

A best practice guide to  
working with volunteers  
in Macmillan information  
and support centres



SUPPORTING  
YOUR  
SERVICE

WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT.

# About this guide

This guide is for all Macmillan information and support centre managers and other Macmillan professionals who work with volunteers in similar settings.

It will help you recruit, train and support volunteers, and offers advice and suggestions for good practice. To find out what good practice means when involving volunteers, please see Checklist A on page 16.

Please note that the guide is not designed to be prescriptive, but offers resources you can use in conjunction with your employer's policies, procedures and guidance.

For ease of use, the resource is divided into two sections:

**Section A** is an overview on recruiting and supporting volunteers. It features easy-to-use checklists to help you prepare for involving volunteers in your service.

**Section B** is a programme of seven sessions for you to run that will help to induct and train your volunteers.

## **Where to go for further advice**

If you need more information, support or guidance, please contact your Macmillan volunteering adviser at your local Macmillan office.

## **Acknowledgements**

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**A**

**A GUIDE FOR  
INFORMATION  
AND HEALTHCARE  
PROFESSIONALS**

# Part one

## Involving, recruiting and selecting volunteers

### An introduction to volunteering

#### What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is a person who freely gives their time, skills and enthusiasm without being paid.

#### Why involve volunteers in your service?

Volunteers are important because:

- they may have experience, skills and knowledge that can help you run a better service
- they can carry out tasks that will free up your time
- they can often offer one-to-one support to your clients, making your service more personal
- they can make sure anyone using your service gets assistance quickly and efficiently
- they are usually highly motivated and enthusiastic about being part of your service and supporting people affected by cancer
- they may have an experience of cancer and be able to empathise with your clients' needs.

In short, volunteers can be a fantastic asset to your service.

#### Why do people choose to volunteer?

The reasons people choose to volunteer are as varied as the volunteers themselves, but here are the top ten reasons why people volunteer for Macmillan:

- 1 To gain work experience.
- 2 To make a difference to other people's lives and their community.
- 3 To make positive use of their free time.
- 4 To help themselves get back to work after an illness.
- 5 To meet people and make new friends.
- 6 To learn new skills.

- 7 To complement a course of study or explore a possible change of career.
- 8 To give something back to Macmillan after a personal experience of cancer.
- 9 To build on previous experiences of voluntary work because of the benefit it brings.
- 10 To have fun.

**Important:** Understanding why someone wants to volunteer for your service is vital because it will help you provide them with the right support and set them tasks that will keep them motivated.

#### What are my responsibilities?

As a Macmillan professional, it's important you provide volunteers with the best possible volunteering experience, and one that meets the needs of your service and service users. You'll be responsible for the day-to-day work of the volunteers in your service, and will follow your employer's volunteering policies. But to the volunteers, you are also the face of Macmillan. So we'll ask you to make sure that they receive information about Macmillan, and that you provide us with some basic reports and statistics about how volunteers support your work.

## Before you begin recruiting

### Preparing for your volunteers

There are many things you need to think about before you recruit volunteers. To begin with, ask yourself five simple questions:

- **What will volunteers do in my service?**  
Are you clear about the roles and work volunteers will carry out? Is there enough for volunteers to do? Most people who give their time like to be kept busy so think about how you'll manage variations in demand for volunteer support. Is there back-up work to do at times of lower demand?
- **Do I have enough physical space to accommodate volunteers at my service?**  
Making space and having the right equipment is an important part of making volunteers feel welcome and valued.
- **Who will be responsible for my volunteers?**  
You'll need to decide whose role it will be to manage volunteers. In most cases this will be you, however if your employer also has a volunteer manager you'll need to make sure you're clear about your respective roles. What will happen when you're on leave or in meetings? Who will supervise and support volunteers if you're not available?
- **How will I meet the needs of my volunteers?**  
It's vital you provide volunteers with the right support and keep them interested in their work and motivated. To do this, you will need to think carefully about the different motivations volunteers have for volunteering.
- **Does my service already have volunteer guidelines in place?**  
Remember that your organisation may already have made key decisions about including volunteers. Find out what they are before you start your recruitment.

After answering these initial questions, turn to Checklist B on page 17 for a comprehensive list of what you need to consider before recruiting.

## Creating a volunteer role description

Volunteers need a clear and up-to-date written description of their duties and responsibilities. Before you recruit a new volunteer you must develop a description of their role within your service.

You should give a role description to a volunteer before they start work and refer to it when their role is formally discussed.

You should also review a role description at least every two years, or when the nature of a volunteer role changes substantially.

### Why you should use volunteer role descriptions?

- They provide a clear overview of a role and what is expected from a volunteer who performs it.
- They help you to assess the type and level of support you will need to provide to volunteers.
- They help your colleagues understand how volunteers support your service.
- They help volunteers to decide if a role is right for them.
- They help to prevent volunteers becoming a substitute for paid staff.
- They show you value volunteers and have planned their role carefully.
- They provide clear measures to determine whether a potential volunteer is suitable for a role.

A role description doesn't have to cover every detail of the role, but it must include:

- the nature of a role and the main activities that will be carried out
- the competencies needed to perform it
- the time commitment required – including any specific times that a volunteer should be available
- who will be responsible for the volunteer's management
- whether the role requires a CRB disclosure.

Base the description on what tasks need to be done in your service, rather than making assumptions about what a volunteer could do.

### **Personal qualities matter too**

In many cases, particularly when volunteers are working face-to-face with people affected by cancer, the personal qualities of a volunteer are more important than their qualifications. These can also be listed in the competencies section of a volunteer role description.

For a sample volunteer role description, turn to Appendix one on page 20.

## **How to recruit volunteers**

From producing flyers to holding open meetings, there are plenty of creative ways you can get potential volunteers interested in your work.

### **Word of mouth**

One of the simplest and best ways to get your message across is by word of mouth. Make sure everyone in your service knows you're looking for volunteers so they can tell their family and friends. However, you may find it difficult to attract a diverse group of volunteers if this is the only recruitment method you use.

### **Volunteer centres and websites**

Your area will have a volunteer centre that can help you find volunteers. They can also place an advert for your vacancies on [do-it.org.uk](http://do-it.org.uk) (a national volunteer recruitment website).

Also consider what other websites you could advertise your vacancies on, and ask your organisation whether they know of any suitable ones.

### **Posters and flyers**

Creating posters and flyers is also a good way to advertise for volunteers. Remember to make them simple and eye-catching

and include clear details of the roles you're recruiting for and the skills you're seeking. Visit [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk) for a range of poster and flyer templates.

### **Where to advertise**

Think about where to put posters and distribute flyers for maximum impact. Ideas might include:

- pinning posters to notice boards in your workplace or other health services such as GP surgeries
- leaving flyers at public places such as libraries, schools, job centres, post offices, civic centres, shopping centres and supermarkets
- putting flyers inside newsletters or free newspapers
- giving flyers and posters to people who have regular contact with your local community, for example, religious leaders or district nurses
- handing out flyers at local community events.

**Important:** consider who lives in your local area and think about how you can reach minority groups with your recruitment methods.

### **Local media**

Contact your local newspaper and ask them to feature an advert for volunteers for your service.

### **Open meetings**

Open meetings are particularly helpful when you are setting up a new service as you can meet with many potential volunteers in an informal setting. Be sure to properly publicise the meeting with the methods outlined in this section and be aware that different groups of people are free at different times. Holding a day and evening session on the same day may be a good way to make sure everyone has a chance to attend.



Five tips for a successful open meeting:

- Start by explaining the purpose of your service and the ways volunteers can help.
- Highlight how volunteers can benefit, such as gaining career experience, developing skills and meeting new friends.
- Hand out a pack to prospective volunteers that includes an application form, a role description and your contact details.
- Record the contact details of prospective volunteers and the role they're interested in.
- Give people the chance to ask questions at the end of your meeting.

### **Volunteer application form**

It's important all prospective volunteers complete the same application form for a specific role. This will help you to fairly decide which applicants you interview if you have lots of applications. Ask your organisation whether they have a volunteer application form. If they don't, contact your Macmillan volunteering adviser at your local Macmillan office.

## **Interviewing volunteers**

You should interview all volunteers who join your service. If your employer has a volunteer coordinator, talk to them about who will be responsible for interviewing.

The interviews should have a structure but not be overly formal. Some volunteers will be put off a role if they have to go through a formal interview. To help you plan a suitable interview, see the sample volunteer interview questions in Appendix two on page page 23.

### **Why interviews are important**

A well thought out interview will ensure you:

- provide all relevant information about your service
- receive the information you need to decide whether an interviewee is right for a role
- understand the volunteer's motivation for wanting to join your organisation.

A well thought out interview will ensure a potential volunteer:

- feels confident to ask questions about the role
- receives the information they need to decide whether the role is right for them.

### **Location**

The setting for an interview should be welcoming, tidy and accessible to people with physical difficulties. It should also be a place where you can conduct a private conversation and won't be interrupted.

### **Before the interview**

Prepare interview questions in advance that will get you the information you need, but remember the interview is meant to be informal. To encourage conversation, use open questions that an applicant can answer at length.

### **Opening the interview**

Welcome the interviewee, offer them a drink and chat informally to them, for example, about their journey to the interview. Introduce your service and how it works, before explaining what will happen during the interview.

### **The focus of the interview**

This is your opportunity to determine an applicant's suitability for a role. Use the competencies set out in your volunteer role description to help you make this decision. Also discuss the commitment you need from a volunteer and how they'll benefit from the role.

### **Ending the interview**

Thank the applicant for their time and find out if they have any further questions. Make sure you have the information you need to make an informed decision about the applicant and they fully understand what the role entails.

### **Contacting a successful applicant**

When offering a volunteer position to an interviewee, make clear that this is subject to them successfully completing any necessary training, providing satisfactory references and passing any required checks.

Make sure you receive the volunteer's permission to carry out necessary checks and explain how long they should take. If everything is satisfactory, go ahead and arrange a start date for the volunteer.

### **Contacting an unsuccessful applicant**

When telling an interviewee their application wasn't successful, be honest about the reasons why you came to your decision. Also bear in mind that there may be alternative opportunities within your organisation. If there aren't, refer the interviewee to your organisation's volunteer manager or local volunteer centre.

Although it can be difficult to say no, taking on someone who is not suitable for a role inevitably causes problems.

## **Your legal responsibilities when selecting volunteers**

### **Screening applicants**

Depending on the role, you may have to carry out checks to find out if a successful applicant has a criminal record. If they do, you will need to make a fair decision on whether it still makes them suitable for the role.

Asking all volunteers, regardless of their role, for a CRB disclosure may be unlawful. Before an interview, check your organisation's policies and procedures to find out how their screening process works.

### **Health and safety**

You're responsible for certain aspects of your volunteers' health and safety. Checklist C on page 18 provides a summary of your responsibilities. Also ask your organisation for further information.

### **Data Protection Act**

By law, the information you collect about potential volunteers is subject to certain legal guidelines. These govern how long the information can be held and the reasons why you can store it. For more information, see Checklist D on page 19.

### **Financial facts**

Before an interview, it's important you make clear to applicants your organisation's policies on expenses, benefits and tax. For more information, see Checklist E on page 19.

# Part two

## Inducting and supporting volunteers

### Developing an induction programme

A volunteering induction programme always needs to be tailored to meet the needs of your service and volunteers. Generally, though, there are two types of induction you should deliver, either separately or combined into one.

- 1 **A general induction** that talks about your employer and the issues that often affect volunteers.
- 2 **A local induction** that talks about your particular service and the role the volunteer will play in it.

