Befrienders Worldwide
volunteer action to prevent suicide

Strengthen, Support and Raise Awareness

Supported by Samaritans UK & ROI
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Befrienders Worldwide’s **vision** is to contribute to a society where suicide is understood both locally and globally, leading to fewer deaths by suicide.

Our **mission** is to be a principal resource in emotional support and to share research which can lead to innovative service practices, delivered by volunteers.

We **value** giving a person the opportunity to explore feelings which can cause distress, the importance of being listened to, in confidence, anonymously, without prejudice and we value that a person has the fundamental decision about their own life.

We have an **impact** on suicide and suicidal behaviour through a network of 165 independent emotional support centres in 29 countries. These centres provide an open space for those in distress to talk and be heard. This service is provided via telephone helplines, SMS messaging, face to face, outreach, partnerships and the internet.
The Global Context

Each year, worldwide more people die by suicide than are killed by others, by murder, acts of war and terrorism combined. The number of people who attempt suicide without a lethal outcome has been estimated by the World Health Organization as many times greater; there are at least 50 suicide attempters for each person who dies by suicide.

In many countries suicide is illegal and suicide attempters are jailed. Suicide is often stigmatized and considered a taboo. This leads to secrecy and false information. Suicidal individuals may not confide in family and friends and be afraid of asking for help.

Such a situation has an impact on the individual, society and the global understanding of suicide. It restricts those who need support in receiving it. It means that those providing the support can feel isolated and unrecognized in their own country.

As a taboo topic, suicides are often camouflaged. Some countries do not report suicide statistics to WHO. Existing statistics underestimate the true extent of suicide worldwide.

Our centres are a trusted source for suicide information as they are working in the field and at a local level to make a difference in their immediate vicinity. These centres have a true picture of what is occurring with regards to suicidal behaviour within their country and how to best provide emotional support within the cultural context.

Befrienders Worldwide provides our centres much needed support and shared knowledge on best practices developed around the world so that they can adapt their local activities and have a significant impact on their society. Together we make a significant global impact on suicide.
Many of the centres in our network have been providing a service to their community for over 40 years and have impacted the suicide taboo in their country, much like the work of our Japanese centres.

Some centres have developed strategic partnerships, such as those partnerships between the World Health Organisation and Sri Lanka’s Sumithrayo to reduce the number of suicides by pesticide in their rural communities, Samaritans of Singapore and the local police, to work around suicidal feelings and the partnership between Samaritans UK & ROI with Network Rail to reduce suicide on the railways.

Other centres are targeting particular sectors of society through innovative service delivery, such as our centres in Brazil with their web chat messaging support.

The support our centres provide relies predominantly on volunteers. These volunteers must recruit, train and support each other in their work.

The work of the network’s centres is outstanding and vital. Capturing our member centres’ abilities and achievements in suicide prevention will allow for a global exchange of knowledge and practice, developing new global processes that will improve the quality of their experience as volunteers, and ultimately the service they deliver.

Together our response to the global context will be...
**To Strengthen**

We will strengthen our membership to ensure greater access for those in distress

We will do this by:

- Sharing information and resources in order to improve the abilities of centres to reach those in distress

- Building stronger relationships between our centres so that they feel connected and are supported by each other

- Supporting centres to influence local policy ensuring that suicide prevention has high visibility within country

- Expanding our membership to ensure that those in distress have access to a wider pool of emotional support
To Support

We will support our network to deliver consistent services

We will do this by:

- Developing a robust training packages that support centres from initial set up through all aspects of service delivery and volunteer support
- Setting up a quality and accreditation structure to measure the consistency of service and improve effectiveness
- Developing global and regional structures that will support the centres in the delivery of their services
To Raise Awareness

We will raise awareness of suicide and suicidal behaviour

We will do this by:

• Committing to technological platform that will lead to easily accessible information sharing on suicide and suicide prevention

• Providing research based information on suicide and suicidal behaviour becoming a global voice on international suicide prevention

• Investing in wider collaboration, partnerships and strategic relationships around the world

• Influencing global policy to ensure that Befrienders Worldwide impacts the global suicide agenda
“The strength of our network lies in our members working together to support each other in providing emotional support and reducing the number of suicides globally.”

