



## **Job Description: Peer Support Navigator for Urgent Response Service**

### **Reporting Relationship:**

The Peer Support Navigator for the Urgent Response Service (URS) reports to the Manager of Service Coordination.

### **Summary of Role:**

The Peer Support Navigator (PSN) for URS provides peer mentoring and support to families with a child diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who has been deemed eligible for the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) Urgent Response Service (URS). The PSN's role has elements of a service coordinator's job yet extends beyond this to take advantage of their unique experience as a family member in the service system. As an advocate, the PSN can use their own life experiences to assist families in navigating the system of care and locating additional resources and supports that professionals may not be aware of.

The PSN's role focuses on:

1. Direct support and guidance to families; help parents/caregivers facilitate partnerships with professionals and informal supports. Supports provided will:
  - a. Empower families - strengthen the family's confidence and understanding of their situation, and reinforce strengths;
  - b. Build family capacity and skills - Support the family's involvement with service organizations while providing opportunities for families to learn and build skills relating to navigating the service system.
2. Facilitate collaboration between agencies and professionals working with the family.

The PSN provides professional and confidential services in a comprehensive, flexible and responsive manner. Most of the PSN's work with families will be virtual (phone, videoconferencing); however, it will be important to be regularly connected with the URS Team which will usually be in-person.

### **Hours of Work:**

The URS Coordinator manages a 20-hour workweek, with flexible scheduling expected to meet the needs of clients and the organization.

### **Qualifications:**

1. Lived experience as the primary caregiver of a child or youth with ASD
2. Experience in the child/youth service system as a family member of a child with ASD
3. Ability to work flexible hours including evenings and some weekends to meet the needs of clients
4. Excellent communication skills (verbal and written)
5. Computer competency
6. Knowledge of the range of supports and services available to children, youth and their families in at least one of Brant/Brantford, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton, or Niagara communities.
7. Minimum of a high school diploma.

## **Conditions of Employment:**

1. Valid Ontario driver's license and current clear driver abstract with a reliable automobile and sufficient insurance for use on company business;
2. Acceptable police Vulnerable Persons Record check; maintaining no criminal convictions for which a pardon has not been granted;
3. Proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, or medical exemption with compliance to requirements for regular antigen testing.

## **Competencies**

In all activities, the following competencies will be displayed:

1. *Confidante/Supporter* – Learns from the family about the child, the family situation and concerns; respects family members' concerns; supports the family by demonstrating understanding of their perspective and reinforcing their involvement in problem solving; reinforces family's strengths and confidence; restates concerns in a way that strengthens family's ability to understand their behaviour and interactions; observes confidentiality.
2. *Information Provider* – Provides information about the PSN's role, URS, and the service system; educates about service options; explains the purpose and methods of URS interventions that are being considered or provided; provides information and support on how to interact with service organizations to form effective relationships with them and have their voice heard; help clients understand their rights.
3. *Service Navigator*: Helps navigate health, education and social systems, demonstrating respect, family-centered practice, and responsiveness to the needs of each client; arranges for and supports appropriate service referrals; promotes service integration and agency collaboration to meet the needs of families.
4. *Problem Solver*: Helps family identify and deal with problems in service delivery; assists the family in strengthening their own problem-solving skills.
5. *Advocate*: Plans with the family how to represent their interests and concerns to service providers; assists the family in negotiating with formal and informal supports including how to represent their own interests as well as to understand how each service will relate to the desired URS outcomes; represents the child and/or family and helps them speak for themselves.
6. *Advisor* – Assists families in planning and decision making; works with or on behalf of the child and family to assist them in functioning as independently as possible.
7. *Service Monitor* - Every contact with a family provides an opportunity for service monitoring, and an opportunity to consider how services might be modified to better suit the child and family and more effectively meet identified goals. Informs URS plans throughout the service; works with the family to identify what is working and what does not with the URS Plan, and suggests adjustments to the Plan to the URS Coordinators; analyzes organizational and/or client challenges and develops strategies and solutions.
8. *Transition Planner* – Clearly communicates that PSN supports and URS services are time-limited; help the family prepare for transition from PSN and URS supports from the start of services.

9. *Colleague and Collaborator*: Strong collaboration skills that support the development and maintenance of good working relationships; develops productive working relationships with the URS Team and within the child/youth service systems; as an active URS Team member, helps inform individual URS Plans and address URS program improvements.
10. *System Modifier* - Analyzes the situation and needs of children and their families, as well as organizational and system arrangements that facilitate or impede service delivery; identifies what works well and what does not with the various systems involved with families and suggests coordination improvements.
11. *Record Keeper*: Documents every contact with clients; documents key issues identified by the client especially related to the URS Plan and interagency coordination efforts and needs, while respecting confidentiality of information the PSN is given as a peer mentor that the client does not want shared. Key information should include the child/youth's needs; client's family situation, priorities, concerns, strengths, and resources.
12. *Judgement and Accountability* - Learn from mistakes; weigh costs, benefits, and risks; make sound judgments re planning, coordinating and follow-up to services; the highest professional and confidentiality standards; ability to work independently and participate as a team member; flexibility and a sense of humour.
13. *Communication* – Strong interpersonal and communication skills (written, oral, listening and non-verbal); engage in positive, productive, and proactive conversations; respond to time-sensitive information;
14. *Role Modeling* - Champion the principles and practices of inclusion and equity; lead by example; share expertise and act as a resource to others.
15. *Continuously Learning* - Is an active learner, responsible for professional development and acquisition of knowledge and skills; identifies professional goals as well as personal areas for growth; apply newly acquired knowledge in service delivery.

