

5th July 2024

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the position of **Relationships Therapist (Disability Specific)** with Community Living Association Inc. This role engages in holistic therapeutic support with parents to develop their parenting capacity through counselling, education, advocacy and parenting training and support. Please find attached an application kit containing the following documentation:

- Position Description (Relationships Therapist: Disability Specific)
- Instructions on how to apply (included in this letter)
- CLA's Parenting Practice Framework
- A letter from parents we work alongside
- Trauma, Vicarious Trauma, Burnout and Self Care Policy and Procedure

CLA Inc works with parents with intellectual and cognitive disabilities and aims to build communities where everyone is welcome and included, have places to live, spaces to belong and meaningful roles. We support parents with intellectual and cognitive disabilities to achieve their parenting goals through holistic, practical, and therapeutic support which values relationship-based and capacity building practice. We are seeking a Relationships Therapist to work alongside parents to achieve their hopes and goals for parenting, through collaborative practice with parents and their networks.

This is a full-time position (38 hours p/w), on a permanent contract, however we are open to negotiation of part-time hours. We invite applications from practitioners who are passionate about the issues people with intellectual disability and parents face, including young parents, and who enjoy engaging in direct practice with people experiencing complexity within their lives and their networks. We encourage diversity in our workplace and encourage all interested applicants to apply. We encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to apply and people of all genders, sexuality, and parenting status. We also encourage new graduates to apply, and offer ongoing, supportive professional supervision to support emerging practice. Remuneration is at a SCHCADS Level 4 (Social and Community Services Pay Scales). There is opportunity to increase your income through inclusion in our salary sacrificing program. The SCHCADS award can be accessed here:

https://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/documents/modern_awards/award/ma000100/default.htm

Benefits of working for CLA Inc includes:

- Diverse practice and skill development opportunities, including induction and training.
- Supportive, collegial environment with regular debriefing and formal supervision by a qualified Social Worker.
- Encouragement to engage in critical reflection through team processes.
- Mobile Phone and laptop.
- Not-for-profit salary packaging.

How to Apply

To apply for the position of Relationships Therapist (Disability Specific) please submit the following documents:

1. Curriculum Vitae (Including two referees who can comment on your work)
2. Cover letter (maximum of four pages) that describes how your skills, interests, and knowledge meet the requirements of the role. Please also consider in your response the following questions:
 - What draws you to this role working with parents with intellectual disability?

- As a practitioner, how are you committed to ethical practice, reflection on practice and ongoing professional growth?
- How do you operate as a member of a team, including any teams and stakeholder groups you are currently in?

Further Information:

- Appointment to the position of Relationships Therapist (Disability Specific) will be subject to a Blue Card 'Working with Children Check' and 'Yellow Card Exemption' and 'NDIS Worker Screening Clearance.' Prior to start date, the successful candidate must have blue card and NDIS Worker Clearance Card and provide a certificate to demonstrate completion of NDIS Worker Orientation Module "Quality, Safety and You".
- CLA Inc policy requires workers to be COVID vaccinated (unless exempt).
- This position requires outreach across North Brisbane and will require the successful applicant to have access to a vehicle or alternative mode of transport.

Please email your applications to reception@communityliving.org.au (Attn: Renee Mills, ARROS Team Leader)

Applications are **to be reviewed on a rolling basis, so we recommend submitting your application as soon as possible**. Shortlisted applicants will be notified by phone for an interview, and the position will be filled once a suitable candidate is identified.

Yours sincerely,

Renee Mills

Renee Mills
Arros Team Leader

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Relationships Therapist (Disability Specific)

Purpose of the Position

Community Living Association works alongside parents who have an intellectual and/or cognitive disability, their families and significant others, and other key stakeholders to support the parent to:

- Build their parenting capacity, knowledge and skill through adaptive, practical and concrete ways of education and learning
- Engage in therapeutic work to process grief and loss, trauma, and emotional harm that can result from adverse life experiences, including engagement in child protection systems both as a child and an adult..
- Build capacity to advocate for oneself and one's family across systems and to engage parents where possible in systems advocacy work.
- Navigate complex systems which they find themselves engaged with such as Child Protection, legal, housing, NDIS, health and education.

The aim of this work is to foster parents' capacity and challenge systems and structures to enable environments where parents can speak up, be heard, be involved, and connected, to their children in ways that are meaningful to them and their families. This includes individual, group and project work to support parents to reach individual goals related to parenting, to connect and create relationships with their peers and to engage in project work and systems advocacy.