Depending on the number of volunteers you've recruited, you could deliver your induction programme to individuals or small groups.

Your induction might begin with a formal welcome by a member of your service, followed by an overview of your organisation and a breakdown of your service's structure. You could then go on to introduce the employees who work for your service.

Other aspects you should include in your induction are:

- a tour around your office space (including toilets and staff room)
- getting an ID badge
- information on how to use office equipment
- details of your dress code, if you have one
- formal policies and procedures, which you could provide in an information pack.

A good idea is to have an induction checklist to make sure you don't forget anything. See Appendix three on page 25 for an example of an induction checklist.

#### A local induction programme is important because it:

- is an opportunity to cover aspects of your work not discussed at the initial interview
- gives extra detail and information about how the volunteer role supports your service
- allows the volunteer to address any fears or concerns
- provides a consistent introduction to volunteering for everyone who gives their time
- gives volunteers the chance to meet your service's team
- lets the volunteer know you take their work seriously
- gives the volunteer confidence before they start work.

## Setting up a buddy scheme for new volunteers

As part of their induction process, you may want to match new volunteers with a more experienced volunteer. These volunteers can show newer recruits the ropes and provide them with additional support through what's known as a 'buddy scheme'. Although this can be done very informally, the scheme works best when you clearly define the nature and purpose of the relationship. Setting up a buddy scheme takes some time and thought but can help new volunteers settle more quickly. It also has the added bonus of freeing up some of your valuable time.

In general, a buddy will act as a guide to your service, answering new volunteers' questions and providing examples of how tasks are carried out. While they may help with some areas of induction and give advice and guidance to new volunteers, they shouldn't be involved in assessing performance or managing new volunteers. The buddy relationship is among peers and the main role is to reassure and support new volunteers.

Buddies need to be reliable and model the behaviours you want new volunteers to follow. So you need to think carefully about how you'll select volunteers for the role. You need to have complete confidence that a volunteer buddy will reinforce the key points you want new volunteers to understand. You also need to make clear how much time they'll be expected to spend in the role and what additional support you'll provide.

Anyone who takes on the role of buddy needs to know exactly what their role will involve so it's a good idea to write up a role description detailing clear information and expectations. A sample role description is included in Appendix five on page 27 and there is an amended induction checklist in Appendix six on page 29.

## How to support volunteers

It's important volunteers and paid staff view each other as colleagues and understand that each have important complementary roles to play in the running of your service.

To ensure this happens, volunteers must feel they are fully supported in all aspects of their work. Volunteers should be able to turn to a member of staff to voice worries or concerns, especially when they start working for your service.

One of the keys to providing the right support to your volunteers is making sure there is good, open communication. They need to know what is expected of them and what is happening on a day-to-day basis.

Volunteers should also always have access to everything they need to carry out their work, for example, documents, records, IT equipment or general information about your service. Volunteers should wear identity badges that show they're part of a Macmillan service at all times when volunteering.

Understanding why someone has chosen to give their time to your service is also important as it will help you identify what will keep them motivated in their work. For example, someone who is volunteering to gain work experience and help with finding a job may be interested in a variety of training opportunities.

Also ask volunteers for their views on areas of their work and your service, and always involve them in discussions about changes that might affect their role.

Regular one-to-one meetings with volunteers offer a good opportunity to provide feedback on their performance, discuss how they are finding their role and give you a chance to show your appreciation. Making these meetings regular will also encourage you to monitor your volunteers' work.

You'll need to assess the performance of volunteers and provide appropriate feedback on successes and areas for improvement. When you provide feedback on performance, make sure that you have appropriate examples to use and avoid making generalisations. For example, consider the difference in these two pieces of positive feedback you may give to a volunteer:

By making feedback specific and detailed, the volunteer will know which behaviours and actions were helpful and understand the impact this had on the service user.

#### Feedback example A

**'I was really impressed with the way you dealt with Mrs Smith's enquiries last Wednesday. I could see she was upset but you found a quiet space away from other service users, encouraged her to talk and listened to her carefully. You gave her the time and space to think and talk. And that meant that she felt comfortable enough to let you know that as well as worrying about her own cancer, she was also concerned about how her husband would cope while she was being treated. You then gave her appropriate information about her diagnosis and the support her husband can get.**

**She came in on Thursday and asked to talk to you again. She said how much more positive she was feeling about her treatment after talking to you and reading the information you gave her. Well done – you provided her with exactly what she needed at a time of great stress for her.'**

#### Feedback example B

**'Mrs Smith, who you saw on Wednesday, came in again on Thursday to say thanks. I promised to pass it on to you. Well done.'**

## Keeping volunteers informed

### Notice boards and newsletters

A regular newsletter or a volunteer notice board featuring news and information are great ways to keep volunteers informed. If neither exists at your organisation, why not ask your volunteers to help set one up?

### Group meetings

Holding regular group meetings is a useful way to promote peer support between volunteers, encourage teamwork and create a sense of belonging. Meetings can be a good time to tell volunteers how your service is progressing, share opportunities for training and organise social events.

Keeping your meeting's agenda open means volunteers can include items they would like to discuss. You may find it easier to have meetings outside of service hours, such as in the evening. Making them a social event and inviting guest speakers from relevant organisations are good ways to maintain interest.

It can be useful to use a communications summary chart to keep track of who has had what information. This is particularly helpful if you have lots of volunteers working different shifts. An example of a communication summary chart is included in Appendix four on page 26.

## Catching potential problems early on

Problems with volunteers are often due to gaps in support, unidentified training needs or the role being the wrong fit for a particular person. Hopefully, you can deal with these problems informally by talking them through and providing improved support and supervision.

As discussed earlier, you should make sure you have examples that illustrate the concerns that you have. It can be helpful to ask yourself the following questions before meeting with a volunteer:

- What standard is expected or required?
- Does the volunteer know that this is the standard expected or required?
- What standard has the volunteer worked to?
- Which examples illustrate the gap between the required standard and the current standard of performance?

Issues that could serve as a warning that something is wrong include:

- tasks are not carried out at all or to the required standard
- agreed times or days not worked
- a volunteer complains to you or others about their work, your service or other volunteers
- colleagues express concerns about a volunteer's attitude or performance (make sure your colleagues views are objective)
- a volunteer has a lack of enthusiasm for their work or a negative attitude
- a volunteer doesn't communicate well with the rest of your team.

If an issue with a volunteer is not resolved after discussing it, ask your manager for support and talk about the next steps you need to take.

**Important:** Do not make any assumptions about why someone's performance is not meeting your expectations. A full, uninterrupted discussion about their role should help you clarify what the problems are and what improvements need to be made.

It may also help to think about the following actions, as suggested by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch in their book *Volunteer management*.

**Re-supervise** – Is your volunteer clear about what's expected? Most people are well meaning and are likely to be doing the best they can with the resources, knowledge and capability that they have. Could you do more to support them?

**Re-assign** – It may be that their role doesn't suit them, following a trial period. They may not gel with other staff or volunteers at your service. Are they still enjoying their volunteering? If their situation or interests have changed, is there another role they could do instead which is a better match?

**Re-train** – Do they need more information or skills to do their role better? Some people take longer than others to learn. What can you offer to help with this?

**Re-vitalise** – A long-time volunteer may need a break from volunteering if they have become jaded or feel it's becoming too much. An alternative to a complete break could be offering them a less demanding role. Something may have happened in their personal life which means they're acting in an unexpected way.

They may have lost motivation over time. Do you tell them how their work makes a real difference and do they feel valued? Do you know if their interests have changed over time and whether your service meets any new needs?

If it becomes clear that they need a break, it may help if you raise the idea but they ask for it themselves. Otherwise, they may think that their only options are to continue or leave outright.

**Refer** – Could your volunteer benefit from volunteering with a new organisation or elsewhere in your service? Have you developed their skills to a level where they need a new challenge? Could another organisation provide them with opportunities that will interest them more?

**Retire** – If volunteering has become too much for someone, or is no longer a mutually beneficial experience, how can you help them leave without losing self-esteem or pride? For example, you could nominate them for a [Macmillan volunteer award](#) or say thank you in another way.

Once you've considered these options and acted on them:

### **Reflect**

What have you learnt from this experience with your volunteer? Is there anything you can do differently to stop this situation arising again? Is there anything you can do to pre-empt a similar situation?

**If a problem cannot be overcome, you may have to ask a volunteer to leave your team. Check your employer's policy on informing a volunteer about this.**

## Saying thank you

Showing volunteers how much you value their work is essential. After all, without volunteers we couldn't provide our life-changing services to people affected by cancer. Therefore, it's important you thank people in a meaningful way that recognises their efforts and impact.

One way you could do this is by holding a social event to celebrate volunteers' achievements. This could be a team lunch or an evening event away from your work. Think about the time and location so that as many volunteers as possible will be able to attend. You could ask a senior member of staff, a local celebrity or your local MP to attend the social event and present awards and certificates.

When saying thanks, make sure you put volunteers' work in to the context of your service. It's rewarding for a volunteer to hear how their work has impacted people affected by cancer and allowed your service to improve. And it's much more satisfying than hearing you say 'thanks for everything you do'.

You can also nominate your volunteers for the Macmillan volunteer awards. To do this, contact your local Macmillan volunteering adviser or visit [macmillan.org.uk/volunteerawards](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/volunteerawards). Nominations can help staff and volunteers to bond, boost morale and make your service a more rewarding place to volunteer.

**Remember:** Taking the time to say thank you and create a positive environment for volunteers will ultimately benefit the people your service is committed to helping.

## When volunteers leave

If a volunteer decides to leave their role with your service, it's important to hold an exit interview. This is a great opportunity to gain valuable feedback about your volunteering programme and personally thank a volunteer for their work. You should keep a copy of all exit information in case we ask to see examples of leavers' forms.

You may also ask your colleagues to sign a leaving card, offer to provide a reference and tell your volunteer the door is open for their return in the future.



# Part three

## Useful checklists

### How to use this section

This part of the guide contains simple checklists designed to start you thinking about best practice, the role of volunteers in your organisation and your legal responsibilities for volunteers.

The checklists are not meant to be exhaustive and should be used in conjunction with your organisation's policies and procedures.

### Checklist A

#### What do we mean by 'good practice'?

Good practice means that an organisation has thought carefully about why and how volunteers will be involved in delivering services and understands how to make volunteer roles effective, safe and rewarding.

Use this checklist (taken from the Investing in Volunteers standard) to see how your employer approaches volunteer involvement and good practice.

Good practice indicator	Met/unmet/unsure
There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout my employer that volunteering is a two-way process that benefits volunteers and my employer.	
My employer commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.	
My employer is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.	
My employer develops appropriate roles for volunteers in-line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers.	
My employer is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.	
My employer is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.	
Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, my employer, our work, policies, practices and relevant staff.	
My employer takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers.	
The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.	

## Checklist B

### Things to consider before you recruit volunteers

Before you begin welcoming volunteers to your service, there is a lot to consider. To help you start on this assessment, we have put together a checklist of basic questions.

#### The volunteers' role

- Why do you want to recruit volunteers and what roles will they play?
- Does your organisation already have guidelines in place outlining the role of volunteers? If not, who will develop them?
- Is it appropriate for a volunteer to carry out the work assigned to their role instead of a paid worker?
- What kind of knowledge, skills and experience should a volunteer have?

