

# RECOVERY THROUGH SUPPORTED BEFRIENDING



## INFORMATION FOR FRIENDS

### What is befriending?

- It is a one to one supported friendship between a trained volunteer and a person who is experiencing mental ill health (Friend) and who are lonely or isolated.
- Our friendships focus on the Recovery way of thinking which helps support you to build confidence, to take control of your life by meeting life goals you have set yourself and enabling you to live as well as possible.

### What is recovery?

If you have mental ill health, you may have heard of 'recovery'. Recovery is not a one-off event – it is a process that can take time. We think of it as a **personal recovery journey**.



#### KEY POINTS

- You can recover from mental ill health. Recovery means different things to different people; it is a very personal journey. Generally speaking, it is about working towards your goals and having hope for the future.
- Not everyone will stop having symptoms during their recovery. If you still have symptoms, you can try to stop them from affecting your life as much.
- Medical treatment is one way towards recovery. It helps a lot of people, but it is not the only way to recover.
- Recovery is something you achieve for yourself. It is not something that someone else does for you.
- Befrienders Highland and our volunteers will be able to help you achieve your recovery goals through our supported friendships.

## Befriending services we offer

**Face to Face befriending** – 1-1 weekly or fortnightly meetings for social activities in Inverness, Nairn, Invergordon, Alness, Caithness, and Skye & Lochalsh areas.

**Telephone, letter or email befriending** – 1-1 weekly or fortnightly contact across Highland.

**Group befriending** – a range of interest and activity groups offering social get togethers and contact with people with similar interests, both through meetings and through group run magazines.



## How can befriending help you with your recovery journey?

Our 1-1 supported friendships can support you in many ways.

- Building an equal friendship with one of our trained volunteers will help increase your confidence and sense of belonging and offer you valuable peer support as you work towards achieving your recovery goals.
- For some people, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, having a negative outlook and loneliness can be barriers to having hope for the future. Recognising these issues and understanding that they may be related to your illness can be the first step towards building hope. A befriending relationship will increase your confidence and help you to find ways to reduce the barriers that may stand in your way.
- Learning to accept your illness and the difficulties it causes you can be a key point in recovery. Acceptance may help you to make changes and take steps towards achieving new goals. It might help you to learn more about your illness and the effects it has on your life and how you feel. Having a befriender there for you' and having someone to talk to, to encourage you and to support you in achieving your goals will help you to accept things and learn to make the most of your life.
- If you have mental ill health, regaining control of your life is an important part of recovery. An aspect of control is finding out what makes things worse for you, and what makes things better. This way, you can find out what works best for you. Knowing that someone is there for you who understands you and will listen and encourage you will help you feel more confident as you regain control of your life.
- Talking to others can help you to relieve your isolation or loneliness and to stay well. Our befriending relationships will help with this and will also help to increase your confidence and positive experiences which will enable you to feel more connected and part of your community. Our volunteers offer positive relationships that will help you feel comfortable and valued as you work towards achieving your goals.



- Making some small and gradual lifestyle changes can improve your wellbeing and can help recovery. Your befriender can support you with this by accompanying you in social activities or, if you have a telephone, letter or email friendship, by encouraging you and being there for you as an equal peer.



- Regular activity can give structure to your day and is helpful for many people. It can also give you a sense of purpose, help you to learn new skills and help you to meet new people, depending on the type of activity you choose to do. Socialising with your befriender or in one of our groups can help you experience new things and do more of the activities you enjoy.

## Who are our volunteers?

- Our befrienders are all volunteers who respect and value people and want to make a difference.
  - Our volunteers come from all walks of life and have a wide range of ages – male and female.
- All volunteers are trained, supported and supervised by their Coordinator on a regular basis.
- All our volunteers offer befriending because they want to and not because they are paid to.

## Is it confidential?

Confidentiality and equality are very important to us and we take it very seriously. We operate a 3-way confidentiality between the Friend, the Volunteer and the Coordinator so any party can discuss anything relating to the friendship at any time without breaking a confidence.

## How long are the friendships?

- We do not put a specific time limit on our friendships; however, they are not to be viewed as a friendship that will last forever. We anticipate that by setting realistic and achievable goals and working with your volunteer and coordinator to regularly review your achievements, most people will no longer need the support of befriending within 3-5 years.

## How do I get a befriender?

- You must be an adult (aged 18 upwards) and receiving professional help for your mental health from a doctor, CPN, Psychiatrist or mental health social worker before we are able to offer you a service.

- A mental health worker or other health care professional can complete a referral form which has been signed by you.
- You can refer yourself. Just complete and return a self-referral form, phone us, email us or fill in the contact form on our website.

## **What happens next?**

- A referral form needs to be signed by you giving permission for the coordinator to speak to your nominated mental health worker before we can proceed.
- The coordinator will arrange to meet with you or speak to you on the phone to find out about you, your life, interests and how you would like your life to be.
- The coordinator will work with you to set some goals that you would like to achieve that will help to make your life better and find out together how befriending can help you achieve these goals.
- We will match you with a compatible volunteer who shares similar interests and who we feel you will get on well with. Your contact will be either face to face, telephone, letter, or email – whichever is your choice. Your volunteer will be made aware of your goals and together you can discuss how they can help you to achieve them.
- There is a trial period of 4 contacts to check things are going well.
- Your volunteer will be in contact either weekly or fortnightly depending on your preference. You will not be able to have contact more than once a week and any form of home visiting is not allowed.
- The coordinator will speak to you twice during the trial period and then every 6 months to review the friendship and your goals. You can call the coordinator at any time should you wish to discuss any aspect of the friendship or your goals.

**If you would like more information or would like to discuss our services, please do not hesitate to get in touch.**

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