

Volunteer Mentor Trainer

We are looking to grow our team of psychologists who are responsible for the training of volunteer mentors for Back Up's mentoring service. This opportunity is not limited to individuals with a psychology qualification.

The mentoring service consists of family and SCI mentoring and is rooted in psychological research by Duff and Kennedy. The aim of the service is to match mentees with mentors who have similar experiences and understand some of what they are going through. The peer support approach equips mentees with positive coping strategies, enabling them to work with their mentor to create an action plan and set goals to make their situation more manageable.

The service has a fantastic record of transforming lives of those affected by spinal cord injury and, because we match mentors and mentees based on their individual experiences, mentees can receive support particular to them. We have ambitious targets to triple the number of matches made by 2025, therefore in order to continue to deliver this quality, whilst increasing output we need to expand our team of mentors to enable us to train more mentors.

Below is a quotation from a mentee who had mentoring in 2021.

'She was absolutely brilliant, just great. There's a big difference in where I am now to where I was. Some things just started to fall into place. Sarah's done a lot of similar things to what I want to do like travelling and having a career. Speaking to Sarah made me realise this was actually possible.'

Mark, 35, SCI mentee

The service is partially NHS funded due to being an integral part of the Back Up on Track programme which provides a pathway of holistic support to people affected by spinal cord injury via three of the UK's spinal injury centres.

We ask trainers to volunteer their time for two out of four training weekends per year, one of two development days per year and provisionally attend one quarterly hour-long virtual drop-in sessions per year. Half of all of these will be in person and the other half virtual. We also ask trainers to be on call for supervision for mentors (a role that in reality requires little action).

Training weekends take place over a weekend and sessions include listening skills, goal setting and facilitating change as well as sharing experiences and learning about safeguarding and managing risk. A large part of the training involves roleplay to practice these learned skills, while

being observed by the mentoring team and trainers, who will decide following the training on the suitability of each participant.

Training for the role will involve an induction meeting with the trainers, meeting with the staff team, observing a training weekend and a training session with the trainer team. Candidates would ideally have a qualification in psychology, counselling or coaching and have a background or association with spinal cord injury.

Volunteer Mentor Trainer Role

Reports to: **Services Manager, Mentoring Team Leader and other Mentor Trainers**

Purpose

At Back Up we understand that spinal cord injury can be devastating but we believe it needn't prevent anyone from getting the most out of life. The aim of this role is to support the mentoring service by facilitating mentor trainings, offering supervision to volunteer mentors and providing support and advice to grow the mentoring service.

Our values

Volunteering with Back Up, as with everything we do, takes place in the context of our values:

- We embrace challenge
- We have fun
- We build inclusive communities
- We are ambitious for each other

Key tasks

- Co-facilitate mentor trainings along with another mentor trainer
- Facilitate development days with support from the mentoring staff team
- Attend mentor drop-in clinics on a rotational basis with the other mentor trainers to offer support and advice to trained mentors.
- Provide ad-hoc supervision to trained mentors who are actively mentoring
- Provide support and advice to the mentoring team
- Attend ad-hoc planning meeting with the other mentor trainers and the mentoring team.
- Offer advice and expertise to develop the mentoring service to support more people

The Person

- Able to empathise with others – patient, sensitive and considerate
- Encouraging, supportive and perceptive
- Excellent interpersonal skills including communication, listening and reasoning
- Friendly, approachable and enthusiastic with a good sense of humour
- Respectful and able to keep information confidential
- Understanding of equal opportunities, confidentiality and data protection
- Able to give and receive feedback, and deal with concerns in a timely and sensitive way

- Confident to step into a well-established service, able to peer review and suggest improvements to the service
- Can commit the time needed for mentoring this includes mentor training weekends, development days, drop-in clinics, supervision phone calls and ad-hoc meetings
- Willingness to travel and to stay overnight at mentor trainings, development days and other meetings

Experience and Knowledge

Essential

- A professional qualification and experience in a related field such as a clinical / counselling psychologist, other psychological therapist, social worker, coach or similar (please discuss this with the mentoring team if you are unsure)
- Experience and understanding of the psychological processes involved in adjustment to disability and / or trauma and the ways in which we might support people in this situation.
- Experience in teaching, training and evaluating trainees
- Experience in risk management and safeguarding practices
- Previous experience offering supervision to volunteers or “skilled helpers”

Desirable

- Someone with background knowledge or personal experience of spinal cord injury
- Someone with personal experience of mentoring

Time Commitment

- At least one mentor training weekend per year which are Friday* evening through to Sunday afternoon (some weekends are virtual, some are residential)
- At least one mentor development day per year (these are likely to be residential) which are Friday* evenings through to Saturday afternoons (one virtual, one residential per year)
- At least one virtual drop-in clinics per year
- Evening meetings as and when required by the mentoring team
- Supervision calls with mentors (as needed; infrequent)
- Occasional calls with mentoring team when advice is needed

We offer a flexible approach to take into account personal circumstances. Please speak to the Services Manager if unsure.

Support and opportunities provided

- Agreed expenses paid by Back Up
- Support from Back Up Mentoring staff team, other Mentor Trainers and other Back Up staff as applicable
- The chance to work as part of a dynamic team and to have a real impact on developments within the mentoring service to support service users affected by spinal cord injury

Other information

Back Up has safer recruitment procedures in place to manage risk when staff and volunteers are working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This role is subject to an enhanced DBS check and reference checks.