#### Volunteers and your service

- Do you have the room and facilities to take on volunteers?
- Have you budgeted for volunteers' extra costs? For example, travel expenses, training and recognition events. Macmillan cannot refund volunteers' costs for you, but your employer may have included volunteer costs in the budget for your service.
- Have you done all you can to ensure your volunteers represent all parts of your local community? To do this, have you made roles open to everyone, including people with disabilities and those who do not speak English as a first language?
- Are all of your service's employees committed to working with volunteers?
- Who will be responsible for managing new volunteers?
- Can people who are or have been users of your service volunteer?

#### Induction and support

- Have you thought about how to keep volunteers interested while they are waiting to begin your induction programme?
- How will you learn what each volunteer wants to give to your service and gain from their role?
- How will you show appreciation for the contribution a volunteer makes?
- How will you assist volunteers who may wish to move into paid employment, further education or other volunteering activities?
- Will there be a variety of tasks for your volunteers to perform?
- What will happen to the work a volunteer has carried out once they leave?

#### Check with your employer about their policies and guidelines on:

- how to recruit volunteers
- reimbursing volunteers' expenses
- carrying out safeguarding checks
- checking references for volunteers
- dealing with complaints from and about volunteers
- confidentiality and boundaries.

## Checklist C

### Health and safety

Your employer will have a health and safety policy. Relate the following questions to it to understand what your responsibilities are towards the volunteers you recruit.

Criteria	Notes
Which areas of health and safety are my responsibility and what do volunteers need to do to protect themselves from risk?	
Will volunteers work alone, and if so, what are the contact arrangements and lone working procedures that apply?	
What risk assessments are in place regarding volunteer roles and who is responsible for reviewing and updating them?	
How will I let volunteers know about the risk assessments that affect their work?	
How will I provide appropriate health and safety information, training, support and supervision?	
What insurance is in place covering volunteers' work? Is anything not covered by insurance? Are there any age limits to the insurance?	
Does my employer use a health and safety checklist for volunteers? Or do we have new starter procedures for volunteers? For example, do volunteers need to do a self-assessment on their desk or chair?	

## Checklist D

### Data Protection

The Data Protection Act aims to ensure that personal information collected in the UK is accurate, secure and stored for the right reasons.

Data protection law applies to the information you collect about volunteers, as well as your service users.

By law, it is your responsibility to make sure that information on volunteers is:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- kept secure
- obtained for a specific purpose
- adequate, relevant and accurate.

Check your employer's policy and guidance on data handling and storage and make sure that any personal information about volunteers is not left anywhere public, such as on your desk.

You will also need to make sure that all volunteers who have access to personal or sensitive information understand the law around data protection and your organisation's policies. Check whether volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality or data protection agreement.

## Checklist E

### Financial facts and the law

It's important to make sure a volunteer's role doesn't affect their tax status or benefits, and there is no risk of them becoming employees, rather than volunteers. To find out more, refer to your organisation's volunteer policy.

Generally speaking, though, the following rules apply.

- Volunteering should only take place for a not for profit organisation whose work benefits others or the wider community.
- Only reimburse a volunteer's out-of-pocket expenses and avoid giving perks that could be seen as a payment. Paying flat-rate expenses, eg £10 per day to every volunteer to cover travel or giving a voucher, can be considered as taxable income and affect a volunteer's tax status. Additionally, this could result in a volunteer being classed as an employee and your employer having to pay the minimum wage for their work.
- Only offer training that is relevant to the volunteer role. Providing training that is unrelated to the role could be considered as a payment in kind.
- Avoid verbal or written obligations such as, 'You must work for six months,' as this might be considered to be a contract. Only talk to a volunteer about your expectations.
- Use appropriate language to distinguish between volunteers and paid staff. For example, use 'role description' rather than 'job description'.

There is no limit to the number of hours that someone claiming benefits can volunteer. For further information on volunteering and benefits please contact your local Macmillan Volunteering Adviser.

You can also find details on volunteers and the law in Volunteering England's Good Practice Bank – [volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice](https://volunteering.org.uk/goodpractice)

This information is also applicable to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

# Appendix one

## Sample volunteer role description

**Role title:** Information centre volunteer

**Location:** Anytown General Infirmary, Nowheretown Road, Anytown AN1 7ON

**Times:** Ideally at least one three-hour shift a week for a minimum of three months.

**Shifts are between 9.30 and 12.30 or 2.00 and 5.00 Monday to Friday.**

### Why do you need me?

Macmillan cancer information and support centres offer free, confidential information and support to everyone. People receiving a cancer diagnosis will usually have lots of questions about the illness and proposed treatments. It's vital there is somewhere safe and trustworthy where they can talk to someone and find things out.

Family, friends and people who are worried about cancer may also want information. So the centre is set up to provide a service to a wide range of people, with different experiences and needs.

We need volunteers to meet these needs and ensure that anyone with a question about cancer has it answered accurately and in a way they can understand.

### The volunteer role

The volunteer role involves greeting each visitor to our service and making sure they are comfortable. You will carry out an initial assessment of their needs by talking to them and filling out a basic questionnaire based on what they tell you.

As an information centre volunteer, you will fill in forms and make phone calls under the direction of the Macmillan information centre manager. When required, you will also carry out follow-up actions, such as attending appointments with and advocating on behalf of clients.

## Main duties

- Provide a polite and professional greeting to visitors to the service.
- Work through an initial needs assessment with each visitor to find out what help and information, if any, they need.
- Where the person's information needs are straightforward and in line with the volunteer operational policy, help them to find what they are looking for. For example by finding leaflets, books, videos, audio tapes or computer information in the centre's browsing and library areas.
- Where enquiries are more complex, refer people to the centre manager (or member of the Trust staff).
- Give people the opportunity to talk about their feelings, offering them support through empathy and a listening ear.
- Enter client details on to the service's database and fill in any relevant paperwork.
- Following a client's assessment, support and assist them with the making of telephone calls or sending of letters or emails.
- Ensure that information leaflets are kept up to date.
- Support people affected by cancer in wards and clinics, for example by telling them about the centre and its services.
- Help to promote the centre, for example by distributing leaflets and posters around the hospital.

Useful skills, experience and competencies include:

- good communication skills
- good listening skills
- a polite and friendly personality
- tact and sensitivity
- the ability to be non-judgmental and remain calm when dealing with people who are upset and emotional
- basic computer skills, with the ability to type information accurately.

The role gives you the opportunity to develop:

- an understanding of how information can be provided in different ways and how information professionals work with service users
- knowledge of professional boundaries between service users and staff
- knowledge of health and welfare issues relating to people affected by cancer, including diagnoses and treatment options
- office skills, such as how to use a database
- teamworking skills
- questioning and advice skills.

## Other information

As you will have access to confidential information, you'll be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. We will also provide you with data protection training.

As this role involves working regularly and directly with vulnerable adults, volunteers are required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check.

# Appendix two

## Sample volunteer interview questions

### **Why are you interested in this role?**

To measure: Will the role meet their motivation(s) in applying?

### **Within this role you may come into contact with people who are emotionally distressed. How will you cope with this situation?**

To measure: Have they considered the stresses of the role? What are their coping mechanisms?

### **Could you please tell me what you know about the work of (NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION)**

To measure: Their current level of knowledge of your service.

### **We want to ensure we have accurately described the role to you. From the role description we sent you, could you describe what you think you may be doing as a (NAME OF ROLE) volunteer?**

To measure: Final opportunity to ensure the information provided about what the role entails was clearly communicated.

### **What skills do you think you have that will help you fulfil the duties of the role?**

To measure: To check level of training required, assess transferable skills and aptitude for the role. Depending on the role you might look for strong organisational skills, ability to work independently, knowing when to seek help from others, good communication and interpersonal skills.

### **How would you decide when you should refer something or someone to a colleague or manager?**

To measure: Understanding the boundaries of the volunteer role.

### **How do you think you will cope if a service user has had a similar cancer experience to yourself?**

To measure: Ability to put personal experiences on hold when working.



**What would you do if the service user asked you how you dealt with the same or a similar situation?**

To measure: Ability to listen without telling person what to do. Ability to know when it is appropriate to give advice.

**What do you understand by the term confidentiality and why is confidentiality important in this role?**

To measure: Understanding the importance of keeping information confidential.

**Have you experience of using a computer? What software packages have you used?**

To measure: Level of computer ability (desirable skill).

**We want you to have the information you need to make sure this role is right for you. Are there any questions you wish to ask us?**

To measure: Have they fully considered the role and what volunteering for your service entails? Have they been provided with sufficient information about the role?

**From what you have heard today, are you still interested in the role?**

To measure: Interest in the role.

# Appendix three

## Sample induction checklist

Name of volunteer:

Date:

Topic	Notes
Tour of premises, including toilets, kitchen, fire exits.	
Arrange ID badge, key codes, swipe card, etc.	
Signing in and out of work premises.	
Introduction to individual team members – arrange individual inductions.	
Give induction pack to volunteer – introduce key policies.	
Review of role description.	
IT log-in details, IT code of conduct, IT helpline.	
Telephones and telephone lists, making internal and external calls, using voicemail, office equipment.	
Procedures in the event of sickness, including alternate phone numbers.	
Intranet and relevant computer drives. Where will the volunteer’s work be stored? Where can they access useful sources of information?	
Health and safety checklist and relevant risk assessments.	
Local facilities – eg where to go for lunch (make sure you have time to go for lunch with new volunteers on their first day).	

# Appendix four

## Communication summary chart

### What is this for?

When a number of people volunteer at different times, days and frequencies it can be easy to miss telling someone a key piece of information. These might include a change in organisational policy, a new volunteering opportunity, a member of the team leaving, or a message of thanks from a service user. You may find this chart useful to record: a) the items of information you need to pass on b) those who do NOT need to receive it c) and those you have informed.

Some examples have been entered below.

	Albert	BB	Chaz	Dave	Eugenia	Fabrice
Change to expenses policy	✓	✓	✓			
New volunteers starting on 1 August	✓	✓	✓			
Volunteer buddies needed	✗	✗	✓			✗
Start of Ramadan	✓	✓	✓			✓
Volunteer awards evening			✓	✓	✓	

KEY: ✓ done ✗ not needed

# Appendix five

## Sample volunteer buddy role description

**Role title:** Volunteer buddy

**Location:** Anytown General Infirmary, Nowheretown Road, Anytown AN1 7ON

**Times:** At least one three-hour shift a week for a minimum of three months.

**Shifts are between 9.30 and 12.30 or 2.00 and 5.00 Monday to Friday**

### Why do you need me?

Starting a new volunteer role can be difficult, with lots of new things to learn. That's why we want to provide as much support as possible to everyone who wants to give their time to supporting people using the Macmillan cancer information and support centre. Our volunteer buddy programme aims to help new volunteers settle in quickly and have someone to talk to regularly about how they are finding the role. The scheme will last until they feel confident enough to work without this support.

### The volunteer role

Being a buddy is an addition to the role of information and support centre volunteer. Buddies will spend regular time with new volunteers and be involved in the following activities:

- helping them find their way around the centre and the hospital
- answering basic questions they may have about the role
- providing support and reassurance, for example if new volunteers feel worried about a service user.

Buddies need to be experienced volunteers who know how the centre works. Most will have volunteered in the centre for at least six months before taking on this additional role.

## Main duties

- Meet new volunteers on their first day in the role and spend the shift with them.
- Assist with the induction of new volunteers, as agreed with the centre manager.
- Show new volunteers the other facilities available to them, for example quiet areas and kitchens.
- Invite new volunteers to sit in and observe their work. Where this involves direct contact with visitors to the service, make sure the visitors understand and consent to the new volunteer being present in discussions.
- Answer any questions new volunteers have about the volunteer role, referring relevant questions to the centre manager.
- Act as a role model for new volunteers, setting an example of best practice in behaviour and standards of work.

