



COUNSELLOR TRAINING PLACEMENTS WITH ISLINGTON CHURCHES BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

The Bereavement Service

Islington Churches Bereavement Service is one of two projects run by CARIS Islington, a registered charity. The Bereavement Service was established in the early eighties and offers listening support to anyone in Islington who has been bereaved. This confidential visiting service is offered regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion etc and is offered free of charge.

Clients and Visiting

We offer an assessment session to any bereaved person able to be visited in Islington. Following assessment, if bereavement visiting is appropriate, clients are referred to one of our trained visitors who will visit regularly for as long as is necessary. The Bereavement Service offers a visiting service. We usually visit clients at home, but we will also visit in any suitable location in Islington, for example at work if a private room is available, or at the client's doctor's. Not all of our volunteers offer a counselling contract, but for those who do this setting is unusual and has its advantages and disadvantages. At assessment the importance of a private undisturbed meeting place is discussed with our clients and all our visitors are expected to agree a contract with their clients and maintain appropriate boundaries. Those offering a counselling contract offer a weekly one hour session.

Volunteer Training

All volunteers attend a twelve week training course. Applicants attend an initial interview which looks for basic listening and interpersonal skills. We do not offer places to anyone recently bereaved. The training course looks at basic listening skills, the grieving process and personal experiences of loss. Following training, a final interview establishes whether we are able to offer a place on our team of visitors.

Placements

Many of our volunteers are training as counsellors and use their work with the Bereavement Service to add to their experience of one-to-one work, or to count towards practice hours. We are keen to support volunteers who are in training although we do not have the resources to establish strong links with training institutions and as such do not consider that we are able to offer formal 'placements'. We are not prepared to be involved in a formal assessment

procedure, however some volunteers ask us to sign logs of practice hours and attendance at supervision and we are happy to do that. We prefer not to write reports about our volunteers for training institutions but are prepared to help volunteers with brief end of term reports if necessary, and are happy to discuss with volunteers their development as a counsellor if we are asked by them. We prefer our volunteers to write 'self assessments' of their progress (which the volunteer might choose to discuss with us at their annual review meeting). When a written report is going to be requested we expect to know, and to have a copy of the relevant documents in advance. We are only able to write references for volunteers who have been with us for a year.

Supervision

All volunteers must attend supervision. Supervision takes place in groups which meet every two weeks. The groups comprise four volunteers plus the co-ordinator or assistant co-ordinator. Each group meets for two hours. Many of our volunteers seek additional supervision e.g. at their training institution. If volunteers choose to do this we do not object but in this case in particular we discuss confidentiality, direction of the work and the possibility of splitting arising from two parallel supervisory experiences. Please read the Bereavement Service Supervision policy for further details.

Islington Churches
Bereavement Service
Islington Churches
Cold Weather Shelter

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