Knowledge Gateway

Practice Guidance and Information

Inclusion in Volunteering: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Top Tips for Inclusive Volunteering

These Top Tips were produced by Volunteer Scotland and the National Inclusion in Volunteering Group.

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.

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 a volunteer's named contact at the organisation is, and who to contact if their supervisor is unavailable.
12. Use inclusive language and don't make assumptions

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

Need some more help?

If you would like more help or advice in relation to this guide, please contact us:

- **https://www.health-in-mind.org.uk/**
- Telephone: Volunteer Scotland 01786 479593
- Email: **knowledgegateway@volunteerscotland.org.uk**

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The Knowledge Gateway is created and led by **Volunteer Scotland**

Volunteer Scotland

This is a regularly reviewed resource. If you have any suggested updates, please email Volunteer Scotland at **hello@volunteerscotland.org.uk**