~ Director of Befrienders Worldwide
Strengthen, Support and Raise Awareness
Membership Information

Vija Shunmoogum, Director, Befrienders Worldwide,
4-8 Rodney Street, London, N1 9JH, United Kingdom
+44 (0) 7528 595 113
info@befrienders.org
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What is Befrienders Worldwide?
Befrienders Worldwide is a global network of centres around the world which provide emotional support for persons who are suicidal or in general distress. It is a registered charitable organization administered by a Board of Trustees with its central office in England. Regional Co-ordinators provide contact with Centres, acquire feedback on regional issues and, where possible, assist in setting up regional networks in their specific regions.

Aim of the network
To assist member Centres to provide appropriate emotional support services for people who are suicidal and/or in distress by the sharing of information and resources in order to improve their ability:

- to make their service readily available to all people requesting it
- to develop effective service policies and practices
- to encourage appropriate research
The History

In 1953 Chad Varah set up the world’s first telephone support line – The Samaritans – ‘to befriend the suicidal and despairing’ in the United Kingdom. His vision saw Samaritans grow to over 200 branches in the UK and Ireland. In 1974 he set up Befrienders International to co-ordinate and assist befriending agencies in more than 40 countries.

Befrienders International (BI) was a charity in its own right and operated independently of Samaritans, although there was close co-operation between them.

In 2001 the activities of BI, as an independent charity, ceased operations. In 2003 Samaritans UK/ROI took on the role vacated by BI and established an International Officer post within their General Office. All international Centres that had been members of BI, were invited to participate in the network with the support of an International Officer and the adoption of the name Befrienders Worldwide (BW).

In 2006 BW set up a steering group of eight Regional Co-ordinators who worked to create an environment in which mutual support, exchange of ideas and information relevant to the work of emotional support may be fully recognised on a global stage.

In April 2012, with support from Samaritans UK/ROI, BW became an independent charity registered in the United Kingdom. Besides establishing a central office in London, BW maintained the role of Regional Co-ordinators. The established regions are:

**East Asia** – Japan, China/Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea

**South Asia** – India & Sri Lanka

**Australasia/Pacific** – Australia, New Zealand

**Africa** – South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Mauritius

**Latin America/Caribbean** – Brazil, Argentina

**North America** – USA, Canada

**North/West/Southern Europe** – Italy, Cyprus, France, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden

**Central/Eastern Europe** – Serbia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Armenia, Russia, Hungary, UNMIK Kosovo and Ukraine
Vision, Mission, Value Statement

Befrienders Worldwide’s vision is to contribute to a society where suicide is understood both locally and globally, leading to fewer deaths by suicide.

Our mission is to be a principal resource in emotional support delivered primarily by volunteers, and to share research which can lead to innovative service practices.

We value giving a person the opportunity to explore feelings which can cause distress, the importance of being listened to, in confidence, anonymously, without prejudice and we value that a person has the fundamental decision about their own life.

We have an impact on suicide and suicidal behaviour through a network of 165 independent emotional support centres in 29 countries. These centres provide an open space for those in distress to talk and be heard. This service is provided via telephone helplines, SMS messaging, face to face, outreach, partnerships and the internet.

Key common principles of Member Centres

- Centres provide emotional support to people who are suicidal, or in general distress
- Confidentiality is respected
- Centres are non-political and non-sectarian, and volunteers do not seek to impose their own convictions on anyone
- Where appropriate, callers may be invited to consider seeking professional help in addition to the emotional support offered by the Centre
- Centres are mainly resourced by volunteers
- Volunteers are selected, trained, mentored and supported by other experienced volunteers and any necessary relevant professional experts
- Centres are mutually supportive and committed to sharing information with other member Centres, and participating in processes and activities of the network

Guiding policies and practices

It is expected that all members agree with, and adhere to, the Key Common Principles of Member Centres detailed in this paper. The guiding policies and practices as described below are those that members should demonstrate
commitment to, and strive towards, but may not yet have been able to achieve.

