
Organisation	Black Dog Institute
Supervisor	Volunteer Coordinator

Black Dog Institute Mission

The Black Dog Institute's mission is to advance the understanding, diagnosis and management of mood disorders by continuously raising clinical, research, education and training standards. In so doing, the Black Dog Institute aims to improve the lives of those affected - and in turn - the lives of their families and friends.

Black Dog Institute Support Group Program

The Black Dog Institute's Support Group Program is a psycho-educational self-help group for people with bipolar disorder or depression, led by a trained Facilitator.

The Support Group Program is designed to run over 9 x 2 hour weekly sessions.

Primary Objectives

The primary objective of the Support Group Facilitator is to assist the group process, designed to support the following outcomes for participants:

- Improved understanding of managing symptoms, including identification of triggers, early warning signs, setback planning and self-help strategies;
- Identify personal strengths and skills; and,
- Develop strategies to support and improve wellbeing and manage relapse.

Key Responsibilities

The Support Group Facilitator's key responsibilities include recruitment of group members, group facilitation, maintaining boundaries and program administration.

Group Member Recruitment

- Promoting the Support Program in the community appropriately and accurately;
- Processing applications in a professional and confidential manner; and,
- Undertaking interviews with applicants to assess suitability for the Program and maintain



confidentiality in respect to all enquiries and applications for the Program.

Group Facilitation

- Facilitating group processes over the 9 week Program;
- Conducting each meeting in a professional, impartial manner including being punctual, prepared and proactive about group process;
- Observe all group rules and ensure that the group does so as well;
- Be proactive in addressing any issues or concerns regarding individual group members, including, if necessary, discussing with a group member that they may not be suitable to continue a Program, either because of their impact on another member or because it is having a personally detrimental impact at this time;
- Managing time throughout the meeting;
- Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to have a say if they wish, and that no-one dominates;
- Identifying members who may be particularly distressed or vulnerable, assessing the support needed outside the meeting; and
- Promoting a sense of safety and security in the group and creating a supportive atmosphere for sharing.

Maintaining Boundaries

The Group Facilitator must maintain boundaries at all times which include:

- Not disclosing related personal information or participating in the role of member in any support group meeting;
- Never offering advice regarding actions, medication, other treatments or other service providers;
- Not being involved outside the group time with any member in a manner which would impact your interaction with that group member during a session to the detriment of the group as a whole;
- Remaining impartial and non-judgmental during meetings;
- Being aware of personal self-care and seeking support if necessary;
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times;
- Ensuring that the meetings remain self-help meetings and do not attempt to become therapeutic or clinical in nature; and,
- Ensure that members are clear at all times that the Program is not a therapeutic intervention



irrespective of any skills which a facilitator may otherwise have.

Program Administration

- Organising the 9 meeting Support Group Program including provision of appropriate venue, refreshments and resources;
- Maintain up-to-date details of local resources and service providers in order to effectively offer group members options of other relevant services;
- Maintain a confidential file for each group member, including member emergency contact details;
- Maintain and supervise weekly attendance record; and,
- Administer pre and post program participant questionnaire.

Additional Requirements

- Undertaking regular reporting and de-briefing with a representative of the Black Dog Institute;
- Representing the Black Dog Institute in a professional manner;
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge on mood disorders through accessing Black Dog Institute publications and resources; and,
- Providing assistance in the event of an emergency situation. For example, ensuring a member has opportunity and access to one-on-one support if required.

Person Specification - Selection Criteria

- Qualifications and/or experience in counseling, psychology, welfare or social work (or equivalent).
- Experience in group facilitation or training.
- Basic understanding and knowledge of mood disorders and/or general mental health issues.
- Ability to recognise own boundaries and limitations.
- Demonstrated capacity for empathy and non-judgement.
- Experience working with vulnerable individuals.
- Willingness to recruit and organise group members through own community networks.
- Availability to facilitate one 9-week support group in your local area.

Working Relationships

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Position Description



This role reports to the Community Education Officer. The Community Education Officer is the central point for contact and provides ongoing support, debriefing and feedback as required.

This role also has interaction with the Volunteer Coordinator and staff and managers from across the organisation as required.

The Group Facilitator is required to work without supervision.

Volunteer Training and Development

Support Group Facilitators are required to complete the Support Program Facilitation training provided by the Black Dog Institute.

Debriefing and ongoing support is provided to Facilitators by the Institute.

Screening Requirements

This position is required to sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration form and undergo two working referee checks.

Time Commitment

Facilitation of the group will involve a commitment of 9 weekly 2 hour sessions, plus preparation time.

Investment of time prior to the commencement of the program will be required for promotion and recruitment of group participants.

Challenges of the Role

Challenges of the role may include:

- Managing the recruitment process for participants, including advising those who are not suitable for group participation.
- Dealing with vulnerable participants and managing emotionally-charged group discussions.
- Maintaining boundaries and ensuring self care, including awareness of personal vulnerabilities.
- Facilitating group discussion without offering personal advice.
- Working without supervision.
- Ensuring long term confidentiality.
- Responsibility in responding to potential emergency or crisis situations during group sessions.

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Position Description

