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**VOLUNTEER COUNSELLOR PLACEMENT INFORMATION**

**Background information**

We are Buckinghamshire Mind, the mental health charity. Our vision is that everyone with a mental health problem gets both support and respect. We deliver high quality community-based services across Buckinghamshire and East Berkshire to reach out and ensure everyone with a mental health problem gets access to the help they need. We are affiliated to national Mind and proud to play our part in the local Mind network. Together we are Mind. Open, caring, experienced, unstoppable, together.

**Our Counselling Service**

We offer high quality one-to-one counselling for adults with a variety of mental health needs. Based in High Wycombe and Aylesbury, this is a self-referral service. Fees are charged on a sliding scale or low cost basis depending on the client’s financial circumstances. We offer an initial assessment and 10 ongoing weekly sessions. If you are required to see long term clients, this may not be a suitable placement for you.

**Training requirements**

Counsellors seeking a voluntary placement must be at an advanced stage of training e.g. as a minimum you must have completed a foundation/certificate level counselling course (or equivalent) and be in the second year of a counselling diploma or equivalent. We do not consider applicants on a distance learning course. Applicants should have at least 50+ supervised hours of clinical experience.

**Application and selection process**

Application forms can be found on our website [www.bucksmind.org.uk](http://www.bucksmind.org.uk) Applications received will go onto our waiting list and you will be contacted if/when a placement becomes available. If we have not been able to offer a placement within 18 months we will confidentially shred your application information. Please be aware that placements do not become available on a regular basis so it is important that you also look elsewhere. If you are contacted about a possible placement you will be invited to attend an formal interview. All offers of a placement are subject to references and enhanced DBS check.

**Personal Therapy**

We place considerable emphasis on counsellors having experienced longer term therapy. If you are in training you will be expected to remain in therapy throughout the duration of your course.

**Supervision**

Monthly 2-hour group supervision for a maximum of 4 students in the group is provided by an external supervisor at the cost of Bucks Mind.

If there are no spaces or you are unable to attend the day / time the groups runs, you will be required to have an external supervisor for your Bucks Mind clients and this will be at your cost. The details of the supervisor must be given to Bucks Mind prior to your starting the client work with us. Unfortunately Bucks Mind does not have the financial resources to reimburse external supervision costs.

In addition to above, a monthly peer supervision group is run by the counselling team attended and led by Team Lead and Counselling Operations manager.

All volunteers are encouraged to attend this to learn from each other’s client work and gain further experience and skills.

**CPD / Meetings:**

All counsellors are expected to attend at least 3 CPD’s in one year (Arranged by Bucks Mind). Counsellors are also expected to attend at least 3 team meeting (No more than 1.5hour each meeting) in one year.

**Administration responsibilities**

**While working Face 2 Face:**

* Arriving in good time to prepare for seeing clients
* Booking ongoing appointments with clients and keeping clients and the office informed of any leave.
* Keeping the room booking diary up to date and booking the room as far in advance as is possible. Putting planned absence in the diary.
* Completing all relevant paperwork on time e.g. weekly stats, closing forms, evaluation forms etc.
* Whenever possible and using the office phone, counsellors are responsible for contacting clients who don’t turn up so the counsellor and office know if they will be attending the following week.
* Collecting fees at the end of each session.
* Ensure rooms are left clean and tidy and furniture is returned to its original position.

**While working Remotely:**

* Make sure you have a Teams set up on your Laptop (Laptop provided by Bucks Mind)
* Make sure you have Buck Mind Email set up on your Laptop.
* Be able to send reminder to clients 24 hours before their session (Reminder for the sessions and payment)
* Have a safe and confidential space to carry out client sessions.
* Update session Notes online within 24 hours of the session.

**Other Responsibilities**

Familiarising yourself with the cancellation policy and adhere to this unless there are extenuating circumstances. The team lead can provide guidance.

Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the team lead or another member of the safeguarding team.

Reading appropriate policies and procedures.

**Insurance**

Public liability and professional indemnity insurance are provided.

**Ethics**

Buckinghamshire Mind are organisational members of the BACP and all counsellors are expected to adhere to the BACP ethical framework for the counselling professions.

**Expenses**

Buckinghamshire Mind does not have the financial resources to reimburse travel or parking expenses.

**Commitment**

Counsellors are expected to commit to a minimum of 1 year on placement and will be required to see a minimum of 3 clients on a weekly basis. Extended leave & regular breaks within 10 weeks of client’s sessions is discouraged as this is detrimental to the wellbeing of clients and the service.

**We really value the time given by our volunteers and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for our counsellors. The Team Lead and the Counselling Operations manager is available to talk through any concerns or issues that might arise during your time with us.**