



Bereavement Matters

St Albans & District Bereavement Network

INFORMATION PACK FOR VOLUNTEERS

To the Volunteer

This pack sets out the rules and principles of the St Albans & District Bereavement Network. Please read it carefully.

We have included in the pack answers to some Frequently Asked Questions, and hope you find them useful. If you have any further queries, please contact: Bereavement Matters on 01727 841 914, or e-mail admin@sabn.org.uk.

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We hope to receive your completed Volunteer Application form soon. Do please contact us if you have any query on 01727 841 914 or email admin@sabn.org.uk.

St Albans & District Bereavement Network
January 2016

1. What is the St Albans & District Bereavement Network?

1.1 Who we are

Bereavement Matters is a registered charity, completely independent of government, whose mission is to care for bereaved people (men, women, families, young people and children) in St Albans and District. We provide a support service, which aims to help our clients work through their bereavement, make their own decisions, and adjust to their situation.

We aim to be available to all those people in the St Albans district, of any background and regardless of race, colour, creed or culture, who need our help.

The Charity's office in St Albans is managed by a Director, assisted by part-time staff and a number of volunteers. There is a dedicated helpline telephone number (**01727 841 841**) for clients and a contact number for volunteers (**01727 841 914**). A Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the Charity.

1.2 The services we provide

Our Helpline is open 09.30am – 1.00pm Monday to Friday and we provide an answerphone outside these hours 7 days a week.

We have bereavement and family visitors who visit the client at their own home or can see clients at our offices. We also offer a support service to bereaved children, either in their homes, at school or at our offices, encouraging them to find ways to cope following the death of someone close such as a parent.

We offer professional bereavement counselling in our office using trained counsellors.

We can also put people seeking our help in touch with a variety of specialist and professional agencies.

2. What can I do as a volunteer for the Network?

We have several kinds of volunteers supporting the Network. Full training is provided for all volunteers, depending on their interests, preferences, qualifications and experience.

You can do one or more of the following:

- **Train to become a bereavement Visitor** - where you visit clients in their own homes. By listening non-judgementally and in confidence, you support the client as he/she works through their bereavement.

OR

- **Buddy Service Member** – where the volunteer accompanies recently bereaved adults to a range of existing social groups and clubs in the St Albans and Harpenden area that they may be interested in joining. Please note that the Visiting and Buddy teams are currently working separately but it is the intention of the Charity that the two teams will be integrated into one over the next six months.

OR

- **Children's Team Members (School, Home or Bereavement Matters Offices)** - we will give you more information at your interview, if you are interested in this area of our work

OR

- **Counselling (Adult or Children)** - where the volunteer meets with a client on a regular basis

(usually for a period of 4-6 months) at our offices. You would need to be qualified or actively training on a diploma course to be considered for these roles, minimum requirements are:

- 2nd Year Diploma to work with Children
- 1st Year Diploma to work with Adults

OR

- **Reception, Helpline & Administration** - this means working in the office, taking telephone calls from clients who need someone who can listen sensitively and who may require various types of help and support. The days and hours you spend in the office, as a telephone volunteer will be decided by mutual agreement.

OR

- **Working in the office** - for those of you who would like to contribute but don't feel you can offer direct personal support to our clients; you may be able to work in the office on a variety of administrative tasks, you would need to be IT literate.

OR

- **Fundraising** – We have an established programme of fundraising activities but we are seeking volunteers to support us in this activity and also to expand this area of work. This could involve helping to set up or help out at fundraising events to benefit our organisation. Or it could involve creating leaflets or displays to publicise or promote our events.
- We also offer clients various other forms of help and support, for example by referrals in appropriate cases to skilled professionals (such as therapists) or to other agencies.

3. Volunteer job description (your work for us)

You may be: a bereavement/family visitor, or a counsellor, or a helpline or office volunteer, or a Child's Team Member (School, Home or Bereavement Matters Offices). Some volunteers may do more than one of the above.

You will be based at: St Albans & District Bereavement Network,
31 Catherine Street, St Albans, Herts. AL3 5BJ

Bereavement visitors normally travel to clients' homes, although you may use rooms at our offices; rooms do need to be reserved/booked in advance by the Clinical Co-ordinator.

You will be responsible to a visiting group leader or supervisor. The Clinical Supervisor/Director will provide further details of our supervision arrangements to you at your interview.

All volunteers must:

- Have clearance from the **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** - previously CRB. You will be responsible for providing us with a copy of your DBS check paperwork for our files and registering with the DBS Update Service.
- ISA Vetting and Barring (to be advised).
- Provide two satisfactory references – one personal and one from previous employment.
- Attend regular visitor group meetings at venues arranged by each group, or individual supervision and group supervision meetings. These will normally be at the office but may sometimes be held elsewhere.