Skills, experience and competencies should include:

- reliability
- good communication skills
- a polite and friendly personality
- tact and sensitivity
- knowledge of the cancer information and support centre
- the ability to be non-judgmental and accepting of differences.

The role gives you the opportunity to develop:

- mentoring and coaching skills
- an in-depth knowledge of the information and support centre
- communication skills
- leadership skills.

## Other information

Buddies will be briefed about the role and – to develop their buddying skills further – have access to ongoing relevant training.

Buddies are not responsible for the performance or actions of new volunteers, or for making assessments about the suitability of a volunteer for the role.

Buddying relationships will generally last no more than six weeks for each new volunteer.

# Appendix six

## Sample induction checklist – share with buddy

**CM** – Centre manager    **VB** – Volunteer buddy

Name of volunteer:

Date:

Topic	Notes
Tour of premises, including toilets, kitchen, fire exits <b>CM/VB</b>	
Arrange ID badge, key codes, swipe card etc <b>CM</b>	
Signing in and out of work premises. <b>CM/VB</b>	
Introduction to individual team members – arrange individual inductions <b>CM</b>	
Give induction pack to volunteer – introduce key policies <b>CM</b>	
Review of role description <b>CM</b>	
IT log-in details, IT code of conduct, IT helpline <b>CM</b>	
Telephones and telephone lists, making internal and external calls, using voicemail, office equipment <b>VB</b>	
Procedures in the event of sickness, including alternative phone numbers <b>CM</b>	
Intranet and relevant computer drives. Where will the volunteer’s work be stored? Where can they access useful sources of information? <b>CM/VB</b>	
Health and safety checklist and relevant risk assessments <b>CM</b>	
Local facilities – eg where to go for lunch (make sure you have time to go for lunch with new volunteers on their first day) <b>CM/VB</b>	



**TRAINING FOR  
VOLUNTEERS**

# Introduction

This section of the guide features seven sessions to support the development of a high-quality induction and local training programme for volunteers who work at your service.

The seven sessions are:

Session 1: Introduction to Macmillan

Session 2: Cancer and treatments

Session 3: Listening and responding

Session 4: Equality and diversity

Session 5: Dealing with difficult situations

Session 6: Loss and bereavement

Session 7: Information giving

You can use the sessions as stand alone units or part of a wider training programme. Also feel free to adapt the sessions according to the needs of your volunteers, your own teaching style and the expertise and resources available.

Each of the sessions promotes active, inclusive learning by encouraging facilitators and participants to draw on their knowledge and experience.





# INTRODUCTION TO MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

<p><b>Session timing</b></p>	<p>75 minutes</p> <p>Introduction 5 minutes  Exercise 1: What Macmillan can offer 20 minutes  Exercise 2: Why user involvement matters 15 minutes  Exercise 3: Macmillan in a nutshell 10 minutes  Conclusion 10 minutes</p>
<p><b>Session objectives</b></p>	<p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• list the range of services Macmillan offers</li> <li>• understand the essential role user involvement plays in helping Macmillan develop services that meet the needs of people affected by cancer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equipment required</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip chart and pens</li> <li>• Macmillan publications (order them for free from <a href="http://be.macmillan.org.uk">be.macmillan.org.uk</a>)</li> </ul>

# Lesson plans

Introduction to Macmillan

Cancer and treatments

Listening and responding

Equality and diversity

Dealing with difficult situations

Loss and bereavement

Information giving

## Exercise 1: What Macmillan can offer

This exercise introduces participants to the services Macmillan offers. Many people may already associate Macmillan with nursing and cancer care. By the end of this exercise, they should be able to identify the many other ways we provide help and support.

### Timing: 20 minutes

(10 minutes for research and 10 minutes for sharing outcomes).

### Group work

Ask the group to brainstorm the services they think Macmillan provides. Write the list up on a flip chart.

Give the group a variety of publications that explain Macmillan's range of services. Using these materials, ask the group to identify other Macmillan services they've not already named.

### Next steps

Take feedback from the group and complete the list of services on the flip chart. The list should include:

- health and social care professionals such as specialist nurses, radiotherapists, doctors, psychologists, pharmacists and benefits advisers
- information and support centres, including mobile units
- information resources, including leaflets, booklets and guides
- Macmillan Support Line
- Macmillan website
- supporting self-help and support groups
- Cancer Voices
- carers services
- financial support such as Macmillan Grants.

## Exercise 1: What Macmillan can offer

### Equipment required

- Flip chart and pens
- A selection of Macmillan publications, which are available to order from [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk). These could include:
  - *Are you worried about cancer?* (MAC12150)
  - *Living with cancer? We can help you* (MAC13377\_DL)
  - *Money worries? We can help* (MAC12732\_0312)
  - *Cancer voices* fact sheet
  - *Macmillan resources catalogue* (MAC5782\_0911)

## Exercise 2: Why user involvement matters

This exercise helps participants understand why user involvement is essential to our work at Macmillan.

### Timing: 15 minutes

#### Group work

Give the group the cancer voices fact sheet and/or self-help and support group services fact sheet to refer to.

Ask your group what they understand about the term 'user involvement' and what it means in relation to cancer.

Following this discussion, ask the group to identify issues that many people affected by cancer feel strongly about and may want to change. These issues could include:

- the way information is delivered
- the quality of hospital waiting areas
- the way bad news is given.

Ask your group how people might be able to get involved in changing these issues.

Also talk to your group about how user involvement has helped Macmillan successfully campaign for:

- free prescription charges for people with cancer in the UK
- free hospital parking in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- a better deal for people with cancer who return to work.

#### Equipment required

The following Macmillan publications, which are available from [be.macmillan.org.uk](http://be.macmillan.org.uk):

- *Cancer voices* fact sheet
- *Self-help and support group services* fact sheet

### Exercise 3: Macmillan in a nutshell

This exercise will help your group summarise what they have learned during the session.

#### Timing: 10 minutes

(5 minutes for brainstorming, 5 minutes for feedback).

#### Group work

Ask the group to imagine they are trying to explain Macmillan's work to a colleague standing next to them in a lift. They only have the time it takes for the lift to travel up ten floors.

Tell each member of the group to write down two different things they would say about Macmillan in this time.

#### Next steps

Take feedback from the group and discuss their responses.

### Conclusion

Conclude by saying that volunteers can visit Macmillan's website to learn more about different services and products Macmillan offers.

2

**CANCER AND  
TREATMENTS**

**Important:** Before beginning this session, participants should complete Macmillan’s e-learning programme on cancer and treatments, called *Introduction to cancer*. This is available from [macmillan.org.uk/learnzone](http://macmillan.org.uk/learnzone) and should take around two hours to complete. Each volunteer will need to create a Learn Zone account and go to the Macmillan staff and volunteers section to access the course.

**E-programme objective**

By the end of the programme, participants should be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of cancer and its treatments and explain the ways in which the illness affects people.

<b>Session timing</b>	<p>55 minutes:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Introduction</td> <td>5 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 1: Reacting to upsetting news</td> <td>15 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 2: Support during difficult times</td> <td>30 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conclusion</td> <td>5 minutes</td> </tr> </table>	Introduction	5 minutes	Exercise 1: Reacting to upsetting news	15 minutes	Exercise 2: Support during difficult times	30 minutes	Conclusion	5 minutes
Introduction	5 minutes								
Exercise 1: Reacting to upsetting news	15 minutes								
Exercise 2: Support during difficult times	30 minutes								
Conclusion	5 minutes								
<b>Session objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain the different feelings people have when they receive bad news</li> <li>• discuss what support would help a person during a difficult time.</li> </ul>								
<b>Equipment required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flipchart and pens</li> <li>• Handouts</li> </ul>								



# Lesson plans

Introduction to Macmillan

Cancer and treatments

Listening and responding

Equality and diversity

Dealing with difficult situations

Loss and bereavement

Information giving

## Exercise 1: Reacting to upsetting news

Introduce the session by checking participants have completed the e-learning programme relating to cancer and treatments. If anyone has not completed this, explain that this session complements the programme and that it would be helpful if they completed the programme in the future.

Ask participants how they did on the quiz at the beginning of the e-learning programme and whether their score surprised them. Did their score increase in the quiz at the end?

**Note to facilitator:** Tell your volunteers they don't have to be experts on cancer. It's more important they understand and appreciate how a cancer diagnosis can impact on the lives of individuals and their families and friends.

**Timing: 15 minutes**

### Group work

In small groups of three to four people, ask participants to picture a time when they received upsetting news. Ask them to share how they felt, thought and behaved.

Tell each group to write down three emotions, three thoughts and three behaviours associated with bad news.

### Next steps

Take feedback from each group.

Highlight how reactions to bad news can differ from person to person.

### Equipment required

- Flip chart and pens

## Exercise 2: Support during difficult times

This exercise highlights the different ways volunteers can help people who have received bad news.

**Timing: 30 minutes**

### Group work

Ask members of the group what they needed when they received bad news in the past. List responses on your flipchart, including:

- information from professionals or websites
- practical help on what to do next
- help with everyday activities such as cooking and shopping
- a listening ear
- the chance to speak with someone who has the same problem
- an opportunity to be on your own and think things over
- distraction from the problem
- a good laugh
- a good cry.

After sharing their experiences, ask the group to break off into pairs to discuss everyone's responses.

Ask each pair to finish the sentence:

People who are experiencing a stressful situation want ...

Once they have done this, give each person the handout *Help in a crisis*. Ask each participant to briefly answer the questions and take feedback.

### Next steps

Take feedback from the group about what they've learnt.

Also make clear that:

- different people require different types of support
- some people using your service may not want lots of information immediately
- most people want someone to listen to them and take the time to understand their unique experience.

### Equipment required

- *Help in a crisis* handout

## Conclusion

To close the session, ask your group how confident they now feel about supporting someone affected by cancer. Reassure them that no one expects volunteers to have all the answers, and they can often help just by listening.

Also suggest to participants that they always hand out or talk through Macmillan resources such as leaflets with people who use their service.

# Exercise 2 – handout

## Help in a crisis

### Where people often seek information and advice from after receiving upsetting news:

- 1 **websites** – remember different websites provide different opinions and information, and should not be relied upon unless they belong to a trusted organisation
- 2 **online forums**
- 3 **a library** – some libraries now have a Macmillan section run by trained assistants
- 4 **a friend or family member**
- 5 **a telephone helpline** or by phoning an organisation with specialist knowledge
- 6 **a Citizen’s Advice Bureau** or similar advice service
- 7 **someone who has had the same problem** – for example, members of a self-help and support group.

People may also:

- think things through themselves
- ignore the problem and hope it will go away.

Can you think of any other ways people may seek information and advice?

---

What has helped you most when you’ve received upsetting news?

---

Did you want a lot of information at the time?

