

MENTAL HEALTH DROP-IN HELPER

What Does Being A Mental Health Drop-In Helper Volunteer Involve?

Mental Health Drop-in Helpers will be expected to interact with drop-in members, listen, make them welcome, and engage in friendly conversation. Volunteers will also take part in the drop-in activities and programmes, plus any meetings, training and Supervision sessions.

Volunteers, along with drop-in users, will be encouraged to be proactive in the running and development of the drop-in. It is the role of volunteers to encourage members to take an active role in the drop-in.

Is There A Minimum Commitment?

Being a volunteer at the drop-in involves a minimum commitment of 6 months. There is no maximum length and some volunteers continue to be involved for many years.

How Frequently Will I Be Needed?

You can volunteer at one or more of the drop-ins. A rota is usually drawn up for each drop-in session, so you will know in advance when you will be volunteering.

What Skills and Experience Do I Need?

No experience is required but some basic knowledge and/or an interest in learning more about mental health issues would be helpful.

Good communication skills are essential, as you will need to engage in friendly conversation, whilst being open minded and non-judgemental in your attitude and approach.

Volunteers will be placed at drop-ins on return of completed Disclosure and Barring checks (DBS check).

What Support Will I Be Given?

Volunteers will be provided with on-going Supervision at the drop-in. This is an opportunity for Volunteers to discuss any mental health or operational issues in terms of the drop-ins. (These sessions will be run by the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, mental health specialists.)

There will be mental health awareness training.

There will also be on-going support/contact from staff at VSL.

Volunteers will have access to a 24 hour counselling service helpline.

Mental Health Drop-In Helper Volunteer Responsibilities

As a Volunteer for VSL you will be expected to:

- Welcome members, set up sessions (including buying milk, tea and coffee as required) and clear away at the end of sessions.

- Allow drop-in members to talk whilst you actively listen.
- Engage in friendly conversation whilst respecting the views of others.
- Establish and develop trusting relationships to support and enable drop-in members to support and enable drop-in members to pursue their goals and expand their life skills.
- Facilitate activities and meetings, joining in as appropriate, bringing your own skills and interests to the drop-in.
- Be flexible in your approach to dealing with issues raised by drop-in members.
- Work as part of a team.
- Be punctual and reliable, and if unable to attend a session, inform the VSL of your non-attendance in good time, providing 48 hours notice if possible.
- Attend all training, supervision and support sessions.
- Take a proactive interest in the running and development of the drop-in.
- Maintain confidentiality and appropriate boundaries at all times.
- Inform the Organiser of any concerns as they arise.
- Agree to abide by the Equality and Diversity Policy of VSL.
- Comply with the VSL's risk assessment guidelines.

Reviewed March 2013