

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?

VIU is launching a new peer support program which will be located in the Nanaimo Campus Library, and we are recruiting student volunteers as 'Wellness Peers'!

About the role:

As a Wellness Peer you will provide support to your fellow students through empathic listening, education, and resource connection. The Wellness Peers will run the new Wellness Lounge in the library and will provide peer support to VIU students. 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 helping 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 a team of like minded VIU students interested in creating communities of wellness

What is the time commitment?

- 3.5 hours per week (Sept- Apr) including:
 - one 2 hour in-person shift in the Wellness Lounge each week (mandatory)
 - one 1.5 hour team meeting every week – which includes opportunities for team building, debriefing, and professional development/training (mandatory)
 - optional additional training opportunities may be available throughout the year
- Completion of approximately 15 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 between Aug 30th and Sep 3rd** (final schedule to be determined)

Who can be a Wellness Peer?

- Current VIU students (full or part time), registered in courses for the 2021/2022 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
 - 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:

- Engage in wellness conversations and respond to student inquiries related to student life, health, wellness, mental health, and navigating university
- Provide empathic listening to students with concerns or questions
- Share information about on-campus and off-campus resources
- Research and provide educational resources related to wellness, mental health, and university life
- Support students in distress to connect to appropriate resources
- Engage in promotional activities to raise awareness about the Wellness Peer Program
- Assist in the promotion and delivery of wellness events, initiatives and campaigns
- Track and log student interactions
- 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 apply, please send your resume and a completed 'Application Form' to thrive@viu.ca
- All applicants will then complete an interview with the Wellness Peer program coordinator to ensure fit and suitability
- Applications will be accepted until all volunteer positions are filled

Questions?

- Please contact Sara LaMarre at thrive@viu.ca for more information