

Devon Memory Café Consortium (DMCC) Guidance Leaflet.

Memory Café Services and Volunteers.

Volunteers are the life blood essential to the smooth running of a Memory Café. It is not one sided however, the volunteers gain from their role. They gain a wealth of benefits including, meeting new people, making friends, learning new skills, often feel valued and better within themselves as they serve the community.

Value and involve your volunteers.

It is important to communicate with your volunteers, ensuring there is a defined pathway or system for them to follow. This can only come if those who run the Memory Café have a clear plan and understanding of the outcome they require towards success. Involve your volunteers in planning; you may be surprised at the good ideas which are put forward.

Offer training for your volunteers. This should include Dementia Awareness, Health and Safety, Hygiene when handling food and First Aid. Plan social events for your volunteers, this can help morale. Do not ignore a complaint or grievance expressed by a volunteer. In most cases a simple face to face chat will resolve a situation.

Recruiting volunteers.

Some Memory Cafes seem to have no difficulty in recruiting volunteers. If you are setting up a new Memory Café in your town or village, enquire if there is a 'Dementia Friendly Community Organisation' you could contact? Alternatively, ask at your local Church or clubs, such as Rotary, if they know of possible volunteers. Advertise in your local press or village magazine if there are interests. Place leaflets, if permitted, within your Doctor's surgeries. If your Memory Café already exists be aware that volunteers may often be former carers wishing to put something back into the system.

Regular Volunteer Tasks.

Stand back and try to think how you would feel if you were attending as a Service User? Anticipate their needs and put a volunteer in place to help them.

- Organize several volunteers to set up the Café, in your preferred layout, prior to commencement of each meeting. Reducing stress when visitors arrive.
- Always have a dedicated volunteer to 'meet and greet'. Rotate the volunteer who does this role, as it will give others a chance to get to know those who attend the Café.
- Prepare name badges to help people to get to know one another.
- Rotate volunteer's duties regularly.
- If able, make available one to one contacts where persons are distressed.
- Maintain a visitor's logbook and keep this safely. It will serve as a Fire Record, if needed, but **one must be aware of data protection.**

Health and Safety.

Ensure that the premises you use are fit for purpose. Carry out a risk assessment, in many instances this is simply a case of having a sensible approach. Check available access for visitors and for wheelchair needs. Make certain all volunteers are aware of clearly signed Fire Exits. Have a designated assembly point in the event of the building needing to be evacuated.