---

3

LISTENING  
AND  
RESPONDING

<b>Session timing</b>	<p>2 hours (including a 15 minute break)</p> <p>Introduction 5 minutes</p> <p>Exercise 1: What makes a good listener? 15 minutes</p> <p>Exercise 2: Body language 15 minutes</p> <p>Exercise 3: How questions help 15 minutes</p> <p>Exercise 4: Reflecting 15 minutes</p> <p>Exercise 5: Helping people help themselves 30 minutes</p> <p>Conclusion 10 minutes</p>
<b>Session objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate effective listening and responding skills</li> <li>• identify the importance of body language in listening and responding</li> <li>• highlight different types of questioning to help people express their feelings and resolve their problems.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flipcharts and pens</li> <li>• Handouts</li> </ul>

# Lesson plans

Introduction  
to Macmillan

Cancer and  
treatments

Listening and  
responding

Equality and  
diversity

Dealing with  
difficult situations

Loss and  
bereavement

Information giving

## Exercise 1: What makes a good listener?

Begin by reminding your group that people living with cancer often, but not always, want someone who will listen to them talk about their experiences. Listening well will make their service more effective.

The following exercise makes participants think about what skills they need to listen effectively.

**Timing: 15 minutes**

### Group work

Ask everyone in your group to picture someone they know who is a good listener. Tell them to write down the skills this 'good listener' has.

### Next steps

When everyone has written down their answers, ask each participant to share two skills they identified. Start a list on your flip chart. Make clear that expressing the right body language can help people feel they are being listened to and understood.

### Equipment required

- Flip chart and pens
- *Guidelines for listening and responding effectively* handout

## Exercise 2: Body language

This exercise helps volunteers to notice how the wrong body language can obstruct the listening process.

### Timing: 15 minutes

#### Group work

Ask volunteers to think about a time they were put off by someone's body language. Ask them to describe what made it so off-putting. Start a list on your flip chart.

Now ask the group what they consider to be examples of good body language. Write them on a separate list.

Distribute the handouts for this exercise and ask participants if they can now add more examples to both lists.

In pairs, ask participants to talk about what they did last weekend while their partner exhibits an example of bad body language. Stop after a minute and change roles.

#### Next steps

Take feedback from the group and find out:

- What made bad body language so off-putting?
- Why did they find it hard to continue?
- What did they have to do to continue?

#### Equipment required

- *Body language* handout
- *Non-verbal communication over the phone* handout



### Exercise 3: How questions help

The objective of this exercise is to explain the purpose of using different types of questions and which questions are more effective.

#### Timing: 15 minutes

#### Group work

In the same pairs from Exercise 2, ask one person to listen and the other to ask questions about today's weather. Change roles after one minute.

#### Next steps

Discuss with the group how different questions felt to the listener.

- Did some questions make the speaker think they were being drawn towards a certain answer?
- Were others distracting?
- Did some questions lead them in the direction they wanted to go?

Explain the difference between:

- useful questions – those that draw relevant information from a the person
- distracting questions – those that are based on the listener's curiosity.

#### Equipment required

- *Prompting through questioning* handout

## Exercise 4: Reflecting

This exercise shows how people talk more openly when they feel they are being properly listened to.

**Timing: 15 minutes**

### Group work

Keep the same pairs from Exercises 2 and 3 and ask one person to talk about their favourite book. While this person does this, their partner should mirror their body language and repeatedly respond to what they are saying. For example, by saying, 'You like romance,' 'That was your favourite book,' or 'That sounds like a great book.'

After three minutes ask the pairs to change roles.

### Next steps

Ask your group:

- How was the exercise different from the previous one?
- How did people show they were listening?
- How did it feel to be listened to?

Also highlight that:

- paying attention to what a person is saying means putting your own thoughts and feelings aside
- you can show a person you're listening to them through the way you respond and your body language.

### Equipment required

- *Listening and attending* handout
- *Attitude* handout
- *Active and passive listening* handout

**Important:** Take a break for 15 minutes at this point in the session.

## Exercise 5: Helping people help themselves

This exercise shows participants how good listening and questioning skills can help people manage their problems. It also shows how offering a solution is not the best way to help.

**Timing: 30 minutes**

### Group work

Start by going through the different types of questions outlined in the handout for this exercise.

Next, ask participants to get into groups of three and label them each A, B or C. Ask the As to talk about a decision that they need to make, for example, what to have for dinner.

Ask the Bs to listen to A and ask questions that will help A manage their decision for themselves.

Ask the Cs to observe how the pair's body language changes for each question. Tell them to note the times when B offers advice.

After the first discussion, which should last around 5 minutes, ask the Cs to talk about the questions they felt helped to move the conversation on and the questions that brought it to a halt.

Ask the As what parts of the conversation they felt were helpful or unhelpful and how closely they felt Bs was listening to them.

**Note to facilitator:** After the first discussion, ask the Bs if there is a temptation to give solutions to A. Remind everyone that as a listener their role may not be to offer solutions but to help people manage their problems better themselves.

This will depend upon the volunteer's service and their role, but volunteers should be clear about the differences between giving advice and giving information.

Repeat the exercise until every member of the groups has played the parts of A, B and C.

## Exercise 5: Helping people help themselves

### Next steps

Take feedback from the group and find out what questions and responses will help a person making a decision the most.

Potential questions and responses could include:

- What else could you do?
- What has helped in the past?
- Tell me more...

Also highlight that:

- good listening and questioning can often help a person find their own solution to a problem
- if you give a person a solution, you are telling them your way of doing things, which may not be right for them.

### Equipment required

- *Observation sheet for role play* handout

## Conclusion

Finish the session by asking each person to share something they have learned and something that has surprised them from the five exercises they have completed in this session.

# Exercise 1 – handout

## Guidelines for listening and responding effectively

- 1 Listen with attention and avoid interrupting.
- 2 Try to remember the essential points that the person is telling you.
- 3 Listen to the 'music' behind the words. What is not openly said but possibly felt?
- 4 Be aware of clues that will help you understand a person's feelings, eg body language, pauses, silence.
- 5 Put yourself in their shoes and imagine how you would feel in their situation.
- 6 Tolerate pauses and silences that are longer than what usually occurs in a conversation.
- 7 Help yourself and the other person feel comfortable and relaxed with each other. Keep calm even when you don't feel calm.
- 8 Reflect what you have heard, what you have noticed. Do it in a tentative way because you might be wrong. This will give the other person the opportunity to agree or disagree.
- 9 Keep your questions to a minimum unless you need precise information or the person to reveal more (remember to use open questions).
- 10 Avoid questions beginning with 'Why'. They can make a conversation sound like an interrogation.
- 11 From time to time, summarise or paraphrase what has been said as a way to demonstrate that you are listening. Try to use some of the same words you've heard.
- 12 Avoid making judgements, eg don't say, 'Can't you pull yourself together?'
- 13 Avoid changing the subject or talking about your own experiences.
- 14 Avoid speaking too soon, too often or for too long.
- 15 Be clear about your own boundaries and limitations.

## Exercise 2 – handout

# Body language

Our body language can portray a lot about how we are listening and communicating. This non-verbal communication can influence how people affected by cancer respond to you and what they think about your service.

Positive non-verbal gestures include:

- plenty of eye contact, but be aware some people find direct eye contact uncomfortable or inappropriate – think about possible cultural issues around this issue
- uncrossed arms and legs
- leaning forward slightly
- open hands when appropriate
- a few nods and noises that confirm you agree or have heard what's been said
- smiling occasionally
- subtly mirroring the way the other person is sitting.

Off-putting gestures include:

- sitting cross-legged – this creates a barrier
- slumping in the chair – you won't look alert and interested
- fidgeting, eg clicking a pen
- crossing your arms
- lack of eye contact
- looking at your watch or the clock – say from the outset if you have limited time for a conversation.

If you are really listening to a person with complete attention, you will find that positive non-verbal gestures come naturally.

**Top tip:** Try to watch people who are having a conversation and listening to each other attentively. You should observe they have unconsciously adopted the same way of sitting or standing.

## Exercise 2 – handout

# Non-verbal communication over the phone

When speaking on the phone you can give and receive a lot of information without even seeing the other person.

Often, you can hear straightaway from a person's voice if they are:

- nervous: may be hesitant and speak quietly
- confused: may not know where to start
- upset: may be quiet, silent, sighing or crying or may talk very fast
- angry: may speak louder, may shout.

When silence occurs in a phone conversation it may be because a person:

- doesn't know how to start talking about what they want to say
- feels embarrassed
- is in shock
- is contemplating what you have said
- has nothing more to say.

To understand how a person you're speaking to on the phone is feeling, you may need to put things in context by saying:

- 'You sound cross/angry/frustrated.'
- 'Have I misunderstood what you've said?'
- 'Have we covered everything?'

Over time, you will find the more you speak to people over the phone the more you will be able to accurately interpret what they're saying non-verbally.

If you use the phone as part of your volunteer role, also be aware of how the person you are speaking to might perceive your language and tone.

# Exercise 3 – handout

## Prompting through questioning

You can use questions to draw out information about a person's feelings or situation. There are various ways of doing this.

### Reflection

Reflect back what a person has said to you as a question.

Them: 'I suppose I'm just confused.'

You: 'Confused?'

### Elaborate

This is to encourage a person to develop what they are saying.

- Would you like to say more about ...?
- Could you explain ...?
- Do you want to tell me more about ...?
- Can you give me an example of ...?
- When did you last feel that way ...?

### Specification

This is useful for uncovering the facts regarding a situation.

- How do they upset you?
- In what way do they do it?
- How often does it happen?
- Who else does that?
- What exactly happens?
- When did it start?
- Which things hurt the most?

### Focusing on feelings

- How do you feel about ...? How did you feel about ...?
- Can you describe your feelings when ...?
- What was the worst/most frustrating part?

### Challenging questions

These should be used only when you have developed a trusting relationship.

- How do you feel you may have contributed to ...?
- What would you have liked to have happened?
- Does that remind you of anything else in your life?
- What do you feel like saying to them? What stops you?



### **Hypothetical questions**

These are useful for getting the person to think about the future.

- How do you think they would react?
- How do you think you would manage ...?
- What resources would you use to deal with this?

### **Questions to draw on skills and resources**

These can be used to get a person to think about the strengths they possess and to find their own solutions.

- What normally gets you through a crisis?
- Who has been understanding when you've needed support?
- What has worked well in overcoming a problem in the past?

### **Closed questions**

Useful for establishing the essential facts.

- How old are your children?
- When were you diagnosed?
- What treatment are you having?

### **Questions to avoid**

#### **Leading questions**

These are questions that try to lead a person into the answer that you want to hear.

- 'You're feeling better now?'

#### **Multiple questions**

Asking more than one question can confuse a person and often leads to them only answering the last question they were asked. We often use multiple questions when we want to hurry the other person. Avoid doing this.

#### **Intrusive questions**

Sometimes we ask questions because we are curious. Be careful when talking about a sensitive issue. It is better to ask an open question than ask a specific question.

Good: 'How has this affected your relationship?'

Not so good: 'Has your partner become irritated by this?'

#### **Judgmental questions**

These often show you disapprove of something.

- Won't your partner drive you to hospital?
- Why don't you ...?
- How could you have ...?

#### **Try to avoid 'Why' questions**

They sound judgmental, as if the person has to justify what they have done. Try to rephrase them with a 'What' or 'How' question.

- Why did you come to that conclusion?
- What did you consider in coming to that conclusion?
- How did you reach that conclusion?

# Exercise 4 – handout

## Listening and attending

The skill of listening and attending (full attention on a person) is the most essential support skill of all. Today, listening is often very partial. A listener focuses on a speaker but also on external events, thinks about something else or begins to form an opinion on what is said.

The aim of fully listening and attending is to allow a person to air their thoughts and feelings in a 'therapeutic conversation'. Responding with empathy involves looking at the world from the perspective of the speaker and how they view their experience, rather than from your own perspective looking in.

