

STAFFING

The CHT ROP Participant Handbook states: “The role of the staff is to support the program goals of ROP by mentoring, coaching and counselling program participants as necessary. Our program philosophy demands that each staff member develop with the ROP participants a relationship built on mutual trust and respect; and within that relationship, assist and support the participants in making positive changes. At the same time, staff must maintain a professional distance.

Interaction between a staff member and a participant is an opportunity for positive learning. Staff will help in identifying alternative ways of thinking, responding to frustration and achieving your goals.

Staff will encourage each other in delivering the best quality service to you; celebrating your growth and progress; challenging you when you seem to be losing sight of your goals; and welcoming you as a member of the ROP Community”

Staff Roles

CHT: There are 12 direct staff members in the ROP Program –two Team Leaders and 8 Youth Workers (four on overnights and four day/evening), the Mentorship Coordinator and the Life Skills Coordinator. Support is also provided by the two Housing Workers and aftercare is addressed in part by the five Youth in Transition Workers. At the senior management level, the Director of Program Services is responsible for a variety of services, including outreach, shelter, health and transitional housing, while the Transitional Housing Manager is responsible for all transitional housing, including the Rights of Passage program and off-site transitional housing.

While all Youth Workers provide ongoing support to the youth, including teaching life skills, individual case management is provided by a Consistent Worker.

The Consistent Workers rotate between the day (8am to 4pm), midday (12noon to 8pm) and evening (3pm to 11pm) shifts to make themselves available to the youth at different times of day. These shifts change every two weeks and Youth Workers also work every other weekend. Overnight staff (who work 10:30pm to 8:30am) do not serve as Consistent Workers, but at times, their hours may mean they have primary contact with a youth.

Consistent Workers have a caseload of about 7 youth each, with a mix of genders. Their role is to provide very direct, individualized support to the youth in their caseload, including developing and managing their case plan, creating a budget and determining their Trust

Fund payment, keeping them on track with employment, education, housing, mental health issues etc. Consistent Workers also meet weekly with the youth to review and update their case plan and discuss a youth's progress with the Team Leaders.

The Team Leaders have multiple functions including supervising several youth workers and also providing oversight into the case management plans of a number of youth. Dillon Dodson, one of two Team Leaders at CHT says that she sees her role as having three different functions. “The first role is supervision and case management of the current residents within our program. The second being supervising staff – the child and youth workers that work front-line with the residents of the program. The third role is a bit of program coordination. Myself and my colleague coordinate the IT issues, food services, operations, the management of the facility.”

All of the youth and staff are additionally supported by several other positions including:

- » Mentorship Coordinator
- » Life Skills Coordinator
- » Housing Workers
- » Youth in Transition Workers

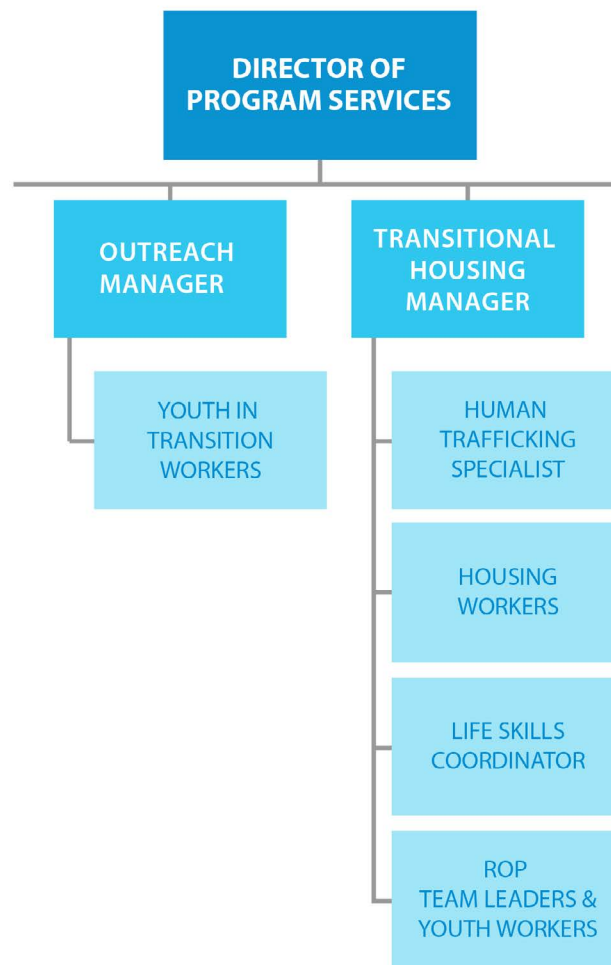
CHV: There are 13 direct staff in the ROP Program – the Manager of ROP, 5 Youth Workers, 5 Shift Supervisors, a Youth Support Worker and the Life Skills Worker – plus support from the Case Managers and Housing Workers who fall under Community Support Services.

