



Volunteer Facilitator: Support & Self Care Groups

Previous group facilitation experience is desirable, though not essential, as training will be provided.

Role Description

Aware volunteer Support and Self Care Group Facilitators are responsible for facilitating weekly Support and Self Care groups. The groups are for individuals who experience depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety and other mood related conditions. Groups have up to ten attendees present. The groups are facilitated by two volunteer facilitators, who receive initial and ongoing training from Aware. All volunteers adhere to Aware's ethos, policies and procedures.

Aware offer three Support & Self Care group services:

Face to Face groups at locations nationwide, a conference call Phone In group and online Zoom groups.

A good working knowledge of IT and excellent WiFi is an essential criterion for this role, as it is necessary to engage fully with ongoing training, to gain external mandatory training certificates, to attend online team meetings and further learning, and to make online reports in line with Aware's policies. Proficiency in the use of Zoom and its functions is essential to the provision of the Zoom group service.

Facilitators work on a rota basis, usually at the same venue and day/time of week. They are supported by and report to the National Coordinator for Support and Self Care Group services.

Person Description - Qualities and Skills

An Aware facilitator is empathetic, possesses excellent communication skills, has an ability to take direction and possesses enthusiasm and passion for the area of mental health, groups and for the work underpinning Aware's ethos. The Aware facilitator is respectful of others and understands the importance of being a supportive, reflective and flexible team player. The person must be willing to make a long-term commitment to volunteering with Aware and to participate in mandatory ongoing training.

Guiding Principles:

- To treat persons attending the Support and Self Care group with dignity and respect, with due regard to the principles and guidelines of Aware
- To facilitate the group in a non-judgmental manner and in accordance with Aware's Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy.
- To facilitate the group to encourage a proactive approach through clarification, consideration of options and to encourage helpful support and action
- To promote pathways to recovery through the offering of literature and information on Aware's additional services including, Support Line, Support Mail, Life Skills programme, Relatives & Friends Programme, Webinars and our website along with signposting other services where appropriate.

Commitment:

- To honour a three-hour weekly commitment for a minimum of eighteen months, on an agreed rota, following training. It is essential that volunteers adhere to the rota to support the stability, consistency and efficiency of the Support and Self Care group provision.
- While active on a rota, to stay in regular communication with the National Coordinator and all other active facilitators on the rota to ensure consistency and continuity of service.
- To carry out the role as set out in the Aware Volunteer Agreement and Role Description.
- To participate in initial and ongoing training provided and to attend online monthly facilitator support meetings.
- To participate as required in evaluations and audits of the service.
- To bring to the attention of the National Coordinator any issues of concern regarding any aspect of your role as a volunteer with Aware.
- To act at all times according to the guidelines and Code of Practice of Aware.

Duties:

- Two facilitators are present for Support and Self Care group to take place (Zoom & Phone In groups may go ahead with one experienced facilitator in an emergency situation, i.e. technology failure).
- Team may be required to identify one person who takes responsibility for drawing up a team roster
- Team to arrive punctually to engage in a group pre-brief and to debrief and submit necessary documentation after the group ends.

NOTE: In the event of an *emergency* where a facilitator is not available, he/she informs their co-facilitator of the change; contacts other facilitator/s to organise cover and to ensure that the National Coordinator is kept informed of all changes.

It is critical that facilitators fulfil this commitment for the wellbeing of group members as cancellation of groups is a serious matter for group members and Aware.

- Facilitators communicate directly with the National Coordinator should any issue arise within the group and/or between group Facilitators
 - Facilitators attend a minimum of 9 monthly Facilitator support meetings per annum. Action points will be posted on the Volunteer Area of the Website along with audit observations and it is essential that facilitator read these to ensure that good practice is adhered to
 - Facilitators will report via the Volunteer Area of the website any issues concerning the 'Exceptions to Confidentiality' as per the Aware Confidentiality and Risk Management Policy
- While groups are treated in confidence (within the normal limits) facilitators are encouraged to discuss with the National Coordinator any issues, problems or fears they may have in relation to their role or arising from a group, as quickly as is practically possible

Facilitator Duties at the group

- Arrive 20 minutes prior to the Support & Self Care group time to engage in Pre-Brief with Co-facilitator
- Display Aware literature (at Face to Face groups)
- Arrange seating in a circle as per current guidelines (if not done by venue provider)
- Display signage directing people to group
- Greet new/regular attendees on arrival
- Check that new people are at the right group
- Respect the privacy of attendees
- Open and close group punctually
- Follow Aware facilitation approach
- Give a 10-minute reminder towards end of group and close group as per Aware facilitation approach
- Debrief with other Facilitator after close of group and submit online form
- Remove signage
- Order literature as required from Head Office
- Keep record and receipts of expenses incurred in your role as facilitator

- Furnish detailed expenses to Aware on a weekly/monthly basis using an Aware expenses form
- Occasionally circulate posters, flyers for the group in your local area
- If possible, man information stand for local Mental Health promotion on an occasional basis, at request of National Coordinator

Benefits of Volunteering with Aware:

- Full training provided
- Ongoing support provided
- Development of skill set
- Statement of Fact provided upon completion of required period of service *
- Out of pocket expenses covered ** (as agreed in advance with Aware)
- 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 Statement of Fact outlined in section 4 5 of the Aware Volunteer Policy

* *Criteria and conditions apply