- The first stage of empathy involves accurately understanding what you are being told.
- The second stage involves accurately communicating this understanding back to the person telling you their experience.

The skill to practise is called reflecting, and there are two main types of reflecting.

**Reflecting content** – This involves summarising the main issues or topics a speaker is expressing and paraphrasing them so the situation becomes clearer for that person. You need to pay close attention to the actual words the speaker says.

**Reflecting feelings** – A speaker often provides additional information about how they are feeling without putting it into words, for example, through their posture, tone of voice, gestures and other non-verbal signs and signals. You need to pay attention to the 'feelings behind the words' and reflect this observation back to confirm that it is the way a person feels.

### Example

Person affected by cancer: 'The consultant just wouldn't tell me what I had.'

You: 'And you feel frustrated because you really want to know?'

If you respond to a person with empathy, they will feel safer and be more trusting of you. They will also see that talking about their feelings and concerns helps them.

## Exercise 4 – handout

# Attitude

Needlessly, when we listen to someone we often try to think about what the perfect response should be. However, the perfect response is often not about what you say but the way you say it. If you present the right attitude, what you say will always be valued.

The important attitudes are:

**Respect** – A warm acceptance of who a person is, rather than a judgmental attitude as to what they should be.

**Empathy** – The ability to enter into another person’s world and understand from the heart what it’s like to be them.

**Genuineness** – An ability to be sincere and true to yourself. This does not mean you should say exactly how you feel at all times. However, all the feelings you express should be genuine.

The right response to someone you’re listening to should show you:

- have heard what the person has said
- value what the person has said
- care about what the person has said
- respect them as a person.

This response may be as simple as, ‘How sad, I’m sorry. That’s difficult.’

## Exercise 4 – handout

# Active and passive listening

Listening is an activity we engage in throughout our lives but rarely stop to analyse how we're doing it. Good listening is a skill we can develop, and it's about being an active listener, rather than a passive one.

### **Active listening**

With active listening, you try to understand a situation from the speaker's point of view.

### **Passive listening**

With passive listening, you wait for the person to stop talking so you can say something you want to say.

What you can do to be an active listener:

- concentrate on the speaker
- free your mind of other distractions
- locate yourself in a place without distractions
- summarise what the speaker has said to you
- ask relevant questions
- express what you think the speaker may be feeling but has so far not said
- position yourself in a relaxed and open manner
- maintain appropriate eye contact
- ask open questions.

Try to add some other 'active listener' skills to the list above.

# Exercise 5 – handout

## Observation sheet for role play

**Note down any observations on the following behaviours.**

1 What body language did the listener use to show they were listening?

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2 What questions did the listener ask which took the conversation forward?

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3 What did the listener do when they found it difficult to understand something?

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---

4 How did the listener show that they had taken in what the speaker was saying?

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---

5 What other good practice did you observe?

---

---

6 What feedback would you like to give the listener?

---

---

4

EQUALITY  
AND  
DIVERSITY

<b>Session timing</b>	<p>4 hours and 10 minutes (including a break for 1 hour and 15 minutes)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Introduction</td> <td>5 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 1: Introducing diversity</td> <td>25 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 2: Stereotyping</td> <td>45 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 3: Being inclusive</td> <td>30 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 4: You know more than you think</td> <td>30 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 5: Real life examples</td> <td>30–45 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conclusion</td> <td>10 minutes</td> </tr> </table>	Introduction	5 minutes	Exercise 1: Introducing diversity	25 minutes	Exercise 2: Stereotyping	45 minutes	Exercise 3: Being inclusive	30 minutes	Exercise 4: You know more than you think	30 minutes	Exercise 5: Real life examples	30–45 minutes	Conclusion	10 minutes
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Exercise 5: Real life examples	30–45 minutes														
Conclusion	10 minutes														
<b>Session objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this session, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• define equality, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• explain the difference between 'same service' and 'equal service'</li> <li>• highlight what they need to do to create an inclusive environment where everyone is valued and treated fairly, regardless of their race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.</li> </ul>														
<b>Equipment required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flipchart and pens</li> <li>• Post-it notes</li> <li>• Handouts</li> </ul>														

# Lesson plans

Introduction  
to Macmillan

Cancer and  
treatments

Listening and  
responding

Equality and  
diversity

Dealing with  
difficult situations

Loss and  
bereavement

Information giving

## Exercise 1: Introducing diversity

This exercise will explore understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.

**Timing: 25 minutes**

### Group work

Begin the session by inviting each person to introduce themselves and reveal one thing that makes them different from the rest of the group.

As the facilitator, you need to be sensitive to the possibility of this exercise creating stereotypes. If you are unsure about using this opening exercise, replace 'One thing that makes you different' with 'One thing that makes a famous person different'.

Spend five minutes explaining how the differences between people make everyone unique and help to contribute towards a diverse society.

### Next steps

Draw the group's attention to the definitions of equality, diversity and inclusion described on the diversity handout.

Find out if your group fully understands these terms. Explain how this session will help volunteers work in a way that incorporates these ideals.

### Equipment required

- Flip chart and pens
- *Definitions of equality, diversity and inclusion handout*



## Exercise 2: Stereotyping

In this two-part exercise, your group will learn how everyone holds stereotypical views about certain social groups.

Part A will help the group understand that stereotypes are often based on ignorance or limited information.

Part B is about the benefit of being aware of the stereotypical views we hold.

### Timing: 45 minutes

(15 minutes for Part A and 30 minutes for Part B)

#### Part A

##### Group work

Distribute handout A on stereotypes. Ask volunteers to say the first thing that comes into their heads when they see the social groups listed on the page.

##### Next steps

Take feedback from the group and use their responses to provoke further discussion.

Questions you might ask include:

- Did you immediately stereotype when looking at the list?
- How willing are we to give up our stereotypical views?
- Where do stereotypes come from?

## Exercise 2: Stereotyping

### Part B

#### Group work

Give out handout B on stereotypes. Ask the group whether the statements listed are true or stereotypes.

#### Next steps

Take feedback from the group. Discuss whether there is any truth behind the stereotypes. Consider what can happen when volunteers make assumptions based on stereotypes.

Also highlight that:

- being aware of our assumptions makes us more attentive to what we say and what questions we ask
- the more information we have about different groups or people, the less likely we will stereotype.

#### Equipment required

*Stereotyping* handouts

**Important:** Take a break for 15 minutes at this point in the session.

### Exercise 3: Being inclusive

This exercise will help your group understand how being different can make people feel awkward. It also looks at ways to make everyone feel included.

#### Timing: 30 minutes

#### Group work

Ask the group to think of a situation where they felt out of place.

Examples could include being the only woman or man in a group, the only person wearing casual clothes at a formal event or the oldest person in a group of young people.

Tell the group to draw themselves in this situation and then discuss it with a partner.

#### Next steps

Take feedback from everyone in the group about their example of feeling out of place. Discuss what was done to make them feel excluded from the group. Also talk about what could have been done to make them feel more included.

Next, talk with your group about how some people may feel out of place when visiting your service. Discuss what could be done to make them feel relaxed and included.

## Exercise 4: You know more than you think

This exercise examines your group's existing knowledge of equality and diversity and aims to inspire them to develop further their awareness of people's diverse needs.

**Timing: 30 minutes**

### Group work

Ask the group what they know about people who are hearing impaired. List the results on your flip chart.

Possible things your group may say

- Hearing impairment is more common later in life.
- Older people who develop hearing problems usually can't lip read.
- When speaking to a person who has hearing problems you need to face them and the light and speak clearly, rather than loudly.
- If a hearing impaired person does not understand you the first time, it can be helpful to say what you said in a different way.
- It doesn't help to pretend you have understood a hearing impaired person if you have not.
- People who are hearing impaired can use the phone with Typetalk or online technology.
- People who are hearing impaired can hear the spoken word better if the environment they're in has a Minicom facility.

### Next steps

The chances are your group will already know a lot of about hearing impaired people from first-hand experience, family or friends.

Ask participants how they have developed their knowledge, and challenge them to continue building personal awareness of all diverse social groups who use their service.

**Important:** Break for one hour at this point in your session.

### Exercise 5: Real life examples

This exercise helps volunteers to stop making assumptions about the kind of support people affected by cancer want. It will also show participants how different people need to be provided with information and support in different ways.

**Timing: 30–45 minutes, depending on the size of the group**

#### Group work

In small groups, ask volunteers to think about services they have worked or volunteered for in the past. Ask them to identify situations where people felt out of place or excluded.

Then ask each group to write on a post-it note three issues they believe were common within their examples. Put all the post-it notes on your flip chart.

#### Next steps

Discuss the group's responses and what services could do differently to make themselves more inclusive.

Draw out the idea that:

- nobody should assume they know what kind of information and support another person wants
- everyone has the right to the information and support they need
- the information and support provided needs to be tailored to individual needs.

**Important:** Break for 15 minutes at this point in the session.

### Conclusion

After the break, ask everyone in the group to share two things they will do differently to make their service more inclusive.

# Exercise 1 – handout

## Definitions of equality, diversity and inclusion

**Equality:** Ensuring everyone has an equal chance to receive the best support possible. This does not mean you give everyone the same support but that you adapt it to the specific needs of an individual.

**Diversity:** The awareness that all people are different and have their own needs and attitudes. This means the support you give must be sensitive to who an individual is and their specific needs.

**Inclusion:** Ensuring everyone has equal access to the support they need and they are involved in developing the services that provide this support.

## Exercise 2 – handout A

# Stereotyping

**What is the first thing that comes to mind when you read the following labels?**

- Footballer's wife
- Banker
- Politician
- Member of the royal family
- Vicar
- Polish plumber

## Exercise 2 – handout B

# Stereotyping

Which of the following statements are true and which are stereotypes?

1 Chinese people look after their families and don't want any help from outsiders.

---

2 Muslim wives won't go out without their husbands.

---

3 Deaf people can lip read.

---

4 Adults affected by cancer can read.

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5 No one over the age of 60 can use a computer.

---

6 Men don't like to talk about their feelings.

---

7 South Asian people consider cancer to be a taboo subject.

---



# Exercise 2 – handout B

## Stereotyping (the answers)

### 1 **Stereotype**

Traditionally, Chinese women have had a caring responsibility for family members, particularly parents, spouses and children, making them less likely to involve outsiders such as health care professionals. This situation is changing, and many Chinese people now use mainstream services. However, some members of the Chinese community still consider it to be their duty to provide care to family members.

### 2 **Stereotype**

Some Muslim wives will not go out unless they are in the company of their husbands. However, this is not the case for the vast majority of Muslim women in the UK.

### 3 **Stereotype**

Some deaf people can lip read, but even those who can lip read well often only understand around 30–40% of a conversation. Many deaf people cannot lip read and use other communication methods, such as British Sign Language.

### 4 **Stereotype**

In 2003, the Government estimated that 5.2 million adults in the UK did not have functional literacy levels.

### 5 **Stereotype**

A 2010 survey by the Book Trust found that 55% of over 60s viewed the internet as a crucial part of their life.

### 6 **Stereotype**

Traditionally, men were less willing to discuss feelings and emotions, as this was seen as a sign of weakness or lack of manliness. While this remains true of some men, many are very comfortable talking about their feelings.

### 7 **Stereotype**

Cancer and some other illnesses have traditionally been treated as being taboo amongst large sections of the South Asian community. Greater awareness of cancer and health promotion projects targeted at South Asian communities are helping to overcome this view.