The ROP Participant Guide says “ROP has staff on duty 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. At first, it may seem like a lot of different people, but you will find that the full-time staff work fairly consistent schedules, and it does not take long to get to know everybody. We also have staff who work on a casual basis, filling in when others are away.

Youth Workers are your main resource when you need practical help, information, or just to chat. They make sure that guidelines are being followed from day to day.

You will be assigned a **Key Youth Worker** as you enter ROP. This is the Youth Worker who will be watching out for you to make sure everything is on track. This Youth Worker will assist you to achieve all of your Case Plan and Life Skills goals. Keep in mind that all of the staff work with all of the residents, so for most things you do not have to wait for your Key Youth Worker.

FIG.3 COVENANT HOUSE TORONTO STAFFING CHART

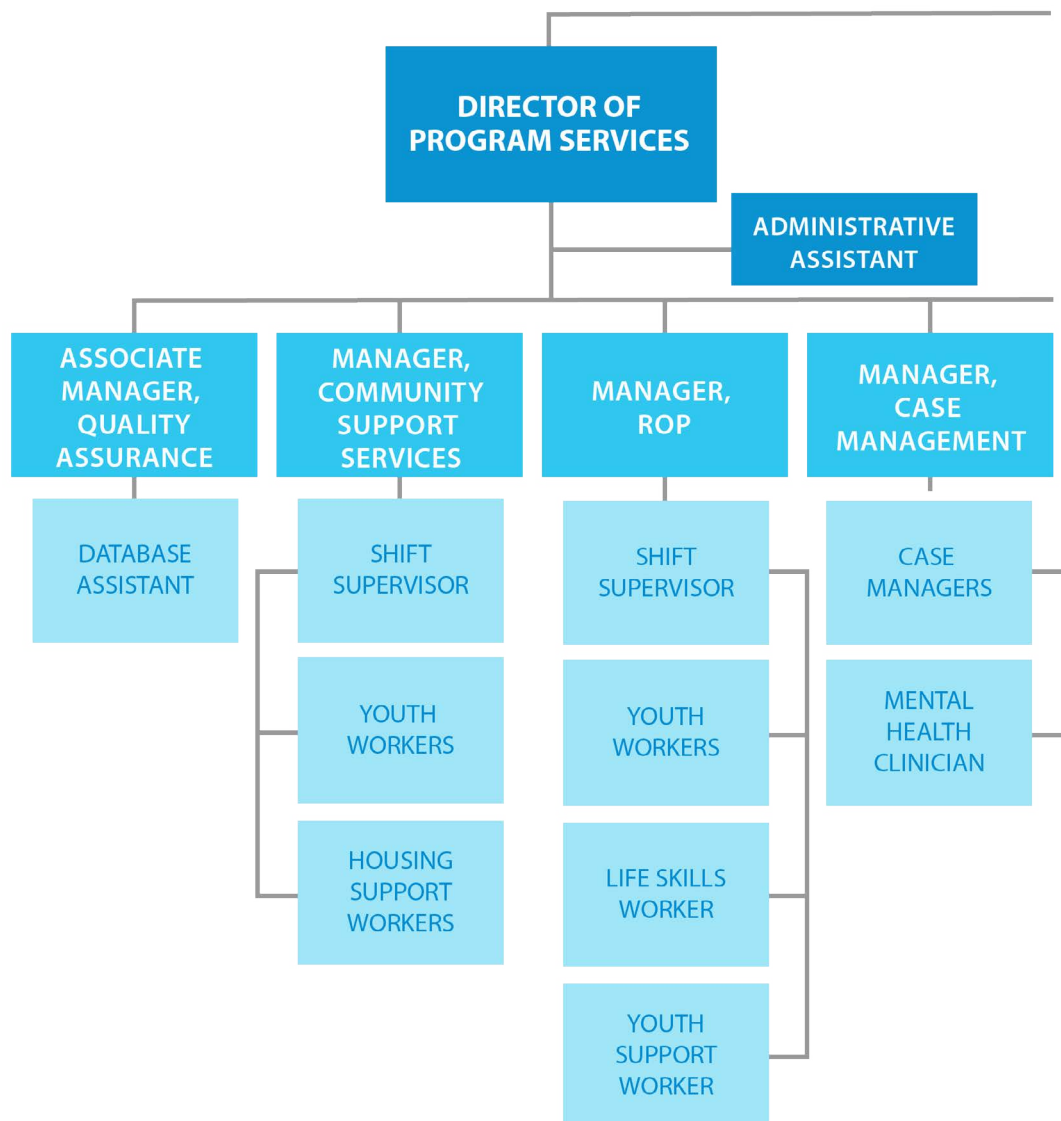


The **Youth Support Worker** does a lot of the same work as the youth workers, but is also the person who is responsible for making sure that the rooms are in order when you move in, everyone has the supplies that they need, keys and fobs, and so on. The Youth Support Worker is in charge of program fee administration, but you can pay your program fees to any youth worker as well. The Youth Support Worker provides such services as income taxes and arranging dentist appointments.