Characteristics and Features

The Relationships therapist will:

- Exercise initiative and judgement to independently develop a case plan by undertaking holistic and collaborative assessment, planning for intervention and ongoing evaluation.
- Actively contribute specialised skills and knowledge, as outlined in the role requirements, internally and externally, and support other practitioners in the team.
- Utilise therapeutic interventions, knowledge of parenting strategies, including Circle of Security, to foster parents' capacity to safely parent, including where this occurs alongside other supported (e.g., family members, partner and/or foster/kinship carer)
- Use discipline skills and knowledge to work with parents engaged in multiple and complex systems, e.g. NDIS, Child Safety, Criminal Justice, Housing, Centrelink, Health, Mental Health.
- Manage time, set priorities, plan and organise their work, engage in your own professional supervision, and supervise other staff/students as required.
- Advocate, coordinate and communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders in complex systems.
- Utilise community development methodologies to bring parents together to create community and social/systems change.
- Engage in critical reflection individually, and as part of a team, to develop practice and practice responses to enhance outcomes for young people.
- Work both autonomously and in collaboration with the Arros Team and external stakeholders.

Responsibilities

- Provide direct support to parents, who have an intellectual, cognitive, or psycho-social disability, to actively support them to address barriers to achieve parenting related goals through individual, group and/or project work.
- Apply CLA's Practice Framework, ARROS Parenting Practice Framework, and CLA's Policies and Procedures in the work, to ensure best practice and to 'champion' the rights, needs and hopes of both parents we work with and the rights of parents with intellectual disability more broadly.
- Engage in therapeutic interventions to support parents to manage their emotions, navigate their experiences of childhood trauma (relating specifically to their parenting), and grief and loss.
- The ability to develop knowledge and understanding of NDIS plans, funding, budgets, and service agreements, and to support parents to understand and participate in the NDIS system where relevant, particularly where advocacy is required.
- Demonstrate a commitment to social justice and an understanding of how best to access, advocate for, and maintain supports for parents with intellectual disability through working effectively with internal and external stakeholders in complex systems e.g. NDIA, Department of Child Safety, Department of Housing, Justice system etc.
- Utilise communication and advocacy skills to write professional reports, outlining your assessments, interventions, and recommendations in support of a parent's goals and any subsequent resources (including NDIS funding) that they need.
- Represent Community Living Association in forums and networks, advocating with, or on behalf of parents, to improve their opportunities and outcomes.
- Work alongside families, significant others, community members, and service providers who are in contact with or support parents who have an intellectual/cognitive disability
- Network and collaborate with parents, foster and kinship carers, significant others, community members and service providers to develop joint responses to the needs of parents who have an intellectual/cognitive disability.
- Provide community development responses to emerging themes in practice.
- Respectfully and actively participate in regular and ongoing supervision, reflective practice through team meetings, staff development activities, and contribute to a positive work environment.
- Work as a member of the ARROS team, including providing back-up support and/or assistance to other team members as required; particularly when continuity of service delivery is compromised.
- Share administrative responsibilities e.g. taking referrals, answering phones, locking up and recording at team meetings.
- Maintain record keeping such as case notes, minor expenditures, report writing and assist the Team Leader with programmatic / organisational data and reporting, including requirements of NDIS funding.
- Work autonomously to fulfill the requirements of the role.
- Work collaboratively with your team members, and other staff across the organization, as required.

Requirements

- Tertiary qualification in social work, or a related discipline.
- Specialised knowledge and/or experience in developmental practice and working with people with an intellectual, cognitive and/or psychosocial disability.

- A comprehensive understanding and skills in the Helping Process, Relational Practice, Trauma-Informed Practice, and Capacity Building Frameworks.
- A commitment to social justice and an ability to use advocacy skills in practice.
- Sound knowledge and skills in working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and the LGBTIQ community.
- Driver's License and use of own vehicle for work purposes (mileage reimbursed as per SCHADS Award)
- NDIS Worker Orientation Module certificate of completion
- Yellow Card, Yellow Card Exemption OR NDIS Worker Screening Clearance
- Blue Card "Working with Children Check"

Accountability

- The Relationships Therapist (Disability Specific) is accountable to the ARROS Team Leader.
- They are required to follow CLA's Policy and Procedures and statutory requirements.
- In accordance with the Staff Supervision and Staff Development Policy, regular supervision will occur with the Team Leader.
- Workers will be supported with opportunities for ongoing professional development.

A note for future workers from CLA parents

Some things we would like you to know!



We are excited that you are thinking of working for CLA.

We think it is important you get to hear from us, the parents you will get the privilege of working alongside. Here a few of the things we would like you to know about what we look for in a good worker!