Availability
Centres aim to provide a 24-hour service (where appropriate), and focus on times of peak demand.

Callers can contact the Centre by the best means available locally (e.g. telephone, letter, e-mail, text-messaging, text-phone for hard of hearing and deaf, internet chat, or face-to-face).

Confidentiality
All information relating to a caller is considered confidential to the Centre. The Centre maintains confidentiality even after death of a caller with only the following possible exceptions:

- The Centre has informed consent from a caller to pass on information
- Medical help is called because a caller appears to be incapable of making rational decisions for him or herself or when a centre determines that local practice obliges intervention when life is in danger
- A court order is received requiring the Centre to divulge information
- The Centre is passed information about acts which they are required by law to report (e.g. terrorism or bomb warnings, child abuse)
- A caller attacks or threatens volunteers or members of the public
- A caller deliberately prevents the service from being delivered to other callers

Honesty
- Centres publicly state how general information relating to callers is used
- Callers are informed of what volunteers can and cannot offer
- Occasionally a colleague may listen to calls for training purposes and/or to offer support to the volunteer engaged with a caller
- All complaints are investigated fully and sympathetically and callers receive a response in the shortest possible time.
Emotionally Supportive

- Callers in need of a Centres’ services are accepted without prejudice and encouraged to talk or write about their feelings, acknowledge their emotions and explore options
- Volunteers use their listening skills, recognise the needs of callers and respond appropriately
- Volunteers will not impose their own convictions, or influence callers, in regard to politics, philosophy or religion
- If a caller is at risk of suicide, or in despair, follow up contact is offered
- With a caller’s permission, and after consultation with the Centre’s leaders, a group of volunteers may be assigned to a caller, to offer support through a period of distress
- If a caller is in need of other help, information may be passed on about other agencies (if available). With a caller’s informed consent, and after consultation with the Centre’s leaders, a referral will be made on their behalf
- The Centre welcomes appropriate referrals from other agencies or individuals

Carefully Structured

- Centres aim to offer a consistent service to callers. To support this aim, the training content and care being offered are regularly reviewed and evaluated, to ensure it encourages callers to work towards managing their lives without dependency or attachment
- Volunteers will be selected for training following the Centre’s formal selection process
- Volunteers may be subject to a police record check (where required)
- Volunteers will be specially trained to develop and enhance their skills
- Volunteers should have a probationary period to enable a review for both the benefit of the volunteer and Centre
- To ensure the safety and welfare of callers and volunteers, services are only available while volunteers are fully supported by a colleague or a leader
- If a volunteer deliberately prejudices the emotional or physical safety of callers, or the reputation of the organisation, this will be deemed as an
act of serious misconduct for which they will be dismissed in line with recognised disciplinary procedures

- Centres strive to make the service as accessible as possible to those most in need and support equal opportunities
- Centres reserve the right to end a call or withdraw the service if it is being used inappropriately

**Membership**

What does membership mean?

Centres/organisations will be required to prove that they agree with, and will abide by, the Vision, Mission, Value, Principles, Policies and Practices of Befrienders Worldwide.

Members of Befrienders Worldwide retain their full independence as separate organisations, and the name of their individual Centre is their choice. Befrienders Worldwide facilitates the network of member Centres but does not hold any responsibility for the actions of individual members.

BW provides a framework for the level of service and standards that a Centre should strive to meet.

All Centres must have a committee/board that has a governance role (strategy, fund raising, financial management and risk management) which is independent of the operational activities.

All Centres must have a committee/group that is responsible for the operational management activities – recruitment, selection, roster duties, caller care, volunteer care etc.

It is anticipated that Members will feel by being part of a network they can operate more effectively and achieve increased visibility, both as individual Centres, and as a network of Centres.

