Befriending through
Face to Face
Emotional Support
Befriending through Face to Face Emotional Support

Aims:

• To enable volunteers (or staff) to feel confident and supported when offering Face to Face Befriending, both in a Centre and in an external environment

Objectives:

• Volunteers (or staff) will have a better understanding of their own feelings when offering Face to Face Befriending

• Volunteers (or staff) will expand their knowledge of the need for a consistent approach to Caller Care when offering Face to Face support

• Volunteers (or staff) will have the opportunity to practise, in a safe environment, the skills needed when Befriending Face to Face

Resources:

Flip chart paper and pens

Individual paper and pens

Demonstration skills practice scenarios (RESOURCE: 1, 2 and 3)

Positive aspects of Face to Face Befriending (RESOURCE: 4)

Total length of workshop: 1 hour 45 minutes (approximately)

(you may need to be flexible with timings to take account of local needs and the needs of individuals)
Introduction

This workshop explores some of the different features that present themselves when offering Befriending in a Face to Face context.

This form of contact is quite different from telephone, Email, SMS, CHAT or letter, as the person being befriended is physically present. It is important to understand the sensitivities involved from both the Befriender’s and caller’s perspective. The active listening skills that are in all Befriending situations are engaged. However, there are aspects of being in a Face to Face situation that all volunteers (or staff) need to be conscious of.

When offering Face to Face support it is important to understand the Centre’s support structure, which in turn enables us to give good and consistent care to the caller.

Start: Establish that in this exercise they are going to share feelings/anxieties that may arise when thinking about supporting a caller in a Face to Face situation (this could be both in the Centre or in an external environment)

Get into pairs

Ask each pair to share:

- what concerns do you have (if any) about Face to Face Befriending?

Feed back to the main group

(Note to Trainers: During this part of the exercise give reassurance of your Centre’s support system which is available to volunteers (or staff) when undertaking this type of Befriending)
Get into different pairs (or small groups of no more than 5)

Ask each pair (or small group) to list on a piece of flip chart paper:

What are the differences between Face to Face and telephone/ Email/ SMS/CHAT/ letter Befriending:

- from the volunteer’s point of view?
- from the caller’s point of view?

| 15 minutes |

Feed back to the main group

First from the volunteer’s point of view, then the caller’s point of view.

Note to Trainers: Below are some ideas to draw out in the feedback:

- physical contact
- not knowing the ground rules
- being alone with a caller/volunteer
- how to finish/end contact
- discomfort due to shyness
- recognition (loss of anonymity) for both caller and volunteer
- active suicide
- fear of violence
- total lack of rapport
- cultural sensitivities
- physical discomfort (this may include smelly/scruffy/drunk/aggressive/overtly friendly etc ......)

| 15 minutes |
Start: Establish that this next exercise is an opportunity to become more aware as a Listener in a Face to Face Befriending situation.

Listening in a particular way enables people to work through their feelings. By actively listening and being aware of non-verbal communication, Face to Face Befriending can be a rewarding experience for both caller and listener alike.

(Note to Trainers: Reassure the group they will not be role playing a caller!)

Get everyone into triads (3’s)

The Listening Game: Barriers to non-verbal communication

Ask each triad to identify the:

• The Talker
• The Listener
• The Observer

(Each will have an opportunity to take each role during this exercise)

• Now hand out a copy of each role (RESOURCE: 1) (The Listener, the Talker & the Observer)
• Ask them to read their brief
• Tell them they have two minutes to read the briefing

After two minutes call time and begin.

Call time after each round, change role as below and hand out the briefing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Round</th>
<th>2nd Round</th>
<th>3rd Round</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listener</td>
<td>Talker</td>
<td>Observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Listener</td>
<td>Talker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talker</td>
<td>Observer</td>
<td>Listener</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continue until all three rounds are complete. Call the two minute time at the end of each round; explain that they will be asked to feed back in their triads at the end of the exercise and not after each round.
Finally, ask the triads to discuss, take notes to feed back to the whole group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 minutes</th>
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</table>

When they were the **Talker**, ask:

- how did you feel at various points during the two minutes?
- what did the Listener do that made it easier for you to talk?
- what if anything made it harder to talk?

