

Staffing Guidance and Recommended Structure

The agency that will be implementing Healthy Divas is responsible for advertising the Lead Peer Counselor and Peer Counselor positions, and for hiring, training, and supervising these staff members. More than anything else, the success of the Healthy Divas program depends on recruiting and retaining talented and committed women of trans experience to coordinate and facilitate the program. Through our work with organizations implementing Healthy Divas, we have found that this may be the single most important ingredient that leads to success. Consequently, it is essential that the implementing agency invest sufficient time and energy in recruiting and supporting the right staff.

Peer counselors must be outgoing, sociable, comfortable talking to people of trans experiences, including strangers and groups of individuals that serve trans and gender diverse communities, and passionate about Healthy Divas, a new way of delivering gender affirming, HIV treatment and prevention programming to trans and gender diverse communities.

Our research has shown that these positions usually require individuals who are currently from and quite socially active within trans and gender diverse communities. The characteristics listed above may or may not fit the description of staff who are already at an organization. If they do not have these qualities or experience, a thorough search for suitable staff is imperative for the success of Healthy Divas.

The Lead Peer Counselor plays a critical role in implementing Healthy Divas, especially during the first few months. We anticipate that the following responsibilities would take approximately 20 hours/week, and the rest of the Lead Peer Counselor's time would be spent delivering Healthy Divas sessions, along with the other Peer Counselor. Of course, each agency will need to decide for themselves how best to configure its staffing. Some organizations may assign some of these responsibilities to their outreach department or social media specialists. In these cases, the Peer Counselors may need to partner with those staff members to ensure that they know how best to conduct outreach or implement a social medial campaign for trans communities.

The additional responsibilities of the Lead Peer Counselor include the following:

- Maintaining a calendar to keep track of the one-on-one weekly sessions
- Coordinating and scheduling the workshops and provider attendance, via zoom or in person
- Leading a recruitment and retention plan, including when and where to find clients and how to keep them engaged in creative ways
- Conducting outreach, including hosting social events, creating a Facebook page, and attending on-going community events
- Reflecting and working cooperatively with the other Peer Counselor to ensure the success of the Healthy Divas program.

Successful Peer Counselors are dedicated, empathetic and committed to helping others!