The **Case Manager** is responsible for developing all case plans and making sure that all of the case plans are done in a way that fits ROP’s purpose and mission. Case Managers are here to support the youth in reaching all of their goals.

The **Life Skills Worker** is responsible for assessing your life skills needs with you and developing a plan to work on areas for development. They also coordinate and manage all life skills activities in ROP.

FIG.4 **COVENANT HOUSE VANCOUVER STAFFING CHART**



There are also several other positions related to ROP as well as maintenance, administrative and leadership functions that are connected to the operation of Covenant House as a whole.

The Director of Program Services (who reports to the Executive Director) oversees ROP and four other areas (Quality Assurance, Community Support Services, Case Management and Crisis Shelter). This position also has a full-time administrative assistant.

The Manager of the Rights of Passage program is responsible for the overall function of the ROP program. As of January 2015 this position had 12 reports – 5 Shift Supervisors, 5 Youth Workers, 1 Life Skills Worker and 1 Youth Support Worker.

Within the ROP program there are 5 Case Managers, 2 Housing Support Workers and 3 Mental Health Clinicians who may also be involved with the youth.

Once the youth leave ROP they may continue to have contact with services, especially if they are 25 and under. This could include outreach services, mental health clinicians and housing support workers. They may also continue to reach out to the staff of ROP.

Within the organization, the staff will work in varying capacities with people from all across the organization.



Jennifer Morrison, Life Skills Coordinator at Covenant House Vancouver

Staff Job Descriptions

The job descriptions provided are samples and are given as guides to help you identify the skills and job duties that may be required. The staffing models in Toronto and Vancouver differ, as do the reporting structures. What your program staffing looks like will depend on overall structure of the agency and your transitional housing program.

The following job descriptions and duties are available as examples:

- » CHT – ROP Team Leader Responsibilities
- » CHT – Shift Coordinator Responsibilities
- » CHT – Job Description – Overnight Youth Worker
- » CHT – Job Description – ROP Youth Worker
- » CHV - Job Description – Manager, Rights of Passage Program
- » CHV - Job Description – Youth Worker
- » CHV - Job Description - Case Manager
- » CHV - Job Description – Life Skills Worker

[See online resources.](#)

Managing Change

Change management is a time-consuming and very involved process on its own, let alone the time required to implement the actual changes. Both organizations talked about how much change they have gone through and how much work this is. Several recommendations for change management were brought forth:

- » Provide lots of notice. Do not announce a change one day and start it the next.
- » Provide your staff with training to support the changes being implemented.
- » Go slow. Give your staff, the youth and management time to adjust to the changes and to see how they work.
- » Review the changes and see how they are working. Be prepared to pull back or readjust as necessary.
- » Increase staff supervision if necessary to provide individual training and support to staff.
- » Understand that change is hard for everyone and that it may result in “negative” behaviours from youth as they adjust.
- » Be open and excited to doing something new and different.

Self-Care

Self-care is the process of maintaining and promoting one's health, well-being and development to meet everyday challenges and stressors with energy, vitality and self-confidence. Rather than a passive process, self-care calls for active engagement and intentional action. Self-care can be a combination of physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological or intellectual processes.

For people working in demanding positions, self-care is especially important to managing one's level of stress and preventing burn out. In fact, "[according to Health Canada \(2009\)](#), stress and stress-related symptoms account for 85% of all visits to doctors." Many studies point to the process of self-care as an acquired set of skills rather than a personal attribute.

Covenant House feels that part of teaching youth new and healthy coping behaviours is to model that in their staff team. They celebrate birthdays and special events (of both youth and staff), they provide training in new areas to facilitate learning and they create a supportive staff team. Supervisors always check with their direct reports on how they are managing and if there are any issues that are presenting that need to be addressed. Staff retreats and an annual renewing of the covenant (a day which features past youth returning to share their success stories) is part of re-motivating and energizing the team.

Staff also talk about self-care – with each other as a staff team and with the youth they work with. Strategies for self-care are as diverse and varied as people, but include activities that help you relax, feel better, deal with emotions or otherwise take care of your physical and emotional self.

Self-care activities can include such things as:

- » eating healthy meals/eating your favourite comfort food
- » exercising or doing a fun activity
- » relaxing with a good book/TV show/movie
- » talking with friends or family
- » spending time with pets
- » meditating/engaging in spiritual pursuits
- » going for a walk or drive to your favourite place

In this section, you will find tools to help assess your level of stress. You will also find toolkits and solutions that will help you learn some of the necessary skills for applying self-care to your everyday life.

"What we've tried to do is provide a *consistent language* for the staff to use when they're *talking about the youth, working with the youth, and framing their plans.*"

—John Harvey, Covenant House Vancouver