**What Befrienders Worldwide offers:**

- Credibility of belonging to a recognised global network
- The provision of guidelines for setting and maintaining service standards
- Priority listing on the www.befrienders.org helpline website
- Password access to the members' Intranet, via the Befrienders website
- Use of training and other information posted on to the Intranet, depending on their usage protocol (e.g. reference only, can be reproduced with permission from the developer, or can be used freely)
• Opportunity to place materials on the Website and Intranet
• Reduced cost of any priced materials
• Newsletters
• Global directory of worldwide Centres
• Access to international and regional member conferences
• Opportunity to be twinned with other member Centres, to participate in exchange visits and to have access to the bursary scheme
• Access to experienced trainers
• Collaborative partnerships across the network, and on a Centre to Centre basis
• Formal and informal networking
• Representation of the network, and its collective members’ experiences, with other organisations (e.g. WHO, IFOTES, Lifeline International, IASP)
• Certificate of membership and use of the Befrienders Worldwide logo
• The support, through regional coordination, with other member Centres

**What Members will provide:**

• An annual statement which reports on the governance and operational (statistical) details of the Centre, and highlights of special programmes/projects undertaken
• Communicate with the Regional Co-ordinator and participate in and contribute to Regional activities
• Annual membership contribution according to means

**How to apply:**

For further information or to obtain an application, please contact:

Vija Shunmoogum, Director, Befrienders Worldwide,
4-8 Rodney Street, London, N1 9JH, United Kingdom
+44 (0) 7528 595 113
info@befrienders.org
www.befrienders.org
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP of BEFRIENDERS WORLDWIDE

Director, Befrienders Worldwide,
4-8 Rodney Street, London, N1 9JH
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 7528 595 113
info@befrienders.org

Membership application and approval process

1. An application form is submitted to the Director.

2. The application is checked for inclusion of all necessary information, in relation to background details and adherence to the Charter, and Guiding Policies and Practices.

3. If all necessary information is included, the application will be considered by the Regional Coordinators who advise and are subsequently accountable to the Befrienders Worldwide Trustees. In addition, references will be sought from any existing member Centres in the same country as the applicant.

4. The applying organisation will normally be informed of the decision within four months.
Application for membership of 'Befrienders Worldwide'

Organisation submitting this application

Name of the organisation:

Contact address for the organisation:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Details of Applicant

Family name:

First name(s):

Role in relation to the organisation:

Your contact address:

Your telephone:

Your fax:

Your email:

Applicant's statement of commitment

On a separate piece of paper, please describe the purpose and work of your organisation, identifying adherence to each specific point of the Charter and Key Principles, as set out below information about the types of emotional support services your organisation offers, hours of operation, number of volunteers, selection and training procedures and the organisation's philosophy should also be included. Please indicate any points in the Charter and Key Principles which your organisation does not adhere to, and indicate whether this might change in the future.
1 Availability
• What are the hours of availability of your telephone, letter, e-mail, text-messaging, text-phone for hard of hearing and deaf people, or face-to-face service, also in relation to peak hours of demand?

2 Confidentiality
• How is confidentiality maintained in your services?

3 Honesty
• How is information on callers maintained, and what general information is shared publicly?
• How are callers informed of what your service can and cannot offer?
• How are complaints handled?

4 Emotionally Supportive
• How is it ensured that callers in need of your service are accepted without prejudice?
• How is it ensured that callers are encouraged to talk or write about their feelings, acknowledging their emotions and exploring options?
• How is it ensured that volunteers use their listening skills, recognise the needs of callers and respond appropriately?
• How is it ensured that volunteers do not impose their own convictions, or influence callers, in regard to politics, philosophy or religion?
• How are callers supported through a particular period of distress, for instance (with a caller's permission, and after consultation with the person responsible for Caller Care) with a group of volunteers assigned to a particular caller?
• Are callers referred to other resources, and if so, under what circumstances?
• How are appropriate referrals from other agencies or individuals organised?

