

VOLUNTEERS SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT POLICY

Supervision

All volunteers must attend supervision.

Supervision takes place in groups which meet every four weeks.

The groups comprise four volunteers plus the co-ordinator or assistant co-ordinator.

Each group meets for two hours.

This level of supervision is considered to be the minimum acceptable and volunteers are expected to attend every supervision meeting even if they are taking a break from client work. The supervision meetings are structured and time is divided between volunteers so that all cases are usually presented at each meeting.

Additional Support

Many of the volunteers contact or meet with their supervisor between group meetings and they are encouraged to do this.

In addition co-ordinators will provide telephone consultation when necessary.

The Bereavement Service co-ordinators will listen to and discuss volunteer's views on the service.

External Supervision

The level of supervision which the Bereavement Service is able to offer is minimal and for volunteers offering a counselling contract does not entirely fulfill BAC guidelines.

Many of our volunteers seek additional supervision e.g. at their training institution.

If volunteers choose to do this we do not object but have three particular concerns:

a) Confidentiality - we offer a confidential service and ask volunteers not to use names or identifying details away from the Bereavement Service. We ask volunteers not to give any unnecessary details and even to change details if it will not affect their presentation. This comment also applies to case studies. Volunteers may not tape record meetings with clients.

b) Direction of the work - external supervision should be used to discuss points of interest and issues which arise from the work. The Bereavement Service is in charge of the work and decisions about direction etc must be discussed with the Bereavement Service supervisor. This is particularly relevant when there are issues about bereavement being maintained as the principal focus of the work.

c) Splitting - two parallel supervisory experiences can be very useful and illuminating but are potentially difficult. In addition to the possibility of splitting, differing models and ways of working can be confusing, particularly with counsellors new to the work. We expect our volunteers to discuss conflicting experiences and advice with us.

Consultation

Any queries or problems arising in the course of the volunteer's work with the client should be reported as quickly as possible to the volunteer's supervisor and if this is not possible to the office.

Annual Reviews for Volunteers

Volunteers are offered two review meetings a year – one with their supervisor and one with the Bereavement Service Co-ordinator.

The aim of the supervision review is to give the volunteer an opportunity to reflect on her/his work with clients during the previous year and to talk about her/his use of supervision.

The Co-ordinator's review is a less formal meeting where the aim is to review the volunteer's involvement with the Bereavement Service in a much more general way and to discuss any concerns the volunteer may have. This is particularly important when the volunteer is in one of the Assistant Co-ordinator's supervision groups and so does not meet regularly with the Co-ordinator.

Volunteers who are in supervision with the Co-ordinator will usually be offered one meeting to cover both discussions.

Additional Information

The supervisors

The supervision groups are led by the Bereavement Service Co-ordinator, Lydia Constantinou, and the Assistant Co-ordinator, Anne Baker. Both are BAC Accredited and UK Registered Counsellors.