

BEROS Case Manager – Empowering young people in Out of Home Care

Do you have a passion for making a difference in the lives of young people facing complex challenges? BEROS is seeking a compassionate and dedicated Case Manager to join our team supporting young people (aged 12-18) on the Sunshine Coast.

We work with young people in the care of Child Safety who are self-placing and often experience homelessness.

BEROS' goal is to work alongside these young people to build community connections, enhance their safety and stability, and meet their immediate needs, including accommodation, resources, and safe, caring relationships. As a Case Manager, you'll provide direct outreach, build trusting relationships, to empower these young people. You work with each young person at their own pace, supporting them to achieve their goals – whether that's engaging in education or employment, building positive relationships, strengthening family and cultural ties, or preparing for their transition into adulthood.

*BEROS is funded by the Department of Child Safety. We are managed by Community Living Association (CLA), and work in a consortium with Micah projects. For more information about CLA and the work we do, go to:

<https://communityliving.org.au/>

This is a 12-month locum to backfill maternity leave. The contract is full-time (38 hours/week) based in Sippy Downs. We offer a rewarding opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable youth. The Case Manager plays a vital role in key areas:

- Build Meaningful Connections: Engage with young people on their terms, building rapport and trust through proactive outreach and consistent support.
- Empower and Support: Develop individualised support plans based on holistic assessments, addressing barriers and empowering young people to reach their full potential.
- Crisis Response and Safety Planning: Utilise trauma-informed practices to de-escalate crises, manage risk, and develop safety plans that prioritise young people's well-being.
- Advocate for Change: Be a champion for young people's rights, navigating complex systems (NDIS, Child Safety, Health, Housing, etc.) to ensure they access essential resources and have their voices heard.
- Collaborate for Success: Work closely with the BEROS team, Child Safety, families, and other key stakeholders to provide wraparound support and achieve positive outcomes.
- Contribute to a Thriving Team: Participate in reflective practice, engage in ongoing professional development, and contribute to a positive and supportive team environment.

BEROS Case Manager Responsibilities Also Include:

- Maintaining accurate case notes, incident reports, and data collection.
- Contributing to the smooth operation of the BEROS house (shared cleaning, shopping, occasional early morning support).
- Participating in a flexible on-call roster to support the BEROS after-hours teams.
- Preparing quarterly case studies showcasing the impact of BEROS's work.
- Attending relevant networking meetings and maintaining communication with stakeholders.
- Frequent travel to Gympie, Moreton Bay and Brisbane

What We Are Looking For in a new Case Manager:

- Whilst this is not an identified position, First Nations peoples are encouraged to apply. Cultural knowledge is highly valued in BEROS.
- A tertiary qualification in social work, human services, or a related field is preferred, but relevant experience and transferrable skills are respected.
- Demonstrated experience working with young people facing complex challenges, including knowledge of developmental practice.
- A strong understanding of and experience applying trauma-informed care, harm reduction, crisis intervention, and capacity building.
- A passion for social justice and a commitment to advocacy.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills.
- Cultural sensitivity and demonstrated ability to work effectively with diverse communities.
- A valid driver's license, Blue Card (Working with Children Check), and COVID-19 vaccination as per CLA policy.

Support and Development:

We offer regular supervision (weekly during probation, then monthly) and ongoing professional development opportunities to support your growth and well-being in this challenging yet rewarding role. You'll be part of a dedicated and supportive team committed to making a real difference in the lives of vulnerable young people.

Benefits:

- SCHADS Level 4 salary with salary sacrificing opportunities. (See the SCHADS Award: [\[link\]](#))
- Make a tangible difference in the lives of young people.
- Work in a supportive and collaborative team environment.
- Flexible work arrangements can be arranged in consultation with the BEROS Team leader. This is in recognition of employee's cultural business, family responsibilities and individual needs.

To determine if this role is the right fit for you, please find within this application kit the following documentation:

- BEROS Practice Principles
- CLA Framework for working with First Nations community
- What young people in out of home care would like you to know about self-placing
- CLA's Trauma, Vicarious Trauma, Burnout and Self Care Policy and Procedure

To Apply:

Please submit your CV and a cover letter (maximum three pages) addressing the key selection criteria (listed below). Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for an interview.

