**South East and Central Essex Mind Ltd**

**Registered Charity No. 1148451**

**Volunteering Opportunity:**

Frontline volunteer role on Somewhere To Turn

**About the Service**

Here at South East and Central Essex Mind, our vision is of a society that promotes and protects good mental health for all and that treats people with experience of mental distress Fairly, Positively and with Respect.

The needs and experiences of people with mental distress drives our work and we make sure their voices are heard by those who influence change. Our independence gives us the freedom to stand up and speak out on the real local issues that affect daily lives. We provide information and support, campaign to improve policy and attitudes and, in partnership with other local Mind Associations, develop local services. We do this to make it possible for people who experience mental distress to live full lives and play their role in their communities.

We believe that through supporting our volunteers to carry out their role to the best of their ability they can emanate our culture and ethos, and therefore support service users better. We aim to share our own enthusiasm and motivation with our volunteers. It helps motivate and enthuse volunteers. It stops volunteers from feeling isolated, or even exploited, in their role.

**Volunteer Role Description (brief description of what the role will involve tasks and activities, responsibilities etc.):**

Somewhere to Turn is a volunteer run service. This is a diverse and flexible new role which looks to support and develop those who volunteer with us. There are four distinct aspects to this role, and depending on your skills and interests you may wish to select on or more at a time.

The Somewhere to Turn Service is the first point of contact for individuals seeking information on local mental health services and support. The service offers callers a 20 minute consultation session either over the phone or face-to-face, or email support which results in their signposting either to internal services at South East and Central Essex Mind or to other local organisations that may better suit their individual needs.  
  
Every service user is offered a follow up call by a member of the S2T team. This call ensures that the information provided met the needs of the client or offers further assistance.

**Aspect One – reception/administration**

As a volunteer on our reception you will have a great introduction to the organisation. You will gain insight into the day-to-day running of the Jubilee Centre – where our services are offered. Some of the tasks that you might do are as follows:

* Greeting and signing in clients
* Checking and amending room bookings
* Processing payments
* Answering the phones and redirecting calls appropriately
* Data input and scanning
* Replenishing and updating leaflets
* Setting up the meeting/training rooms

As the first face clients see, you will be welcoming and efficient, directing clients to the right place. Administration duties are a great way to get to know our organisation, improve office skills, and work with a wide range of people (general public, service users, trustees, mental health professionals, and more!).

**Aspect Two – emails and follow-up calls**

Taking on email and follow up responsibilities means you will follow on from the reception role to involve responding to service users via email and conducting follow up calls. This role introduces you to our internal services, 1-1 client contact and the services that we signpost to as well. Some of the tasks that you might undertake in this volunteer role might be as follows:

* Handling email queries and comments from service users
* Conducting follow-up calls with service users that have already received information and referral forms from us. We check in with service users and ensure that the information we have provided has met their needs and we are able to offer further assistance if required
* Navigating our database to find relevant signposting information
* Adding to and updating our database with new/niche services found using the internet

Contacting clients via emails and becoming familiar with services available will prepare you for further aspects of the role should you choose to take them on.

**Aspect Three – taking calls and drop-ins**

This aspect involves dynamic responses to service users, as they are on the end of the phone or sat directly in front of you. As a Volunteer taking on this aspect, you will be able to recall some of the most common signposting organisations that we discuss and have some knowledge of how those services support people. You might be expected to take on the following tasks in this aspect:

* Taking initial calls from clients, or seeing face to face what they are looking for, and offering some advice as to which of our services or other local organisations will be able to help them.
* Completing referral forms with service users
* Writing action plans and sending our referral forms via email or post
* You also have the option of attending PACE (Police And Criminal Evidence) training to become an appropriate adult for those held in custody with a mental vulnerability.

**Aspect Four – peer support group facilitation and 1:1 support**

This aspect of the frontline volunteer role involves facilitating our peer support groups or conducting 1:1 sessions with Somewhere To Turn clients, who require more hands on, extended support. Volunteers carrying out extended support should uphold our goal-orientated, empowering approach to help those who feel stuck in their recovery to find the right options for support. As a volunteer in this aspect you will:

* Give nontherapeutic support and signpost to the appropriate mental health services to aid your client’s recovery.
* May conduct graded exposure with clients to reduce their anxiety around certain places or situations.
* Assist clients to attend appointments where necessary
* Link clients with available self-help resources including websites, books, and apps

**Personal Qualities or Skills**

Essential:

* Be non-judgemental.
* Have good verbal and written communication skills.
* Have active listening skills.
* Work well as part of a team, but also able to work independently using your own initiative.
* Have an understanding of equality and diversity, and knowledge of ensuring Equal Opportunities
* Be able to present a professional image when representing the organisation and when meeting service users
* Have worked or volunteered in the public sector.
* Have some computer skills (use of Microsoft Office - Word and Outlook essential, Excel and Access an advantage)

Ideal:

* Remain calm and professional in challenging situations (either over the phone or face-to-face).
* Understand the importance of boundaries and confidentiality.
* Have some experience of supporting people with their mental health.
* Have the confidence to liaise with other service providers in a professional manner.

Any age restrictions: over 18 only

**Hours:** Our volunteers are vital to the running of Somewhere To Turn. Therefore we look for volunteers able to attend on the same regular shifts. We are looking for those who can offer a six month commitment. For more flexible roles please see our website for any up to date roles on offer. Somewhere To Turn currently runs Monday – Friday, 10am – 3.30pm, but hope to extend this in the future. We are able to offer full day (10am – 3.30pm), morning (10am – 1pm) or afternoon (12.30pm – 3.30pm) shifts. This can be discussed on or before interview.

**What Volunteers Will Gain:**

As a Volunteer you will gain experience of working in a professional mental health environment, knowledge of local and national services, receive low cost CPD if desired including all those listed on our training calendar , have travel expenses paid and free tea and coffee, and will train under a BACP registered member organisation.

**Main Point of Contact:**

Please contact our Services Coordinator on 01702 601123 or email [jessica.wing@seandcessexmind.org.uk](mailto:jessica.wing@seandcessexmind.org.uk) for an application form and to arrange an informal discussion about the role before moving onto interview.