**S**

**DEALING WITH  
DIFFICULT  
SITUATIONS**

<p><b>Session timing</b></p>	<p>2 hours (including a 15 minute break)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Introduction</td> <td>5 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 1: What situations do you find difficult?</td> <td>30 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 2: What situations do you think may be difficult in your service?</td> <td>30–45 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 3: What do I say?</td> <td>30 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conclusion</td> <td>10 minutes</td> </tr> </table>	Introduction	5 minutes	Exercise 1: What situations do you find difficult?	30 minutes	Exercise 2: What situations do you think may be difficult in your service?	30–45 minutes	Exercise 3: What do I say?	30 minutes	Conclusion	10 minutes
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<p><b>Session objectives</b></p>	<p>At the end of this session, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help people using their service who are upset</li> <li>• help people using the service who are angry</li> <li>• deal with other situations they have identified as being difficult.</li> </ul>										
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## Exercise 1: What situations do you find difficult?

This exercise aims to show that everyone experiences situations they find difficult, but that this doesn't mean they can't cope with them.

**Timing: 30 minutes**

### Group work

To begin, ask each person in the group to talk about any situation they have found difficult to deal with. This could be at home, at work or socially.

Then ask the group to split into pairs and talk about:

- emotions they find difficult to cope with and why this may be
- any difficulties they have dealing with anger because of past experiences, for example, their parents were always arguing
- any difficulties dealing with people becoming upset because they're afraid they might get upset themselves
- how they might deal with the above.

Give out the *Feelings* handout covering these four topics and discuss them as a group.

### Next steps

Explain that some of the volunteers' anxiety may stem from a sense that they have to make everything all right. However, a volunteer's role at your service is not to make everything better for a person affected by cancer. Instead, it is to help people manage their situation more effectively.

**Important:** Break for 15 minutes at this point in the session.

### Equipment required

- *Feelings* handout

## Exercise 2: What situations do you think may be difficult in your service?

This two-part exercise examines difficult situations participants could face when working in their service.

**Timing: 30–45 minutes**

### Part A

#### Group work

Begin by writing the following potentially difficult situations on a flip chart:

- dealing with a person whose prognosis is not good
- dealing with an angry person
- dealing with a person who is in tears
- dealing with a person whose situation is similar to my own.

Ask the group to add any other difficult situations they think they may experience when working for your service.

Ask individuals which situation they would find the most difficult.

Now divide the group into threes or fours and ask each smaller group to discuss how they would deal with one of these situations.

#### Next steps

Ask the smaller groups to feedback their observations.

#### Equipment required

- Flipchart

## Exercise 2: What situations do you think may be difficult in your service?

### Part B

#### Group work

Divide a flip chart page into four equal sections with the following questions in each section:

- How does this situation affect me?
- What emotions have led to this situation?
- How can I help this person to help themselves?
- What resources do I need to do this?

Give each of the smaller groups 15 minutes to discuss their situation in relation to the four questions. Ask them to write their answers on post-it notes. After the discussion has ended, ask each group to stick their answers in the relevant section on the flipchart.

#### Next steps

As a whole group, discuss the answers and any similarities between them. Also remember to add any relevant suggestions for dealing with a particular situation from this exercise's handout.

If there's time, repeat the exercise but ask groups to discuss a different situation.

Also highlight key learnings from parts A and B:

- Participants should understand they cannot always change a difficult situation or make it better. But they can make it more manageable.
- Participants should not be frightened of people expressing their emotions. If they are, this may discourage clients from expressing themselves and dealing with their feelings.
- The skills participants use to deal with difficult emotions in their home lives can be used in work situations as well.

#### Equipment required

- *Some difficult situations and how volunteers might provide support handout.*

### Exercise 3: What do I say?

This exercise helps volunteers to feel confident when talking to people in difficult situations. It should also highlight how volunteers don't need to make a situation better and are not responsible for a person being in that situation. Showing that they care is often all they can do.

**Timing: 30 minutes**

#### Group work

To begin, ask the group what sort of questions or statements from people would make them feel uneasy when working for their service. For example:

- My son has cancer.
- I have to have a mastectomy and I can't cope with the thought of it.
- You don't understand what it's like.
- It's all right for you.
- I feel so depressed.

Ask each participant to write each statement they think of on a piece of paper. Add any statements you think are relevant but missing. Fold the pieces of paper up and put them in a hat. Try to include around 10–15.

Ask each participant to take out one statement, read it aloud and say how they would respond to it. If they don't know what they'd say, ask others to make a suggestion.

#### Next steps

Let participants know they may often feel scared of saying the wrong thing and want to know the right thing to say. Tell them there is usually no right answer. If volunteers show they have heard what a person has said and understand what they're feeling, this is a good start.

#### Equipment required

- Pens, paper and a hat

### Conclusion

Ask each person one thing they have learned and one thing they will do differently as a result of exercises 1, 2 and 3.

# Exercise 1 – handout

## Feelings

### 1 When someone cries I feel

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This is because

---

### 2 When someone gets angry I feel

---

This is because

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### 3 When someone asks me for advice I feel

---

This is because

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### 4 When I hear that someone has a terminal illness I feel

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This is because

---

### 5 When someone really listens to me and understands me I feel

---

This is because

---



## Exercise 2 – handout

# Some difficult situations and how volunteers might provide support

Listed below are different emotions and situations people often experience when they are affected by cancer, and things you can do to support them.

### **Feeling of loss**

Cancer inevitably involves one or more areas of loss, for example, loss of health, bodily function, job, role in family, sense of normality, body image, social relationships, work, sexuality, dreams and ambitions, and sometimes life itself.

People will need to grieve for this loss.

Your role: You can only listen and show you understand.

### **Struggling to cope with other people's reactions**

People may react in a negative way to a person's cancer diagnosis because of the myths, fears, taboos, stigma and stereotyping surrounding the illness. This can be difficult to deal with.

'I went back to work part-time and they knew I'd come out of the hospice. One woman has been avoiding me like the plague.'

Your role: You can show the person using your service that you respect them and explain that people react the way they do because of their own fear.

### **Frustrated with the medical profession**

Unfortunately, doctors may have insufficient time to listen or explain everything about a person's diagnosis or treatment. Some doctors use a lot of medical jargon that mystifies the illness. Being a patient is often a passive role, which can be very frustrating.

'I always take my list of questions with me but he's always out the door before I get a chance to ask them.'

Your role: You can help the person explore options as to how to get better support from the health professional they are dealing with.

### **Unsure about what treatment to choose**

It is difficult to decide what sort of treatment to opt for. Doctors and family may give advice to people or put pressure on them to have a certain treatment. This may make them feel powerless or not in control of their life.

Your role: You can help the person making the decision by giving them information about treatments, such as that produced by Macmillan. You can refer them to someone who can talk their options through with them, for example, a specialist working on the Macmillan Support Line.

### **Stressed at home or on within their relationships**

Changes in role and status can turn families upside down, eg when a person is no longer the main carer or breadwinner. People who have just been diagnosed with cancer naturally worry about the feelings of partners, family and friends. Some cancers affect the personal, emotional and intimate sides of life to a greater extent than others.

'My husband is very supportive but I don't always say how I'm feeling because I don't want to upset him.'

Your role: You can listen and assure people that stress at home is very common when a person has cancer. You may be able to help the person find ways of talking to their family about cancer. Or you could direct them to the Macmillan Support Line.

### **Feeling fearful**

People with cancer have many fears, for example:

- fear of death
- fear of pain
- fear of the unknown
- fear of surgery
- fear of hospitals
- fear of recurrence
- fear of other people not coping.

Friends and relatives may try to avoid talking about these issues with the person who has cancer because they are worried they'll upset them. However, not talking about these fears can make them increase.

Your role: To listen to a person's fears without giving them false reassurance.

### **Struggling to cope with uncertainty**

Constantly waiting for the results of tests and treatments and uncertainty about a diagnosis or prognosis can be very wearing.

'I just get so scared not knowing what might be happening with the cancer inside my body.'

Your role: Talking about uncertainty is a good way of helping a person deal with it.

### **Feeling isolated**

People affected by cancer can feel cut off from others. Leisure pursuits may have to stop if a person feels unwell and their social life may deteriorate. This feeling of loneliness may grow when friends and family don't visit.

'I feel worse now the radiotherapy has ended. I'm so exhausted. At least when I was going to hospital I could talk to people.'

Your role: You may be able to direct people to an appropriate self-help and support group or activity that would help them meet others.

### **Anxious about practical matters**

People using your service may be anxious about the following:

- care of home and children
- money
- making a will
- disruption to normal routine because of treatments
- life after treatment.

'I was off sick for three months. During that time, my employer wrote to me saying that because of the economic situation he had to let me go. I know that wasn't true.'

Your role: You may be able to pass on information about practical help that's available, such as a leaflet about the financial support Macmillan provides and information resources about work and cancer.

### **Feeling angry**

Anger is very common. There are many reasons why it might be difficult to deal with.

'When the doctor told me I had cancer I didn't hear anything else. I don't know how I got home. Several days later I just kept saying, "Why me?" Sometimes I still feel like that.'

Your role: Listening and assuring a person that their anger is understandable can often diffuse how they feel.

### **Struggling to cope with physical difficulties**

The physical symptoms and changes associated with cancer and its treatment vary greatly. Some affect a person for the rest of their life, while others, such as tiredness and depression, get better over time.

'I used to be so active before the treatment. Now it's takes all my energy to get up in the morning.'

Your role: Talking to someone who has been through a similar situation may be of help to a person who is struggling to cope with physical difficulties caused by their cancer. Self-help and support groups and online communities can offer this support.

**Important:** Don't let your natural instinct to find a solution for a person stop you from listening to them. Often listening and showing understanding is the only thing you can offer, but it may be something the person cannot get from anyone else.

6

LOSS AND  
BEREAVEMENT

<b>Session timing</b>	<p>3 hours (including a 15 minute break)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Introduction</td> <td>5 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 1: What losses have you experienced?</td> <td>45 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 2: How do you cope with loss?</td> <td>45 minutes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exercise 3: Helping people cope with loss</td> <td>1 hour</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conclusion</td> <td>10 minutes</td> </tr> </table>	Introduction	5 minutes	Exercise 1: What losses have you experienced?	45 minutes	Exercise 2: How do you cope with loss?	45 minutes	Exercise 3: Helping people cope with loss	1 hour	Conclusion	10 minutes
Introduction	5 minutes										
Exercise 1: What losses have you experienced?	45 minutes										
Exercise 2: How do you cope with loss?	45 minutes										
Exercise 3: Helping people cope with loss	1 hour										
Conclusion	10 minutes										
<b>Session objectives</b>	<p>At the end of this session, participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate awareness of how people deal with loss</li> <li>• highlight different sources of support that may help a person deal with loss</li> <li>• identify the unique role they can play in supporting a person who has experienced loss.</li> </ul>										
<b>Equipment required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip chart and pens</li> <li>• Post-it notes</li> <li>• Handouts</li> </ul>										

# Lesson plans

## Exercise 1: What losses have you experienced?

This exercise shows that we experience loss throughout our lives, we all deal with it in different ways, and that other people cannot judge how great a loss is for someone.

**Timing: 45 minutes**

### Group work

Start by asking participants to think about the losses we experience in our life, from cradle to grave. For example:

- getting lost from a parent as a toddler
- moving schools and losing friends
- breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend
- losing a job
- losing a faculty, for example, your hearing
- children leaving home.

Ask each person to write three losses they've experienced in their life on separate post-it notes.

Then draw the following diagram on two pieces of flip chart paper.