Selection Criteria: Please include examples to illustrate your practice when responding to the questions below.

Applications with no response to the questions below will NOT be considered.

1. From the document provided in the application kit *'What young people in out of home care would like you to know about self-placing'* what advice from young people resonated with you and why? Provide at least 2 examples of how you implement their advice in your practice?
2. What are 4 key skills and values from your practice framework that you apply to working alongside young people? Provide examples of these skills and values in practice.
3. How does your knowledge of trauma, disrupted attachment and harm reduction guide your practice with young people? Give a de-identified case work example.
4. What is your approach to working with diverse communities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities and LGBTIQAP+ young people, families, services, and communities. Provide an example.

BEROS Practice Principles

Listed here are the key ideas and themes that inform BEROS' approach to working alongside young people.

Relationship

"Because I find it hard to trust people and open up and talk to them. So, they [BEROS] made an effort to get to know me and everything" - Venables, 2020.

Relationship building is a fundamental element of BEROS practice. The cohort of young people we work with, have often had negative experiences of service intervention, and lack trust in workers. BEROS invest time and resources into building trust and developing a professional relationship. Our approach to relationship building is trauma informed and considers young people's attachment styles. Furthermore, it is flexible and changes for each individual young person. Time spent building relationship with a young person could include scheduling in activity days, catch ups over food, outreach to the young person's safe space, engaging with other important people in the young person's life, and getting to know the young person's interests rather than their background or history in care.

Voluntary Cooperation

"I had the option. It was you could work with us and we'll help you out with a lot of the support stuff. Or you could easily just say no and we wouldn't bother you again. And I felt like that was really good because it gave me the choice. Well, if I wanted to work with [BEROS] or not." - Venables, 2020.

Working from a principle of voluntary cooperation, BEROS understands that for young people who may be experiencing crisis, it can be difficult to keep a service at the forefront of their mind. BEROS maintains a consistent and persistent effort to engage with them. As a service, BEROS does this by maintaining a non-judgmental and guilt

free open door, which allows young people to engage or connect with workers when they are ready to do so. Beros understand that lives are complex and at times young people might not have the time or space to engage with a service. Sometimes Beros hangs around in the background for several months but is in contact regularly to encourage 'relationship building' activities – even if that means going for a drive and getting a feed.

Confidentiality Across Systems

"Yes, they don't tell Child Safety or anyone anything unless they feel like I'm in danger... It feels good. I've told [worker] a lot of things and I feel safe" - Venables, 2020.

Beros workers build trust and rapport with young people by maintaining their privacy and confidentiality. Young people in the Child Safety system are often familiar with the note taking and report writing processes that Child Safety Officers, placement workers and stakeholders adhere to. In most cases young people have an assumed knowledge that their information is openly shared between stakeholders. This has been most evident by the reaction and feedback from young people when we explain our position on confidentiality. Young people have been brought to tears by the notion that Beros do not receive their file when we take their referral. Instead, Beros workers want to meet young people 'where they are at' and get to know them for the person they are today. The information they choose to share with us is at their discretion and will remain within our service.

Transparent Practice

"They're professionals, but they're also not really. So, they'll help you with a lot of things, but they're also people you can turn to and talk to, but not as someone professional but someone as a friend. You can trust them as that sort of person." - Venables, 2020.

Beros aim to be transparent in our practice from the moment a young person is referred to the service. Workers start this conversation with our initial induction and maintain open and honest communication throughout our working relationship. Workers explain the voluntary nature of our service and our privacy and confidentiality policy. We note that this is not a once off conversation and guarantee that we will continue to talk to young people about how they would like us to engage with the systems around them.

Young Person Takes the Lead on Change

"Oh, they supported my decision making 100%. I would say one thing and even though they wouldn't go, 'well, that's a bit of a stupid idea, I don't know what you're on there', but [they would say], 'just know the repercussions if you are actually doing this'." - Venables, 2020.

