

Friends in Need for Referrers

Friends in Need is a valuable, free service for your clients who are experiencing depression, anxiety and loneliness. Our aim is to promote community resilience by reducing isolation through peer support.

We are a friendly and welcoming peer-to-peer social support community for people to help each other. Our uplifting, fun and free-of-charge activities provide the opportunity to socialise and share experiences in a non-judgemental and completely confidential setting.

“It was a life saver for me and gave me back my self-confidence and taught me lots of ways to handle my long-term clinical depression and get back to work,” says one Friends in Need member.

All our activities are based around the five ways to wellbeing: To connect; To Give; To Learn; To Notice; To be Active and members are empowered and highly involved in the structure and content of the timetable.

“In a nutshell, Friends in Need is a non-judgemental group of people who have literally been there, seen it and got the T shirt when it comes to coping with anxiety and depression,” explains Ansa Khan, Friends in Need Lead. “I see some really magical moments where people who are struggling themselves, offer support to others in need. Sometimes, a little bit of motivation and knowing that people understand how you might be feeling is all that’s needed! We find that motivation, general wellbeing and self-esteem are greatly increased through participation in Friends in Need.”

We manage groups and activities by encouraging and empowering others to take on responsibility within the group to help organise and run activities. A peer volunteer training course has been developed for the specialist role of peer volunteer within a group environment.

We value and provide ongoing training and support for our volunteers. Group members who do not wish to have an official role are still encouraged to take responsibility within the group which results in improved self-esteem, confidence and a reduction in a common feeling of worthlessness. Peer volunteers attend a monthly meeting with the coordinator and a monthly member planning meeting promotes real team spirit and makes the group stronger.

To find out more about Friends in Need and to make a referral, please contact Ansa Khan, Team Lead, on 07496 874882 or email ansa.khan@bucksmind.org.uk. Please invite me to one of your team meetings so that I can come and tell you all about what we do.

We know you are busy: Referring patients is quick and easy: Please send an email with the name of your patient, a telephone number, preferably a mobile so that we can also text them and an email address if possible, too. If you have time, a very brief synopsis about your patient would also be helpful e.g., bereaved, socially isolated, low mood, depressed, anxious, etc with an indication of a timescale. We endeavour to contact your patient within 3 working days and work hard to really encourage them to meet with us as soon as possible.