

A peer mentor will **listen to you without judgment**. They will offer you support based on their own lived experience and give you the opportunity to think about what you'd like to achieve and share ideas that have worked for them.

You might not have had this type of support before, but it can make a big difference

- We will arrange an introduction between you and one of our peer mentor volunteers. This will be a mentor with who can relate to your experiences, and may have experienced something similar.
- Once you and your mentor have been introduced, we will arrange a time that works for you both so your mentoring conversations can begin.
- Mentoring can take place on the phone, online in virtual meetings, or face-to-face. You will be offered at least six conversations.
- We welcome referrals through Open Mental Health partner organisations, including Mindline 24/7, and any health professional or organisation you are in contact with.
- All of our peer mentors are volunteers and want to help others who have been in the same position as them.

Interested, or want to find out more?

✉ peerconnections@rethink.org

Want to find out more about Peer Connections or interested in becoming a mentor?

Contact Alex or Sue for an informal chat:

☎ **07436 094 141**

✉ alexander.nelson@rethink.org

☎ **07436 073 030**

✉ susan.hunter@rethink.org

Rethink
Mental
Illness.

Mindline Somerset

Mindline is a confidential listening service which provides a safe place to talk if you, or someone you know, is in mental distress or needs emotional support.

Local call 01823 276 892
Freephone 0800 138 1692

Open
Mental
Health

Open Mental Health is a Somerset alliance of NHS, social care, voluntary organisations and individuals who ensure you get the support you need, when you need it.

Do you experience challenges with your mental health?



Talk to a mentor who understands through Peer Connections

Rethink
Mental
Illness.

Open
Mental
Health

Rethink
Mental
Illness.

Peer Connections is a free service that offers support to people aged 18+ living in Somerset with a diagnosed or undiagnosed Serious Mental Illness (SMI)—Schizophrenia, Psychosis, Bipolar or a Personality Disorder.

Our peer volunteer team have had their own challenges with mental health and found coping strategies and skills that worked for them. They will have a good understanding of your experiences, feelings and thoughts.

"I enjoy speaking to my mentor and there are not many services or people that I feel comfortable having these sorts of conversations with; it has been a real help."



Peer mentor volunteers

Our peer mentors' experiences are powerful tools that help them support other people facing similar struggles with mental health.

Please check Spark-a-Change volunteering database to see current vacancies for Peer Mentors.

When available, vacancies will be posted on Spark-a-Change:

www.sparkachange.org.uk

People become peer mentor volunteers for many reasons: to connect with other people, support others through their experience, find a sense of purpose, or gain experience and confidence for employment.

Peer mentoring can help maintain a mentor's recovery as well as aiding those receiving support.

We value your experience

Mentors are supported at every step in a way that meets their individual needs, from starting training, all the way through to being introduced and mentoring someone who needs support.

The free training gives mentors the information, tools, resources and knowledge they need to help others.

"The challenges I've been through I can see from a different perspective. Being a peer mentor has helped me to learn and continue to grow as well as knowing I'm able to help others."

The Benefits of Peer Mentoring

Some of the benefits of either giving or receiving peer support are:

- Increased understanding and insight into mental health issues
- Improved coping strategies
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Improved optimism and hopefulness
- An increased understanding and/or new perspective on owning a wellbeing journey

"I am continuing to look after myself as it reminds me to use all the skills and tools I have learned to keep myself well in my daily life."



"I signed up to help others, but I realised I receive help and support for myself in abundance. Having the training makes me feel reassured."