Through trust and transparency built with a young person, Beros can have open conversations with young people about what they want and where they are at. Beros do not hold the position of 'expert' in the work. Instead, we encourage self-determination in the young person. While we maintain a future focus, Beros acknowledges that change does not always have measurable outcomes. For young people with complex support needs, 'change' can be engaging in harm-minimisation strategies or accessing services to ensure their basic needs are met. Whatever their goal may be on any given day, Beros work alongside young people to meet their needs and are always there to celebrate their successes.

Work with the Young Person's Reality

"It actually felt amazing. Because knowing that my entire life I've had no one to talk to and nobody to get to listen to me. And now that I've finally got someone to talk to, it felt so fulling." - Venables, 2020.

As a team Beros commits to physically and emotionally meeting a young person where they are at. Through the therapeutic alliance Beros workers can provide a level of attunement that allows a young person to feel valued and emotionally safe. This means working within the young person's current reality and understanding of truth. Rather than challenging their perception of what may be occurring, Beros sit with and acknowledge the young person's lived experience. When we sit with this reality, we can validate their experience and assist them to emotionally regulate.

Unconditional Positive Regard

"...even though they didn't know you, they had no clue about you. Or they knew just what was on your files. It was really good to have a smiling face that didn't care about where you had come from. Or what you had been through. They were just there to help you." - Venables, 2020.

Unconditional positive regard is a term coined by Carl Rogers and is an integral part of his client-centred approach. This does not mean that we must like each of the person's choices, but that we accept who they are at a level deeper than surface behaviour. When discussing this cohort of young people and the complexities in their lives, we often hear young people being labelled by the choices they have made or by some of the behaviours they exhibit. Young people are very aware of how they have been labelled and how they are viewed by the adults in their life, or society in general. Unconditional Positive Regard asks us to challenge this stigma and respect the young person as a human being with their own free will, operating under the assumption that they are doing the best they can.

Sitting with Risk

Beros workers often hold a lot of knowledge about a young person's self-placing arrangement and must be comfortable sitting with the risks associated with it. When assessing risk, Beros consider the young person's current context, which is informed by our relationship with them. Beros workers make assessments about how much information is shared with Child Safety and discuss this openly with the young person. When safety planning alongside a young person, Beros workers acknowledge the limits to confidentiality and discuss situations where we may need to disclose information to Child Safety and broader support networks. For example, when a young person is at immediate risk of harm to themselves or others.

CLA Framework for working with First Nations community

Community Living Association has a commitment to culturally aware, competent and safe practice standards alongside First Nations young people, their kinship network and community. We also consider the need for culturally safe working environment for First Nations employees.

CLA has embedded various Reconciliation strategies to ensure ongoing commitment to providing a high standard of service delivery and relationship with First Nations people. This includes:

- Active Membership with Noonga Reconciliation Group. Providing resources for Noonga monthly meetings.
- 10-year partnership to support Noonga to organise and deliver an annual National Sorry Day Ceremony. The process brings together Early childhood education, primary and secondary schools and the broader community to commemorate the lives of Stolen Generations' people and families and celebrate the continuation of culture.
- Supporting community engagement and education events to raise awareness of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and lived experiences.
- Projects and groups alongside local First Nations Peoples connected to school communities, promoting meaningful inclusion of cultural perspectives and building trusted relationships between young people, families, schools, community and CLA.
- Development of a Reconciliation booklet outlining the history of the local area, including Traditional Owners, race relations and impact of colonisation on First Peoples'. This is a living document that can be updated as we 'dig deeper' to access local knowledge.
- Relationships with Elders, First Nations consultants and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- Procuring business from First Nations Performers/Elders to perform Welcome/Acknowledgement of Country at CLA events.
- Annual Cultural Competence/Safety training opportunities for CLA staff.
- Commissioned artwork from Aboriginal Artist for display in CLA office space
- Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of all formal meetings, reports and publications.
- Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags around workplace, on promotional materials and in email signatures.