- Be kind.
- Be on time, help me and give me the support I need to be a parent.
- Take me seriously!
- We like workers to take time to get to know us and who we are so we can build a trusting working relationship.
- It's important for workers to understand our children's needs, our needs as parents and the needs of carers, where we have kinship and foster carers looking after our children. We all have different needs!
- I like an ongoing worker that I can trust, not constant changes. I love it when a worker can get to know me and my kids over a longer period of time, so they get to know how we work as a family!
- It is very important that workers listen and take on board what we are saying
- When it is appropriate we love to laugh together and build memories that we can reflect on and laugh about
- The worker needs to have good communication, good vibes, not be too serious and love a joke!
- Knowing how to help parents with parenting, their disability and child safety is really important!
- Most importantly, you need a good sense of humour!

As parents, we love our kids and we work hard to be 'good enough' parents. We prefer to talk about being the 'best parents we can be'. We look forward to meeting workers who are as passionate about parenting as we are!

From the Parents of CLA
(we look forward to getting to know you!)



Managing Emotions

Therapeutic interventions: trauma work, emotional regulation, identity, grief and loss, healthy relationships.

“Having your kids removed is trauma. In itself, on top of all the other traumas. It's important to take time to self care.”

“I used to yell abuse at the CSO because she would make me so angry. Now I can stay calm even when she is treating me unfairly. It's better for me and my kids.”

Parenting

Building parenting Capacity:

- Tailored education (knowledge/skills)
- Circle of Security
- Practical support (e.g., modelling during contact)

“Being a parent doesn't come with a manual, so give us time and we can show you we can actually parent.”

“Take each day as it comes to learn new things as your kids grow up. Lots of us come from Child Safety so we don't have good role models. Learning to play is something I didn't get growing up.”



PARENTING PRACTICE
 Parent centred-family focused
 Disability & trauma informed
 Centring lived experience
 Relational
 Holding hope
 Deep listening
 Holistic
 Influencing systems
 Reflective practice



Speaking Up

- Engaging in advocacy alongside parents
- Building capacity for self advocacy, peer advocacy and systems advocacy

“They might have a degree, but unless you've walked in my shoes you don't understand.”

“Knowing your rights and learning to speak up for yourself and your friends is important. It feels good to know people are listening and hopefully things change.”

“By speaking up calmly, I am teaching my kids to speak up and use their voice and not be afraid.”

Navigating systems

Engaging in complex systems alongside parents: (e.g., legal systems, child protection, NDIS, health, housing and education)

“Systems like Child Safety judge us and don't recognise individual needs. Don't judge a book by its cover.”

“As parents, we should have more access to the community and systems.”

“They should have disability specific teams and more understanding of disability and mental health. You should be able to advocate for yourself without a worker.”



Community Living Association

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Trauma, Vicarious Trauma, Burnout and Self-Care

PREAMBLE

Work in community services and at CLA can be stressful and tiring as well as fulfilling and rewarding. The work at CLA can also involve working with people who have experienced trauma and may be experiencing trauma on a continuing basis. Work at CLA can also at times include involvement in situations where workers (paid staff) and volunteers may feel personally threatened. This happens rarely but can happen.

CLA identifies this potential not as a way of deterring people from working in the organisation but as a reality which people should be prepared for.

We encourage prospective workers, including students at CLA to reflect on their personal history of trauma and whether a) this might prevent them applying for a job at CLA or b) whether it is something they consider in their self-care plans. Prospective workers are encouraged to reflect on how they will plan for an appropriate work/life balance, monitor their sleep and self-care plans; if you are successful in being offered a position at CLA we will support you to reflect on these matters.

POLICY

CLA recognises the potential for burnout, vicarious trauma and trauma impacts of this work and will work with its workers to maintain appropriate self-care.

PROCEDURE

- Applicants for work at CLA will receive a copy of this policy and procedure as part of the Application Pack – included in Recruitment Checklist.
- Interview processes will include questions related to potential for exposure to vicarious trauma and trauma.
- This policy will be included in Induction Checklist.
- Supervision will include checking with workers on self-care plans and strategies. This will be written into every supervision agreement. (See Supervision Agreement)
- Workers are encouraged to consult resource material on burnout/vicarious trauma and trauma/self-care and sleep hygiene. (See Related Documents)

- Team Leaders and workers are reminded that if there are concerns about worker safety then safety plans need to be established. (See Section 4.3 Outreach Worker Safety Policy)
- It is not an expression of personal failure for workers to experience fatigue, apprehension or distress. It can be a natural reaction to stresses on the job. We encourage workers to be open about these feelings with their supervisor.
- Where workers are experiencing negative impact due to the work, team leaders will engage with them around remedial actions. These may include: self-care plans, safety plans, counselling, critical incident responses, disengagement from certain situations