

Lounge Host Volunteer

Role Description

Reports to: Digital Assets Coordinator

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. Volunteering with Back Up is centred around our values: **We embrace challenge, we have fun, we build inclusive communities and we are ambitious for each other.**

Purpose

The aim of this role is to enable people affected by spinal cord injury to realise their potential through developing, coordinating and facilitating breakout rooms on rotating/static topics during the bi-weekly virtual Back Up Lounge. The breakout rooms cover a wide range of topics and give attendees the chance to engage with peers with a goal of identifying hints, tips, education relevant to their situation from peers with lived experience(s). This is achieved through open discussion and acts as a great support service to people affected by spinal cord injury who attend the Back Up Lounge.

Hosts will take charge of a singular breakout/"sub-room" within the lounge working with the Back Up services staff to:

- host the room during the lounge
- facilitate open discussion
- feedback/identify common themes of need/issues to the staff team
- Highlight improvements & potential ideas for the service/rooms going forward post sessions.

Key tasks

Before the session:

- Liaise with services staff to identify appropriate session to coordinate/facilitate based on knowledge and experience. Some of the breakout rooms are constants (e.g., Family) and the focus remains similar week on week whereas others (e.g., "Lounge and Learn") rotate topics each time. It is important to discuss which room you feel comfortable hosting with services staff ahead of time to allow for preparation time.

- Coordinate/Liaise with other co-hosts/volunteers if applicable. Often in these sessions there is either one or two hosts, so dependant if you have additional support in the room, you will need to discuss any plans with co-host.
- Lead, sustain and develop these strong and effective working relationships with any co-hosts and services staff.
- Contact Digital Assets Coordinator in a timely manner if you are unable to make your session

During the session:

- Support session attendees affected by spinal cord injury
- Ensure that the breakout room provides a productive forum for attendees and ensure every participant has a chance to speak - smooth flow of conversation is important, as is making sure no one individual dominates a session.
- Enabling people to explore their feelings, wishes and needs and provide peer support to help them through open conversations on the subject matter. Making sure attendees:
 - feel supported
 - identify issues they may be having through discussion
 - can access relevant services from Back Up and elsewhere through signposting or asking a member of the services staff team to provide follow up support
 - become more aware of the possibilities of life after spinal cord injury

Post-session/other duties and responsibilities:

- Attend a 30 minute debrief session immediately after the Lounge to feedback on how session went – any issues identified, follow up or signposting necessary for attendees, attendee numbers
- Input into subsequent planning and activities for future Lounge topics/breakout rooms
- Identify regular Lounge attendees who could be approached to become volunteer hosts in the future
- Work as a team, consulting with others to ensure you give and receive high quality support
- Any other duties relevant to the host role as required by Digital Assets Coordinator

The person

- Empathetic: patient, sensitive and considerate of others' needs.
- Rapport builder: able to build encouraging and supportive connections, friendly, approachable and enthusiastic, good sense of humour.
- Strong communicator: excellent interpersonal skills including communication, listening and reasoning, confident in speaking in front of a group.



- Team player: confident and responsible session leader, good problem solver helping others identify solutions.
- Inclusive: helps individuals identify their own goals, remains calm when dealing with difficult situations and different personalities and perspectives.
- Respectful: maintains confidentiality adhering to data protection, equal opportunities and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Self-aware: punctual and reliable, able to use personal experience in a helpful way for others, familiar with Zoom platform.

Experience and Knowledge

- Personal experience of spinal cord injury /or has a family member who is a minimum of three years post injury
- Sound knowledge of Back Up services, vision, mission and values

Time Commitment

- Attend a 1-day online training session
- Host at least 1 Lounge breakout room per month (depending on number of volunteer hosts and availability hosts will be rotated)
- Attend post-lounge feedback meeting

Support and opportunities provided

- Training will be given by attending a 1-day online training workshop to support you and to help you develop your skills to fulfil the role
- Agreed expenses paid by Back Up
- Support and guidance from Digital Assets Coordinator and other Back Up Services staff as required
- The chance to work as part of a dynamic team and to have a real impact on people affected by spinal cord injury and to support them to establish a support network and learn from others lived experience(s)

Safer recruitment

Back Up has safer recruitment procedures in place to manage risk when volunteers are working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. This role is subject to a compulsory enhanced regional criminal records check and reference checks.