Pin the diagram to the wall and ask participants to think about when their losses occurred and to stick them on the appropriate place on the timeline.

## Exercise 1: What losses have you experienced?

### Next steps

Looking at the timeline, talk about how loss does occur throughout people's lives. Also distribute the handout for this exercise and discuss.

### Equipment required

- *Bereavement, loss and change* handout
- Flipchart
- Post-it notes



## Exercise 2: How do you cope with loss?

This exercise explores the support a bereaved person does and doesn't want. It should emphasise that everyone reacts differently to loss, and most people want to talk to someone who shows understanding.

**Timing: 45 minutes**

### Group work

Start by asking participants to take one example from Exercise 1's timeline, or to think of another significant loss, and write down:

- how they felt about it
- what they wanted from others
- what they didn't want from others.

Suggest that they do not choose anything that will be too traumatic to deal with in this short session, but reassure them that it's okay if they do want to express their emotions.

When they have done this, ask them to work in a pair or small group and talk about what they have written.

### Next steps

Ask each pair or group to say one thing that they did want and one thing that they didn't want from others when they were dealing with loss.

**Important:** Break for 15 minutes at this point in the session.

### Exercise 3: Helping people cope with loss

This exercise explores how participants can help people cope with loss. You should stress that participants are not alone and can ask other people, including you, for advice. Also mention that their service will have resources to help people deal with loss, and that sometimes all people want is someone who is happy to listen to them.

#### Timing: 1 hour

#### Group work

To start, ask what different losses people experience when they have cancer. List them on a flip chart.

Then ask participants to work in pairs, pick three or four of these examples and say how their service can help a person coping with loss.

#### Next steps

Ask each pair to feedback one example where they felt their service could help and another where they felt it couldn't.

For the latter examples, ask the other participants if they can think of ways that a service could help.

### Conclusion

Ask participants to say one thing they feel more confident about coping with as a result of completing Exercises 1, 2 and 3.

# Exercise 1 – handout

## Bereavement, loss and change

### **Bereavement**

Everyone who experiences a major loss in their life goes through some kind of bereavement process. How each of us experiences this process is different and will depend on what losses we have experienced before and how we have coped with them.

When working with a bereaved person, a volunteer must always be sensitive to an individual's particular experience and how they've dealing with it.

As a volunteer, you can help a bereaved person talk about and accept how they feel about their loss.

Ultimately, you may be able to help the bereaved person think about how they can move forward and get on with their lives. There is no right way to do this or set period of time in which to do it.

Some bereaved people are unable to get past their loss, and may become depressed or even suicidal. If you feel this is the case with a person using your service, you may need to get help from someone who has more experience dealing with this type of situation.

### **The support you can offer**

- Show a bereaved person that you are willing to listen to difficult or bad feelings. This will help the bereaved person to express feelings which may be hard to accept as part of loss. For example, expressing anger about a dead relative or about any other loss.
- Tell a bereaved person that you can cope with their sorrow and they don't have to apologise for their tears.
- Accept that some people grieve without tears, but they may want to talk about how they feel.
- Give a bereaved person the opportunity to recall and enjoy memories.



# INFORMATION GIVING

<b>Session timing</b>	<p>2 hours and 45 minutes (including a 15 minute break)</p> <p>Introduction 5 minutes  Exercise 1: Preferred way of learning 15 minutes  Exercise 2: What makes good information giving? 20 minutes  Exercise 3: Giving information 30 minutes  Exercise 4: Case studies 1 hour  Conclusion 20 minutes</p>
<b>Session objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this session participants should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• state what makes information easy to understand</li> <li>• provide information that is suited to the needs of the people using their service</li> <li>• respond appropriately to a situation when they can't provide the information that's requested.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip chart and pens</li> <li>• Post-it notes</li> <li>• Handouts</li> </ul>

# Lesson plans

Introduction  
to Macmillan

Cancer and  
treatments

Listening and  
responding

Equality and  
diversity

Dealing with  
difficult situations

Loss and  
bereavement

Information giving

## Exercise 1: Preferred way of learning

This exercise shows that everyone has their own preferred way of learning and it's important to take this into account when giving people information.

**Timing: 15 minutes**

### Group work

Ask everyone in the group what they do when they have a new piece of technology that they want to use. Ask them to raise their hand if they:

- 1 read the instructions
- 2 press all the buttons until it works
- 3 ask someone to show them how to use it
- 4 use only the simplest programmes first and learn as they go along.

### Next steps

Discuss how varied people's answers are and how we all have a preferred way of learning. Give out the handout and discuss it with the group.

### Equipment required

- *Learning styles* handout

## Exercise 2: What makes good information giving?

This exercise gets volunteers to think about the best ways of providing information.

### Timing: 20 minutes

#### Group work

Begin by asking participants to think of a recent time when they received information from someone. What made it either a useful or useless experience?

Then, in pairs, ask them to list factors that can lead people to give information effectively, and to list factors that can lead them to give information poorly.

Ask each pair to write on separate post-it notes two to three good factors and two to three bad ones (if there are less than six people ask everyone for three to four each). Stick the good and bad post-it notes in separate columns on your flip chart.

#### Next steps

Ask the group if there are any other key good or bad factors they'd like to add. Then discuss everyone's points and examine common ones made.

Distribute the handout on information giving and discuss it with the group.

Finally, ask participants how they would apply what they have learned in this exercise to their role.

#### Equipment required

- *Giving information* handout

### Exercise 3: Giving information

This exercise examines how best to communicate information to people using a service. It highlights that participants need to start by finding out how much information a person already has. They also need to check the person has understood the information they've been given. The exercise should also emphasise that everyone has a preferred way of accessing information.

**Timing: 30 minutes**

#### Group work

To begin, ask each person to find someone they haven't worked with. Ask each pair to tell each other how to get to their house from where the session is being held. If this is too easy, ask them to describe how to get somewhere more difficult, for example, a relative's house. Give them five minutes to do this.

#### Next steps

Ask each pair what they found useful in each other's descriptions.

When a person was providing information, find out whether they:

- checked how much the other person knew already
- made a map or asked if the person had a Sat Nav
- checked that the person had understood what they'd said by asking them to repeat the information.

**Important:** Break for 15 minutes at this point in the session.



## Exercise 4: Case studies

In this exercise, participants will apply what they've learned to a number of case studies.

### Timing: 1 hour

#### Group work

Give out the handout for this exercise. Ask participants to work in pairs or small groups to answer the questions about the case studies.

If there are less than six participants, ask each pair or group to work on three case studies of their choice. If there are more than six, ask them to work on two.

Give them 30 minutes to complete this part of the exercise.

#### Next steps

Ask each group what answers they came up with and discuss any areas where participants disagree. Differences may occur in the same pair or group, or between different ones.

#### Equipment required

*Case studies* handout

## Conclusion

Take 20 minutes to summarise what has been covered in this session.

When you do this, ask each person to say:

- what they now feel more confident about with regards to information giving
- what they are still concerned about
- what they are going to do to develop their information giving skills
- what resources, for example, booklets, training support, supervision, group meetings, would help them develop their skills.

# Exercise 1 – handout

## Learning styles

Learning usually goes through a cycle of:

- 1 Having an experience, for example, burning your hand whilst cooking.
- 2 Reflecting on this experience: I did that when putting something in the oven. How could I protect my hands in future?
- 3 Thinking about what the experience means and creating a theory: If I use oven gloves they will protect my hands.
- 4 Applying this theory: I have used the oven gloves and now I don't burn myself.

Although we need to use all of the above ways of learning, we all have preferred modes.

### Different types of learners

**The Activist** likes to learn by doing. They are most likely to say 'let me try it', rather than 'can you explain?'

**The Reflector** likes to observe and think about what is being done. They are most likely to say 'show me' and 'how do you do that?'

**The Theoriser** wants to understand what it is all about before undertaking the learning. They are most likely to say 'why does that happen?' or 'how does that work?'

**The Pragmatist:** wants to know how to apply the learning. If there is not an immediate application, they will not bother to learn. They are most likely to say 'how can I use this information in order to ...?'

**Important:** By carefully listening to a service user's questions, you can find out what sort of information the person wants and the best way to provide this information.

# Exercise 2 – handout

## Giving information

The way in which the information is given will depend on the nature and complexity of the information and the level of understanding of the person asking for it.

### Some ways of increasing understanding

Before giving the information:

- suggest that the person writes down the information
- give the person an idea of how much information you are going to give them so that they know for how long they will have to concentrate.

Giving the information

- Break down long, complicated information into logical steps.
- Move from the known to the unknown. People understand and remember when they can connect the information to something they already know.
- If there is a lot of information, check the understanding at each stage before moving on.
- Ensure that the person knows how to use the information to manage their problem.
- Work out an action plan with a person so they can use the information they've received.

Checking the understanding

- Give the person an opportunity to say if they don't understand, eg 'Is there anything that you would like me to go over again?' This is preferable to 'Is that clear?', which is a leading question.
- Ask the person to summarise the information.
- Ask the person to summarise the next steps they'll follow in their action plan.

# Exercise 4 – handout

## Case studies

- 1 Margaret** is aged 70. She has just finished hospital treatment for breast cancer. She has been sent home from hospital but will continue to receive chemotherapy. She asks you how the chemotherapy may affect her as she is feeling very tired at present and does not know how long this tiredness will last.

Through chatting to her and asking open questions you realise that she is worrying about being on her own, having got used to being looked after in hospital. She does not have any family close by and does not like to bother her neighbours.

**Questions:**

- What are Margaret's needs?
- What resources could you provide that could meet these needs?
- What other organisations, professionals, voluntary organisations may be able to help?

- 2 Rajit** is a 30-year-old man who has thyroid cancer. He has heard frightening stories about the treatment and its side effects, and wants to know what is involved. He is partially sighted and finds it hard to read the written information he's received.

**Questions:**

- What information could you find for him?
- What organisation may be able to help?
- What other needs may he have and how could you find out what they are?

**3 Martin** has oesophageal cancer and is worried about his treatment and how he will cope when he cannot work. He has written information about his treatment with him. As you discuss information about benefits, you start to suspect that he can't read.

**Questions:**

- Who could Martin go to for information?
- How could you help him to understand the written information he has received?
- What other support could he receive?

**4 Georgia** is a 22-year-old woman being treated for non-Hodgkin lymphoma. She has dropped out of university due to her treatment and is worried about how she will cope if she goes back to study, as she has poor concentration and is constantly tired.

**Questions:**

- How could you help Georgia?
- Where could you find information that will assist her?
- What other support could she get?

**5 Don** is the partner of Doris, who is being treated for bowel cancer. Don tells you that he is feeling guilty about not being able to help Doris more, as he has continued to work shifts during her illness. He says his employer has told him that if he doesn't work, he won't get paid.

**Questions:**

- What would you say to Don?
- What information could you provide to help him with his situation?
- Are there other organisations that could also help him?

Cancer is the toughest fight most people will ever face. But they don't have to go through it alone. The Macmillan team is there every step of the way.

We are the nurses, doctors and therapists helping people through treatment. The experts on the end of the phone. The advisers telling people which benefits they're entitled to. The volunteers giving a hand with the everyday things. The campaigners improving cancer care. The fundraisers who make it all possible.

Together, we are Macmillan Cancer Support.

**Our cancer support specialists, benefits advisers and cancer nurses are available to answer any questions you or your patients might have through our free Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 00 00 Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm.**

**Alternatively, visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)  
Hard of hearing? Use textphone 0808 808 0121, or Text Relay.  
Non-English speaker? Interpreters available**