When they were the **Observer**:

- Was there anything you particularly noticed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 minutes</th>
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**Bring the whole group together and facilitate feedback from whole group**

- What if anything did you find difficult?
- Was there anything you would do differently?
- What worked for you and why?
- How did you feel........?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 minutes</th>
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**Staying as a whole group**

**Start**: Establish that this final exercise will draw on the observation and learning from the previous exercise.

**What aids good non-verbal communication?**

Facilitate a general discussion and write up the suggestions on a flip chart. These may be later developed into an aide memoire for volunteers.

**Note to Trainers**: *Start the discussion by adding a few from the list below to get the session started:*

- gesture
- eye contact
- dress
- tissues!
- posture
- proximity
- lighting
- *arrangement of furniture*
- expression, warmth, etc......................
Print off enough copies to cover the number of attendees (you could make up sets and laminate them), then simply hand them round according to the table, as the roles change.

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**The Talker:**

Talk to the Listener in your triad, for about two minutes (time will be called at the appropriate moment) about how you spent your last weekend. Give plenty of detail, but avoid anything you do not wish to divulge.

*When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. Do not discuss the exercise.*

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**The Listener:**

Start listening to the Talker, but almost immediately begin to look bored, and continue to do so throughout. Let your eyes wander from his/her face and back again, examine your nails........

*When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. Do not discuss the exercise.*

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**The Observer:**

Observe both the Listener and the Talker carefully. Sit quite still and say nothing........

*When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. Do not discuss the exercise.*
(RESOURCE: 2)

Print off enough copies to cover the number of attendees (you could make up sets and laminate them), then simply hand them round according to the table, as the roles change.

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**The Talker:**

Talk to the Listener in your triad (3’s) for about two minutes (time will be called at the appropriate moment) about how you spent your last weekend. Give plenty of detail, but avoid anything you do not wish to divulge.

When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. Do not discuss the exercise.

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**The Listener:**

Listen attentively to the Talker in your triad (3’s) for one minute (you’ll have to estimate this). Look encouraging and interested by saying nothing, except possibly an occasional ‘mm’ or nod of the head.

Then, still without saying anything, get up and take some entirely inappropriate action, like opening the window, or putting on your coat, or rearranging the chairs......improvise......then sit down again and resume your **attentive** listening.

When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. Do not discuss the exercise.

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**The Observer:**

Observe both the Listener and the Talker carefully. Sit quite still and say nothing........

When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. Do not discuss the exercise.

**However** if either the Talker or the Listener are distressed in any way, support appropriately.
(RESOURCE: 3)

Print off enough copies to cover the number of attendees   (You could make up sets and laminate them, then simply hand them round according to the table, as the roles change)

| Cut here........ |

| The Talker: |

Talk to the Listener in your triad, for about two minutes (time will be called at the appropriate moment) about how you spent your last weekend. Give plenty of detail, but avoid anything you do not wish to divulge.  

When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. **Do not discuss** the exercise.

| Cut here........ |

| The Listener: |

Sit listening to the Talker, saying nothing, except possibly an occasional ‘mm’ or nod of the head. But avoid all eye contact with him/her. Listen carefully, but look anywhere except at his/her face.  

Be subtle, try and make it seem like a real attentive Listening experience, without any eye contact.  

When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. **Do not discuss** the exercise.

| Cut here........ |

| The Observer: |

Observe both the Listener and the Talker carefully. Sit quite still and say nothing........

When the 2 minutes is called to stop, wait for your new briefing. **Do not discuss** the exercise.  

**However** if either the Talker or the Listener are distressed in any way, support appropriately.
Positive aspects of Face to Face Befriending:

• For callers, isolation is always difficult – Face to Face is one step out of isolation

• For some callers, the ability to talk Face to Face is easier than using another means of access/contact

• Human contact – Befrienders are human too.....!

• Eye contact

• Body language

• The ability to show one is empathetic, by physical presence

• The chance to actually be alongside a caller – we say we do this when we use other methods of contact – with Face to face you are alongside them

(Note to Trainers: You may add to this over time with points that come from the workshop and which you feel enhance the positive aspects........)