

volunteering & mental health



1. Let people know your organisation is inclusive!

- Implement any support required promptly
- Build trust and facilitate open, honest conversations when the volunteer is ready.
- Include affirmative / inclusion statements on your website, position descriptions and other organisational documents
- Consider advertising your volunteer roles through mental health organisations or disability employment service providers

2. Ask your volunteers

- Check on their progress in the role and provide space for them to discuss any needs or issues that arise
- Provide an opportunity to give regular, constructive feedback on their volunteering
- Implement any support required promptly
- Build trust and facilitate open, honest conversations when the volunteer is ready.



3. Include family, carers or support workers

- During induction and early stages
- At meetings, particularly where new information or feedback is being given
- Implement any support required promptly
- Build trust and facilitate open, honest conversations when the volunteer is ready

4. Be flexible

- Can the duties of a role be negotiated? Are there any unnecessary requirements or criteria in the position description? Can the volunteer role duties be shared by two people?
- Are you able to provide flexible hours or working from home arrangements? As with employees, being flexible can help get the right person for the role and provide the support they need to do it well
- If someone is not performing well or enjoying their volunteer role, is there another position or different duties they can do?
- Can you be adaptable around medical appointments or the volunteers need to manage other parts of their daily routine?
- Is there the opportunity for regular breaks and periods for time out?



5. Consider the volunteering environment

- Do you have break out spaces that allow a quiet space and low stimulation for people when needed?
- Are there any nearby outdoor spaces that people can access on breaks?
- Think about the sensory load of your environment – do you have windows with natural light? If not, have you considered indoor plants?
- What is the noise and lighting like? Could it be quieter? Dimmer?
- Are there opportunities during breaks for social connection and developing peer relationships?

4. Be clear and transparent about roles/expectations

- What they are expected to do, and what they are NOT expected to do
- Be as detailed as possible and outline negotiable points, where there is flexibility or adaptations can be made.
- Any expectations the organisation or volunteer program has on appropriate attire or behaviour
- Lines of reporting and communication and who the volunteer should approach if an issue arises
- Ensure that this information is provided both verbally and in written format, and there is the opportunity for the volunteer to ask questions or seek clarification.

