



## COVID-19 Surge Response

### Generalist Counsellor / Psychologist

#### Job Description

<b>Location:</b>	Illawarra Women's Health Centre, Warilla NSW (80 km South of Sydney)
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Simon Eccleshall, Head of Programs Unit, MSF Australia
<b>Technical lines:</b>	Sally Stevenson, General Manager, IWHC with technical support from the Medical Unit, MSF Australia
<b>Status:</b>	Fixed term contract (6-months)
<b>Band/Grade:</b>	tbc
<b>Date:</b>	December 2020
<b>Duration:</b>	Six months
<b>FT/PT:</b>	Part-time 3 days / 22.5 hours per week or Full- time (negotiable)

#### Organisational Context

Médecins Sans Frontières, an international medical and humanitarian association founded in 1971, provides medical assistance to communities faced with crises endangering their survival. These crises typically take the form of armed conflict but also include epidemics, natural catastrophes and even exclusion from healthcare. Currently, MSF is present in 70 countries.

The Australian Section of Médecins Sans Frontières was established in 1995 and is one of 21 sections, 24 associations and other offices that form the MSF global movement providing oversight and expertise, funding and staff for field operations and communicating on the needs of our patients.

For this position, MSF Australia is partnering with the Illawarra Women's Health Centre (IWHC). Nationally accredited, the IWHC has a focus on mental health, women experiencing domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and sexual and reproductive health. The community-based Centre sees over 6,000 women a year and has an exceptional reputation, providing integrated care and social support to women with complex needs using a social model of health and a community development approach to service delivery. IWHC has recently secured access to a 'safe room' space located at the local Stockland Shopping Centre which may serve as workspace for this position.

#### COVID-19 Response: Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV)

FDSV against women is a public health emergency and occurs in epidemic proportions in Australia. The mental and physical health consequences of FDSV are significant, long lasting and evidence based - impacting women, children, future generations, our community, our economy and ultimately, our country.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has critically exacerbated this emergency, and simultaneously thrown into stark relief the lack of services available to women seeking support because of FDSV. As a direct result of the COVID-19 social distancing requirements, domestic and family violence rates have risen across all socioeconomic groupings, and in all contexts - as was widely and publicly predicated in March. The Australian Institute of Criminology's findings about women's experiences of domestic violence during the early stages of the pandemic show that of the 15,000 Australian women

surveyed, 11.6 per cent (1 in 10) reported experiencing emotionally abusive, harassing, or controlling behaviour. The consensus across the sector is that the worst is yet to come after September, when much of the government financial support is removed or reduced, and we head into Christmas, a time when violence and abuse traditionally escalates.

The Illawarra Women's Health Centre is at the front line of this "shadow" pandemic. There is a significant increase in women contacting IWHC for support due to domestic and family violence. Nearly all these women have complex needs and the restrictions and safety measures of COVID have substantially increased levels of risk, fear, and anxiety. There is currently a 2-month waiting list for counselling at IWHC and existing staff are at risk of burn-out.

### **Overall responsibility:**

This position requires the provision of a generalist counselling service to women clients of the centre. The counsellor is required to carry out all duties within a holistic and feminist framework, as a member of the health care team. This position may require some outreach to other services/places, and may from time to time include some group work as negotiated/planned, as time and circumstance permits.

### **Primary responsibilities:**

1. Provide counselling services to individual clients, including psycho-social assessments, information giving, advocacy and therapeutic counselling in a client-centred framework, in order to address clients' immediate and medium-term goals or issues. This will include working cross-culturally and with women with different abilities and working with health-care interpreters where required to promote access for women of non-English speaking background.
2. Work with the IWHC team, including making internal referrals to practitioners and services to ensure continuity of care and enable a holistic response to the client's psycho-social needs.
3. Make referrals to external services and other agencies as appropriate to the needs and goals of the client.
4. Participate in the development, facilitation and evaluation of therapeutic, education/support groups as time and work plan allows.
5. Maintain best practise monitoring and evaluation processes for clients and groups.
6. Establish and maintain a client record utilising Medical Director for each individual client in keeping with NSW Health guidelines and legislative requirements.

### **Secondary responsibilities:**

- All staff will work towards the goals of the centre, within a feminist, holistic framework, to promote the health of the diverse women who are our clients and our communities of interest. Staff will always provide respectful service which empowers women and support their rights.
- Practice within the guidelines and policy of the Centre including relevant policies of NSW Health and legislative requirements
- Support orientation of new staff/students and training of casual staff
- Contribute to Continuous Improvement (Plan Do Check Act Cycle) in respect of own area of work, and broader work of the Centre as time and resources permit
- Collect statistical information for the Centre's data collection as appropriate
- Contribute to policy development and planning in the Centre

- Share knowledge with other members of the health care team to support professional capacity building;
- Remain alert to themes regarding client/community needs, as expressed by clients
- Contribute to monitoring and evaluation of own area of work as well as the broader work of the Centre as resources, time and circumstances permit
- Assist in health promotion/community development activities of the Centre as time and circumstances permit
- Network and collaborate with relevant organisations in the pursuit of health outcome and to support community and professional capacity building
- Participate in staff development and training, and keep up to date with relevant legislative changes
- Participate in and prepare for support/supervision meetings as provided and/or group supervision
- Attend scheduled staff meetings as appropriate and as time allows
- Work as part of the team, and undertake some Centre duties on a shared or “as required” basis, such as answering phone, sharing “housekeeping” tasks such as washing up, watering pot plants, cleaning fridge
- Represent the Centre on occasions as arranged, and as time and circumstances permit.
- To ensure essential client care, it is expected that our staff will work extra time on occasions till the practitioner finishes seeing the last client of the day.

## **Selection criteria**

### **Essential**

- Tertiary qualifications, appropriate training and at least five years’ experience
- A professional practice using a trauma informed and client centred approach
- Feminist understanding/analysis of women’s issues/women’s health issues
- Understanding of a social determinants approach to health
- Ability to work with women of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Experience in counselling women who have experienced domestic and family violence, and/or child abuse, use of alcohol and other drugs, depression, grief and loss, low self-esteem
- Driver’s license and access to a vehicle
- Australian Working Rights

### **Desirable**

- Fluency in a community language other than English
- Group work experience
- Experience in a community-based service

### **Applications**

Applications MUST address individual selection criteria. You should also write a cover letter indicating why you want to work for Médecins Sans Frontières Australia and attach a copy of your CV.

Please note that a criminal record check and *Working With Children Check* is required as part of the selection process. Applicants with criminal records will not automatically be ineligible for the position they are applying for. Médecins Sans Frontières Australia has a Child Protection Policy in place and all employees are required to comply with this policy.

Médecins Sans Frontières Australia is committed to creating an inclusive workplace for all our staff. We believe that a diverse team helps us better serve those most in need, and we encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds to apply for this role, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and people with disabilities.

**Applications close: ASAP (Applications will be reviewed upon submission)**

Applications and enquiries to: Email: [officerecruitment@sydney.msf.org](mailto:officerecruitment@sydney.msf.org)