

Health in Mind

Top Tips for Inclusive Volunteering: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Health in Mind, have been promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in Scotland since 1982. We do this by providing a wide range of services and courses to support people and enable them to make a positive difference in their lives.

TOP TIPS FOR SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS

These Top Tips were produced by Health in Mind

By reflecting on the following we would hope that these points would help you make your volunteering offer more inclusive:

Organisational Culture

1. Think about your organisational culture and approach to mental health and wellbeing. Develop a safe open culture where all staff and volunteers have an awareness of mental health and wellbeing.

Supervision and Support

2. Consider offering Volunteers Managers Scotland Mental Health First Aid training, or have a trained mental health first aider that volunteers know they can contact if needed

3. Adopt a person centred approach to supporting volunteers – supporting volunteer in a way that works for them, not just the organisation. Be flexible! Figure out what works for both of you

4. Be aware of any assumptions you might be making about the volunteers' abilities based on their diagnosis or history – it is better to ask the volunteer, rather than assume knowledge.

5. Have a conversation during induction, asking the volunteer how you can support them best, and if appropriate, coming up with a plan together for how they will be supported / ask for time out if they become unwell while volunteering.

6. Talk with volunteers about what they do to keep well, and if they can share any early warning signs that they are moving away from a place of wellness.

7. Include space about how volunteers are doing within supervision- don't just focus on the role.

8. Offer opportunities for peer support with other volunteers.

9. Encouraged to take time out if they are moving away from a place of wellness

10. Check in with volunteers who are taking time out– a text, an email, a phone call from time to time

Communication

11. Be clear who volunteers' named contact is, and who to contact if their supervisor is unavailable.

12. Use inclusive language and don't make assumptions

13. Ensure that clear guidelines and boundaries about the volunteer role are in place and shared.

Motivations- Volunteering Supporting Mental Health

14. Get to know our volunteers as individuals and what their hopes, goals and aims are. Get to know your volunteer's interests and passions outside of volunteering. How does this link to supporting their mental health

Involvement- Creating a Community

15. Ensure there is a platform/ space for volunteers to share ideas

16. Make sure that volunteers are aware of all of the opportunities available to them within the organisation including training, other volunteering opportunities, job vacancies and support

17. Create a sense of community through offering the opportunity to get to know one another and other teams

18. Take time to celebrate achievements

19. Ensure that volunteers feel part of the Health in Mind community, but also be clear about their responsibilities as a volunteer, as opposed to a staff member/ someone using services

- **Inclusive Volunteering page**
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