

VIU's Wellness Peers

Volunteer Opportunity for VIU Students

Are you passionate about promoting wellness and mental health? Are you interested in working towards building a more supportive, connected, healthy VIU campus culture? Are you interested in developing skills to aid in a future career in the helping professions?

We are recruiting student volunteers to be 'Wellness Peers' for the 2022/2023 academic year!

About the role:

As a Wellness Peer volunteer you will run the new Wellness Lounge, located in the Nanaimo campus library. The Wellness Lounge is a place where students can come to relax, connect, grab resources, and pet a therapy dog! You will play a vital role in creating a welcoming, safe, relaxing space, and you will be available to connect and chat with students on a drop-in basis.

As needed, you will also provide deeper support and resources to students looking for help with wellness, mental health, and navigating student life. The Wellness Peers will be provided with training and ongoing support from VIU's mental health team.

Why volunteer as a Wellness Peer?

- Develop strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Cultivate knowledge and experience in the wellness and health promotion field
- Gain valuable experience in a peer support role
- Contribute to the health and wellness of the VIU community
- Receive Co-Curricular Record Credit
- Receive extensive FREE training in multiple areas, including (but not limited to):
 - Empathic and active listening
 - Unpacking biases
 - Understanding boundaries
 - Cultural Humility
 - Trauma-informed care
 - Mental health basics
 - Responding to disclosures of sexual violence
- Complete FREE certified trainings that you will be a huge asset for future careers in the helping professions (such as SafeTalk)
- Be a part of an awesome team of like minded VIU students interested in creating communities of wellness!

What is the time commitment?

- Approximately 11 hours per month (Sep-Apr) – which includes:
 - one 2-hour in-person shift in the Wellness Lounge each week (mandatory)
 - one 1.5-hour in-person team meeting every two weeks – which includes opportunities for team building, debriefing, and professional development/training (mandatory)

- once per semester, collaborating with other volunteers to offer an in-person connection event for students

Prior to beginning in the role, you will also be asked to engage in training, including:

- Completion of a few hours of online, self-paced, module training, **prior** to beginning your role in Sept
- Participation in 2-3 days of in-person team building, orientation, and **training in late August or early September** (final schedule to be determined)

There may also be optional additional training opportunities available throughout the year for those who are interested (these will not be mandatory).

Who can be a Wellness Peer?

- Current VIU students (full or part time), registered in courses for the 2022-2023 academic year
- Upper level students (non-first year)
 - *1st year students may be considered depending on relevant skills, experience and knowledge*
- Students of all disciplines are welcome and encouraged to apply. This position may be of particular interest to students in the helping disciplines (e.g., Social Work, Social Services, Child and Youth Care, Psychology, Nursing, etc.)
- Students with lived-experience (in a variety of areas) are encouraged to apply
- An open and diverse community fosters the inclusion of voices that have been underrepresented or discouraged. We highly encourage applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds.
- The following skills and experience would be assets:
 - Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
 - Desire and passion for connecting with new people
 - Skills in empathic listening
 - Self-reflective and open to learning
 - Excellent time management skills
 - Strong coping and self-care practices and awareness of one's own capacity and limits
 - Non-judgemental, open approach to diverse people
 - Comfort communicating with individuals in distress
 - Work well independently and as a team
 - Experience in a customer service or helping role
 - Knowledge of health and wellness

Position Duties/Tasks:

The Wellness Peers complete a weekly shift at the Wellness Lounge. During this shift, you will:

- Host the Wellness Lounge
 - When hosting the wellness lounge, you will create a safe environment where students can come to relax, take a break, or connect
 - You will be friendly, welcoming, social, and supportive
 - You will ensure that the space is set-up and taken-down and stocked with all necessary supplies
 - You will track and log student interactions

- When needed, you will engage in wellness conversations and respond to student inquiries related to student life, health, wellness, mental health, and navigating university
- You will provide empathic listening to students with concerns or questions
- You will share information about on-campus and off-campus resources
- If needed, you will support students in distress to connect to appropriate resources

Outside of your weekly shift, you may also be asked to:

- Engage in promotional activities to raise awareness about the Wellness Peer Program
- Assist in the promotion and delivery of wellness events, initiatives and campaigns
- Collaborate with other staff and student groups around campus as needed
- Model student leadership and community connection on campus
- Contribute to the health and wellness of the VIU community

How do I apply?

- To express your interest in being a volunteer, please complete this [expression of interest web form](#).
- Program details and volunteer requirements are still being finalized for the 2022/2023 academic year. Once the program details have been finalized, all interested students will be contacted with more details about the position and the application process.
 - Applicants will be asked to complete an application form and go through an interview process to ensure fit and suitability
 - Applications will be accepted until all volunteer positions are filled

Questions?

- Please contact the Thrive team at thrive@viu.ca for more information