At a practice level, CLA staff are informed by the nine guiding principles outlined in the National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental health & Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2004-2009 which are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is viewed in a holistic context that encompasses mental health and physical, cultural and spiritual health. Land is central to wellbeing. Crucially, it must be understood that while the harmony of these interrelations is disrupted, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ill health will persist.
- Self-determination is central to the provision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services.
- Culturally valid understandings must shape the provision of services and must guide assessment, care and management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health problems generally and mental health problems in particular.
- It must be recognised that the experiences of trauma and loss, present since European invasion, are a direct outcome of the disruption to cultural wellbeing. Trauma and loss of this magnitude continue to have intergenerational effects.

- The human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be recognised and respected. Failure to respect these human rights constitutes continuous disruption to mental health (as against mental ill health). Human rights relevant to mental illness must be specifically addressed.
- Racism, stigma, environmental adversity and social disadvantage constitute ongoing stressors and have negative impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' mental health and wellbeing.
- The centrality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and kinship must be recognised as well as the broader concepts of family and the bonds of reciprocal affection, responsibility and sharing.
- There is no single Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander culture or group, but numerous groupings, languages, kinships and tribes, as well as ways of living. Furthermore, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may currently live in urban, rural or remote settings, in urbanised, traditional or other lifestyles, and frequently move between these ways of living.
- It must be recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have great strengths, creativity and endurance and a deep understanding of the relationships between human beings and their environment.

CLA's 'Culturally Safe Engagement Framework' is regularly reviewed and adapted as we engage in ongoing learning and practice development. It is outlined below in its current form:

1. Understanding history and context including pre-colonisation, colonisation and impact across generations and in contemporary history.
2. Acknowledging the impact of colonisation including social disadvantage, intergenerational trauma, institutional and systemic racism, dislocation from kinship networks and cultural practices & knowledge.
3. Committed to seeing culture as alive, current and dynamic. We do this by being open to feedback and holding space for multiple stories and truths which are unearthed through Truth Telling. We adjust practice as we learn and decolonise understandings formed by historical recording by white victors.
4. Relationship focused, holistic and purposeful support. Allowing time to build trust; being genuine, being aware of cultural cues, being flexible and responsive, working collaboratively and holistically around goals that are important to the young person.
5. Engaging in and learning alongside community/kinship/family. Including developing strong relationships with Elders, collaboration and partnerships with ACCOs and accessing Link Up and other First Nations specific specialist services and resources.
6. Working with young person to build or strengthen connection to culture.

Guided by these key questions outlined in Aboriginal Children's Cultural Needs

- Who you are (personal identity)
- Who you belong to (Family, Community)
- Where you belong (Country)
- What you do (cultural expression and participation in events)

- Where you come from (extended family, kinship network and community history)
- What you believe (Values, beliefs and cultural practices)

(Bambllett et al 2012)

What young people in out of home care want you to know about self-placing

The following shares the voices of 11 young people who took part in interviews about their experience of self-placing as part of a research project conducted by the University of Queensland.

- Be kind, patient, compassionate, person-centred, empathetic, curious, non-judgmental, and trauma informed.
- Be respectful of young people's belongings -it might be all they have.
- Give young people information about all the possible resources, services and support they are entitled to – especially after-hours services.
- Stress your availability to young people. Be transparent about the future and provide stability where possible.
- Support young people to have a safety plan in case their placement doesn't work out. This could involve using other services, or making a safe word.
- Advocate for the needs of young people with Child Safety and other services, and provide guidance where possible.
- Support young people to secure their future by providing resources – eg. Centrelink support, housing application, driver's licence, updated resume etc.
- Understand AOD and other typically "naughty" behaviours as mechanisms for survival, and encourage harm minimisation approaches.
- Don't make promises you can't keep about staying in touch when you leave. This is how young people lose trust in workers.
- Most importantly: Ensure young people have access to the basics – food, transport, a phone and a place to stay

Venables, J., Healy, K., & Cullen, J. (2022). *Enhancing outcomes for young people in out-of-home care who 'self-place': Optimising practice and policy responses*. The University of Queensland

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 2.4.12 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.