- Declare on your application form that you will abide by our Code of Practice for Volunteers which sets out the principles covering our work and must be followed at all times
- Confidentiality Agreement agreed and signed

The following **additional** requirements apply to bereavement visitors and counsellors:

Bereavement visitors only

- You **must** successfully complete the Charity's initial training course, and be assessed as suitable before becoming a member of a visitor group
- Ideally, you should attend a refresher course every two years, in addition to some second-tier training of your own choice after two years' work for the Network
- You should try to make initial contact with the client within one week of receiving client information from the Charity
- At the first visit, and also at subsequent visits if this would reassure the client, you **must** show him/her your Bereavement Matters identity card. If you lose your card, you must contact the Charity's office immediately to arrange a replacement
- Your visits to the client's home should last no more than an hour, although first visits may sometimes take longer. Your visits to the client will normally be weekly or fortnightly
- You should (normally) not offer more than six visits to any one client. If you feel that more visits would help the client, you should discuss this with your group leader or the Clinical Supervisor who will decide whether further visits are indicated for that client
- Your role is to listen, and give emotional support, to your client. You **must not** promote any particular religious or other belief when discussing matters with your client
- You should not give your home address or telephone number to your client. If your client needs to pass on messages, he/she should contact the office which will then forward any client messages to you. If you need to telephone the client from your own home, you may wish to add the 141 prefix before dialling which will conceal your telephone number from the client
- You should attend group meetings with your Group Leader regularly. Such meetings are an invaluable source of mutual support and supervision.

Counsellors only

- You will need to have completed 150 hours of counsellor training on a BACP accredited course, and either have obtained a level 4 qualification or be in your first or second year of the diploma course. We will require a letter of reference from your tutor for this placement. If you have a professional qualification in this area, we will need to see the original documents for our records, and will review the need for any further bereavement training before you commence volunteering for us.
- You **must** be able to provide a reliable service for our clients. This usually means a commitment of two hours once a week working within our rota and facilities.

- You **should** be aware of **and must** agree to abide by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) ethical framework for good practice in counselling and psychotherapy.
- You **must** successfully complete the Bereavement Matters initial training course, and be assessed as suitable before you commence Counselling for our organisation. If you have attended bereavement training with another organisation then this will be reviewed at your interview. You will need to provide evidence of this training ie: certificate of attendance.

Reception, Helpline & Administration only

- You **must** successfully complete the Bereavement Matters initial training course, and be assessed as suitable before becoming a member of the helpline/reception team.

4. Our commitment to you

Bereavement Matters is serious about our responsibilities to you, our volunteers. We depend on you and very much value your work. We promise that we will:

- Provide you with a role description to help you define your activities
- Provide initial training for your volunteer role, and give you the opportunity of further training for your role as appropriate
- Provide you with a supervisor, and access to our library and other resources as appropriate
- Give you helpful feedback about your performance
- Try to answer your queries, and solve any problems you may have
- Keep you informed about developments in our work
- Try to ensure your personal safety at all times
- Never give your personal details to any client or other member of the Network
- Cover you against claims by clients or others through our public liability insurance
- Listen to your comments and suggestions about our work

Taking care of you - this is very important. We want you to enjoy your work !

A bereaved person is very vulnerable, and so a demonstration of warmth, compassion and interest by a volunteer can be misinterpreted. As a volunteer, you must never lose sight of your main task - to help bereaved people - which means you must be clear about the boundaries of your relationship with the client.

You must care for yourself emotionally. Attending group and supervision meetings, and regularly keep in regular touch with your group leader or supervisor. This is a very important part of our support to you.

We strongly suggest that you don't take on more clients than you can cope with at any one time.

If you suffer bereavement yourself or are experiencing any personal difficulties that may affect your work, do please contact your group leader, supervisor, or the Director.

5. Equal opportunities for all

Our mission statement says that the Charity “seeks to advance the work of caring for bereaved persons, and aims to enable anyone in the St Albans City and District to have access to bereavement support”. We are a non-sectarian, non-political, voluntary association of people of faith or non faith.

We wholeheartedly support the principle of equal opportunities in employment, volunteer recruitment, and access to our services. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or age.

We are committed wherever practicable to build up, maintain and support a body of staff and volunteers which broadly reflects the community we serve, using talents and skills available throughout that community.

We are also committed to providing complete equality of access to our services on the basis of need alone, and to taking all possible steps to ensure individuals are treated fairly and appropriately according to their need.

6. What you need to do next

We hope that, by now, you have a good idea of what the Network is about, what volunteering opportunities we can offer you, and what your commitment to us would mean in practice.

If you would like to go ahead, please now complete and sign the Volunteer Application Form enclosed with this pack. You should then return the form to:

Contact: Bereavement Matters

St Albans & District Bereavement Network

Address: 31 Catherine Street, St Albans, Herts AL3 5BJ. **Telephone:** 01727 841914

What happens after I've sent my application form in?

On receipt of your completed form, you will be contacted to arrange an informal interview at the Bereavement Matters office. (You will need to bring with you a current Passport for ID). During the interview, we will discuss your application, answer any queries you may have, and talk to you about any training.

Thank you very much for taking the trouble to read through this pack. Please retain it, and any other documents we have sent you, for future reference.

If you would like to be a volunteer, please now complete and return to us the application form enclosed.