

Support Line Volunteer



Role Description

The Aware Support Line provides telephone support and information for individuals experiencing depression, bipolar and mood related conditions and for family and friends supporting a loved one. This is a national Freephone service and operates 10am-10pm seven days a week. Volunteers will ensure that all calls to the Aware Support Line are conducted within the framework of the Support Line approach. Each volunteer is trained to respond to all calls with empathy, by allowing clarification, consideration of options and encouraging positive action while adhering to Aware's ethos, policies and procedures. The Support Line volunteer reports to the Support Line and Support Mail Manager.

Person Description - Qualities and Skills

An Aware volunteer will be empathetic and possess good communication skills, have an ability to take direction and possess enthusiasm and passion for the area of mental health and/or for the work of Aware. The Aware volunteer must be respectful of others and understand the importance of being a supportive and flexible team player. They must be willing to make a long term commitment to volunteering with Aware and to participate in mandatory ongoing training.

Other Requirements

- Must be over 25 years of age.
- Available for three hours once a week
- Smartphone (*calls are taken through a dedicated app*)
- Reliable broadband
- Somewhere quiet to take calls
- Fluent written and spoken English.
- Technology skills are essential (*with ease download apps; change app settings; toggle between tabs and website etc*)
- Garda clearance will be required and two references.

- Children First Online training (*further details will be provided by Aware on acceptance to Aware training*)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults at Risk of Abuse Online training (*further details will be provided by Aware on acceptance to Aware training*)

Guiding Principles:

Volunteers will respond to calls to the Support Line by promoting pathways to recovery through:

- treating persons contacting the service with dignity and respect with due regard to the principles and guidelines of Aware
- responding to each call to the Support Line in a non-judgemental manner and in accordance with Aware's Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy
- to promote pathways to recovery through the provision of literature and offering information on Aware's additional services including Life Skills, the Support & Self Care Groups, Support Mail service and Lectures where appropriate.

Duties & Commitment:

- To honour a three hour weekly commitment for a minimum of eighteen months.
- To carry out the role as set out in the Aware Support Line Volunteer Agreement
- To attend a minimum of four bi-monthly meetings per annum
- To participate in initial and ongoing training provided
- To be punctual for your Support Line slot, allowing enough time to familiarise yourself with the available reference material and read any new notices
- To input call information into the computer logging system
- To utilise your co-volunteer supports during and after your three-hour shift (Debrief)
- To bring to the attention of the Service Manager any issues of concern regarding any aspect of your role as volunteer for Aware
- To participate as required in evaluations and audits of the Service
- To act at all times according to the guidelines and Code of Practice of Aware.

Team work and rota:

It is important that volunteers adhere to the rota to support the stability, consistency and efficiency of the service:

- To confirm any planned unavailability or holidays one month in advance
- To find a replacement if unable to honour a shift and to inform Service Manager as soon as possible of this change.
- To attend bi-monthly meetings to discuss any issues, address challenges and ensure clear communications.

Benefits of Volunteering with Aware:

- Full training provided.
- Ongoing support.
- Development of skill set.
- References provided upon completion of required period of service.*
- Out of pocket expenses covered.**
- Experience of working with a national organisation which strives for best practice and whose services are independently evaluated.
- Opportunities to progress with Aware.

* Details re provision of references outlined in section 4.5 of the Aware Volunteer Policy.

* **Criteria and conditions apply.