5 Carefully Structured
• How is your service regularly reviewed and evaluated, to ensure consistency, and a service, which encourages callers to work towards managing their lives without dependency or attachment?
• Are volunteers subject to a police record check (where possible), and how are they selected and specially trained?
• For the safety and welfare of callers and volunteers, how is it ensured that colleagues and leaders support volunteers?
• What systems do you have in place for the dismissal of volunteers who deliberately prejudice the emotional or physical safety of callers, or the reputation of the organisation - on the basis of serious misconduct?
• How does your Centre strive to make the service as accessible as possible to those most in need?
• How does your Centre ensure it has an appropriate system in place for dealing with inappropriate calls?

6 Self-Determination
How does it ensure that callers can remain responsible for their lives and maintain the right to make decisions even if that decision is to take their own life?

7 Commitment and contribution to the network
Why do you want to join Befrienders Worldwide?

How might you be able to contribute to the network? (e.g. financial contributions, materials for sharing, information for newsletters, facilities to host meetings, participation in exchanges, supporting regional initiatives, trainers, help with specific projects like the Website, etc).

8 Further information
Please provide further information about your organisation not included above:

Volunteer Information
Number of Volunteers…………………………Number of paid staff…………………………

Roles of paid staff (include hours employed for each person):

Operational Information
Hours of operation………………………………………………………………………………

Number of Volunteers on duty when Centre is operational………………………….

How people in need contact you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Contact</th>
<th>Number of contacts (not %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-face</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of contacts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Define other………………………………………………………………………………

Number of contacts expressing suicidal thoughts……………………………………...
Number of female contacts……….. Number of male contacts…………………………

Special programmes you run?...........................................................................................................................
…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………...
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Funding
Where do you get your funding?............................................................................................................................
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Annual running costs (local currency)……………………………

Is your Centre a registered charity/ Trust/ Incorporated Society/recognised NGO? Yes/No Information/ Charity Number (if applicable):..............................................

National Information
Is there a National body? Yes/ No

Name of National Body………………………………………………………………..............................................

Other Organisations your Centre is associated with or has on going contact with
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………...
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………...
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Please include with your application copies of the following documents:
• Annual Report
• Proof of legal status
• Reference from a Befrienders Worldwide Regional Co-ordinator/ existing member in your country (and if not, from the World Health Organisation or similar body).

Signature
I have read all the documentation relating to membership and wish to apply on behalf of:

Name of organisation:

Signature: Date:  

This form should be returned to: Vija Shunmoogum, Director, Befrienders Worldwide, 4-8 Rodney Street, London, N1 9JH, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 (0) 7528 595 113. Email: info@befrienders.org
MEMBERSHIP FEES

Vija Shunmoogum, Director, Befrienders Worldwide,
4-8 Rodney Street, London, N1 9JH, United Kingdom
+44 (0) 7528 595 113
info@befrienders.org
Membership Fees

Effective 1\textsuperscript{st} July, 2013

(Those centres that join before this date will not be required to pay until July 2013)

Currency

All fees and calculations are in U.S. Dollars.

Calculations for a Centre

The fee is based on the individual centre’s yearly budget as reported in the Annual Return. A copy of the audited financial statement from the year being reported will be used to document the data in the Annual Return. The total budget is converted to U.S. Dollars using the exchange rate from the XE web site for the first non-holiday Monday of the year for which the fee is being calculated. The web site is: http://www.xe.com/currencytables/

Use the following table to determine the fee:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue for year</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $50,000</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $500,000</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $500,000</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculations for an Organisation of Centres

A member organisation (one which represents several centres) pays a fee of $400 plus $10 for every centre over five (5). For instance, if an organisation consists of ten (10) centres, then its fee would be $450 ($400 for the first five centres and $10 for each additional centre).

If the organisation determines that if each member centre paid a fee, the total would be less than the amount calculated in the paragraph above, the organisation may opt to pay the total of fees for all the centres. If the organisation chooses to pay the sum of individual fees they must submit audited financial statements from all its centres.