



## **Maytree Volunteer Befriender Role Description**

### **About Maytree**

At our sanctuary (Finsbury Park, North London) for those in suicidal crisis, we offer a potentially transformative experience with a once-only 4-night stay at our non-medical, family-style house. Through respite, time and space for reflection and compassionate and nurturing care, our volunteer befrienders and professionals support an opportunity for the revival of hope and resilience.

*Our values - trust, respect, openness, empathy, non-judgement, equity - are paramount in all our thoughts and actions.*

### **Who are we looking for?**

We are keen to have a diverse volunteer community and welcome people from all backgrounds to apply. To be eligible to apply for the role we are looking for people who are:

- Naturally compassionate and a good listener
- Self-reflective and emotionally resilient, able to contain challenging conversations with guests about suicidal feelings
- Able to walk up and down stairs, without assistance
- Have proficient hearing and clear oral communication to be able to engage in conversation with guests
- Have basic IT literacy skills e.g. be able to use a laptop to make simple summary notes
- Able to self-manage your own personal care needs to fulfil a sleepover shift
- Committed to the Maytree Model
- Resonate with the organisational values
- Aged 18 and over

### **Maytree's Befriending Model**

Befriending is as its sounds: sitting alongside our guests as a compassionate, confidential, and non-judgemental friend. Through active listening and human warmth our volunteers enable our guests to explore their feelings and their options in their own way and in their own time. This face-to-face support is not therapy; it is about being calm and committed and not afraid of difficult subjects, including suicide.

## Main duties and responsibilities

- Focus on creating a warm, informal and home-like atmosphere through normal, everyday conversations in one-to-one and group contexts
- Provide dedicated 1:1 ‘befriending time’ with guests, helping them explore more sensitive topics in a safe and supportive space
- Engage with a guest in other activities such as doing a puzzle or going for a walk, or in preparing and sharing meals together
- Assist Lead Befriender in suggesting and offering practical support, such as signposting and sharing resources for housing, employment, or other services, when appropriate.
- Willing to contribute to household tasks, such as shopping or preparing rooms for guests
- Options to share skills and interests with the house and to support the service e.g. gardening, events, fundraising, recruiting volunteers, distributing leaflets, designing literature.

## Volunteer shift pattern and commitment

There will be five separate shift ‘blocks’ for volunteers to sign up for, as below;

Shift	Time
Morning (1)	8:00-10:30
Morning (2)	10:00-14:30
Afternoon	14:00 – 18:30
Evening	18:00 – 21:30
Sleepover	21:00 – 08:00

In principle we prefer volunteers’ commitment to align with a regular schedule as below. However, if this does not fit well with your life and lifestyle, we are open to discussing what could work for you. For example, if sometimes you are able and willing to be very flexible, such as doing more than one shift within a few days, this will be greatly valued. It would allow us to match the level of activity in the house, when it can quickly switch from very quiet (sometimes no guests) to very demanding with, say, three guests.

- **Option 1:** 2x shifts per month AND 1 x sleepover shift OR
- **Option 2:** 4 x shifts per month.

## Additional commitments

- Willingness to volunteer for a minimum of one year
- Successful completion of volunteer Befriender training
- Attend a review meeting at three months post start



- Attend at least *one* reflective practice session every three months and *one* in person reflective practice session per year
- Agreement to the volunteer Code of Conduct and volunteer agreement

### **Volunteer Training, Development and Support**

- **Initial Training** - All volunteers must successfully complete Maytree's training programme, designed to introduce you to our mission, values, and befriending approach. Training includes a mix of group sessions, discussions, and role plays and once accepted, a shadow shift to prepare you for your role.
- **Ongoing Development** - Volunteers have access to further training opportunities throughout the year, including evening talks with an invited speaker.
- **Reflective practice sessions** (in person and online sessions will be available) at which volunteers can share experiences, feelings and learning from their time in the house.
- **Support and Community** – We foster our values with a supportive environment and a caring volunteer community, where in addition to the all-important shift briefs and debriefs, social events and mentoring opportunities further enhance the volunteer experience.

### **Application Process**

Ready to join our community? Here's what to expect:

1. Complete the Volunteer Application Form, available on our website, and email it to 'Maytree team' at [maytree@maytree.org.uk](mailto:maytree@maytree.org.uk).
2. Attend an online interview with a Lead Befriender.
3. If successful, complete our Volunteer Training program, including a shadow shift.

Begin your journey as a valued Maytree Volunteer Befriender!

**We encourage applications from the BAME and LGBTQ+ communities and are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment.**