

Introduction

Core Skills in Befriending for Volunteers is a free, online course for volunteer befrienders available exclusively to Befriending Networks members.

The course consists of 10 online modules (outlined in the Learning Outcomes section below) which participants complete at any time during a two-month period from the date their registration is activated. Each module takes roughly between 1 and 2 hours to complete and participants are issued with a certificate from Befriending Networks on successful completion of the course.

Registration

Registration takes place at the beginning of each month. In order to register for the course, **coordinators** should sign themselves up for the relevant month's intake through our [Training Calendar](#). NB: Coordinators should only sign up through the Training Calendar for one place for themselves and should not sign any volunteers up at this stage. The BNs Learning Development Officer will contact coordinators to find out names of volunteers once coordinators sign themselves on through the training Calendar.

Coordinators can request places for up to 5 volunteers in an month.

Coordinator involvement

Coordinators have a small role to play in monitoring the progress of their volunteers throughout the course. They are required to keep track of their volunteers' submissions to the online platform and to provide brief feedback to volunteers on their answers. This takes an average of 5 minutes per module. A detailed set of guidance notes is provided to each coordinator registering for the course.

Coordinators receive open-ended access to all 10 modules when they register through the training Calendar and are expected to thoroughly familiarise themselves with all course materials. Coordinators will be asked to sign an agreement to this effect before registering any volunteers.

Learning outcomes

Module 1: What is Befriending?

By the end of this module you will have an understanding of:

- what befriending is and what it is not, and the ways in which befriending differs from:
 - friendship
 - mentoring and
 - advocacy
- the qualities and characteristics of volunteer befrienders
- the core elements of the befriending relationship
- the benefits of befriending

Module 2: Values and Attitudes in Befriending

By the end of this module you will have explored:

- your own motives for wanting to become a volunteer befriender
- how people can become isolated and marginalised in society
- some key aspects of your own values and attitudes
- the importance of a non-judgemental approach in befriending

Module 3: Communication Skills

By the end of the module candidates will have:

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- An understanding of the importance of good communication skills to the volunteer befriender's role
- An awareness of the potential barriers to effective communication and ways to overcome these
- An understanding of both verbal and non-verbal elements of effective communication
- Knowledge of the process and importance of active listening

- Had the opportunity to think about some common problems with listening

Module 4: Building Relationships

By the end of the module you will have:

- Explored different types of relationship which are fundamental to people in our society and what makes them work
- Thought about why informal social relationships are of such importance to people and communities
- An understanding of the key elements of a positive, supportive befriending relationship

Module 5: The Matching Process

By the end of the module you will have:

- An awareness of the central role of matching within befriending
- Had the opportunity to consider the importance of and limits to personal preference in terms of the person you're matched with.
- Knowledge of the other types of information which your organisation uses to inform matching decisions
- Created a summary of the stages involved in the matching process within your organisation from the first meeting through to the match being fully established

Module 6: Boundaries & Confidentiality

By the end of the module you will have:

- Be familiar with the boundaries of your own befriending service and understand why they are in place
- Thought about the importance of boundaries in befriending - for befriendees, befrienders and the organisation

- Thought about how you will maintain boundaries in challenging situations
- Established what confidentiality means within befriending

Module 7: Support and Supervision

By the end of the module you will have:

- Considered why support and supervision is important within befriending
- A clear picture of the different ways in which your organisation will support you in your role
- Thought about how the support you receive as a befriender can be made most effective

Module 8: Roles and Responsibilities within befriending

By the end of this module you will have:

- An awareness of the various different stakeholders within your befriending service
- Drawn up a summary of the roles and responsibilities of each of these stakeholders
- A clear picture of the practical tasks carried out by each party in the course of running the befriending service
- Thought about what would happen if stakeholders did not carry out their roles and responsibilities appropriately.

Module 9: Managing Endings

By the end of the module you will have:

- Thought about the reasons for befriending relationships coming to an end
- Considered the feelings that loss and endings can provoke
- Identified why managing endings is important in befriending relationships
- An understanding of the ways in which people involved in the befriending service can work together to make endings as positive as possible

Module 10: Befrienders as community connectors

By the end of the module candidates will have:

- Considered the benefits of extending community connections
- Considered what loneliness and social isolation are, and their impacts
- Researched possible connections in their local community and beyond for a particular client group