

Volunteer Befriender Video Transcript

Hello everyone, my name is Claire and I have been a Befriender for Bucks Mind for about three years now.

I was fortunate in that my first two partnerships were face-to-face with both of them. Whereas some people meet at coffee shops and they go for walks and are generally out and about. For me, because both of the people that I was paired with had mobility issues as well, we stayed at their homes. So I went to their home each week and we spent an hour or two chatting and listening to them really, and just making sure that they felt heard.

So I wasn't there to be their friend, I wasn't there to be their counsellor, but I see Befriending as being somewhere in between the two. And, of course, any concerns that I had following those sessions I would raise with Bucks Mind immediately and liaise with my Coordinator on anything that I wasn't sure about. I would really recommend this by the way, they are all really supportive and there to help you.

In terms of feedback and to give you a sense of what the Befriendedees want from this as well, some of the feedback that I got was that I saw past the mental illness, which has really stuck with me and I took as a massive compliment as well. Because, really, they just need somebody to see the person and not the illness. So, if you are able to be there and you are not judging them, and they feel able to trust you and open up to you, it is a real honour and a real privilege to be part of their world. So try to remember that.

And the bit that I love about it, apart from the fact that I am helping somebody who really needs it, is you really see a difference. On the telephone you don't get the same sense in the same way, but just little things like they hold themselves differently, they really are just more confident in themselves, they've got a bit of fight back. I cannot say that either of those face-to-face partnerships were better at the end, as in fully recovered at the end of it, but they were better than they were at the beginning. And both of them commented on how helpful they found it.

I hope you found that helpful. Good luck - and as I said earlier, if you are in doubt and you are not sure of something, get in touch with your Coordinator. It is what they are there for and they are amazing. So good luck! And I look forward to seeing you at a volunteer development session sometime soon. Bye!