### **Responsibilities:**

1. **Support and guidance to families** - The supports provided will depend on the unique priorities, needs, and resources of each family, as well as program priorities. Effective peer support navigation is grounded in the relationship between the family and the PSN.
  - Provide peer mentoring, taking advantage of your unique experience as a family member in the service system with a child with Autism; demonstrate an understanding of each family's perspective
  - Empower families by strengthening their confidence and understanding of their situation; reinforce their strengths; help families identify problems they are experiencing in service delivery and assist them in strengthening their own problem-solving skills
  - Build family capacity and skills through supporting the family's involvement with service organizations and providing opportunities for families to learn and build skills in navigating the service system; restate the family's concerns in a way that strengthens their ability to understand their behaviour and interactions; assist families in planning and decision making

- Educate the family about the caregiver mediator model and support their participation in this approach
- Learn from the family about their situation including their child/youth's needs; family concerns and the situation in which the family finds itself; the family's priorities, concerns, strengths, and resources; respect their concerns.
- Provide information on the time-limited supports provided by URS including the Peer Support Navigator role; establish expectations by explaining the role of the PSN and the parameters of the URS; explain the purpose and methods of interventions that are being considered or provided through URS
- Educate about community services and resources, including OAP, developmental services, mental health services, health services, child welfare, education, youth justice, etc.
- Inform clients regarding their rights and options.

## **2. Inform the URS Plan and evaluation of the program**

- Inform the URS plan of care throughout the service by working with the family to identify what is working or not working with the URS Plan and gather their ideas for improvements
- Suggest adjustments of the URS Plan to the URS Coordinators
- Analyze organizational and/or child/family problems and develop strategies to resolve them with the URS Team
- Monitor URS service delivery with the family and work with them to help inform the discharge plan
- Gather family feedback about the URS service to help collect evaluation of the program
- Analyze each family's situation, needs, and system arrangements that facilitate or impede service delivery; identify what goes well and what does not with the various systems involved with families and suggests coordination improvements to the URS Team.

## **3. Help families access services**

- Assist families in navigating the cross-sectoral systems of care including resources and supports that many system professionals may not be aware of
- Discuss both formal and informal support options with the family
- Support referrals to new services, including but not limited to the Contact Agencies and AccessOAP
- Help families prepare for the transition out of URS from the start of services by planning for services and supports once the PSN and URS services end.

## **4. Facilitate collaboration between the family and the agencies and professionals working with them**

- Provide information and support to families on how to interact with service organizations to form effective relationships with them as well as have their voice heard
- Plan with the family how to represent their interests and concerns to service providers

- Assist families to understand how each service will relate to the desired URS outcomes
- Working with the URS Coordinators, support a coordinated, collaborative experience for the child/youth and family by promoting service integration and agency collaboration to meet the needs of families.

## **5. Advocacy**

- Work with and on behalf of the child and family to assist them in functioning as independently as possible
- Assist families in negotiating with formal and informal supports
- Represent the child and/or family and help them speak for themselves
- Use every contact with a family as an opportunity for service monitoring and to consider how services might be modified to better suit the child and family and more effectively meet identified goals.

## **6. Professional Expectations:**

- Represent Contact Brant in a professional manner at all times by maintaining professional and ethical conduct and behaviour; exhibit stated agency values.
- Adhere to agency Policies and Procedures as well as Service Principles.
- Fulfill all requirements of client record keeping in a timely manner and document data required by the Ministry.
- Respect the role as a health information custodian – fully understand privacy legislation; ensure informed consents are received from clients and information is only disclosed to those for the purposes intended.
- Be familiar and cognizant of existing and new resources and information pertinent to the field of children/youth with special needs and the service systems, especially across the Hamilton-Niagara Region.
- Demonstrate strong communication skills. Communicate concisely, clearly and in a manner that is appropriate for the listener; use reflective listening skills; use non-verbal communication that is compatible with the message being conveyed.
- Support quality assurance by regularly requesting and receiving client feedback as well as supporting evaluation strategies to assess the service impact.
- Identify gaps and needs in the service system to support planning and improving services offered in the community.
- Promote Contact Brant through presentations, participation in events, and committee membership.
- Promote effective teamwork through daily interactions with co-workers and participation in staff meetings.
- Facilitate good working relationships with providers in child/youth services, the health and education sectors in order to enable their regular contribution into service delivery and planning.
- Develop and foster effective working relationships with clients, cross-sectoral service providers, schools, other URS Lead Organizations, and other community stakeholders to facilitate effective coordination of services for each client.

- Respond promptly to issues and feedback identified.
- Keep the Manager of Service Coordination abreast of issues related to caseload as well as matters that could impact Contact Brant, both operationally and strategically.

The Peer Support Navigator is an integral member of the Contact Brant team. It is expected that the Peer Support Navigator will contribute to problem solving with regards to improving services, efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

This job description may evolve with the changing operational requirements of Contact Brant. With this in mind, the position is not limited to the duties outlined above.

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Peer Support Navigator for URS

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Date

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Manager of Service Coordination

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Chief Executive Officer