

pathways  
southwest

Towards better mental health



# PATHWAYS SOUTHWEST Volunteer Handbook

Pathway SouthWest Inc.

 08 9791 1257

 [info@pathwayssouthwest.org.au](mailto:info@pathwayssouthwest.org.au)

1/14 Rose Street, Bunbury WA 6230

 PO Box 275, Bunbury WA 6231

[www.pathwayssouthwest.org.au](http://www.pathwayssouthwest.org.au)

**ABN 91 769 457 185**



## **Welcome to Pathways SouthWest**

Our work is possible because of the committed efforts of volunteers, and so we are both grateful and excited to have you on-board with us.

This handbook is to help you understand more about our organisation, to gain an understanding of your expected performance and behaviour, and to be aware of how to stay safe while volunteering. This handbook is also meant to provide you with a framework of what to do if you have any concerns or are no longer able to volunteer.

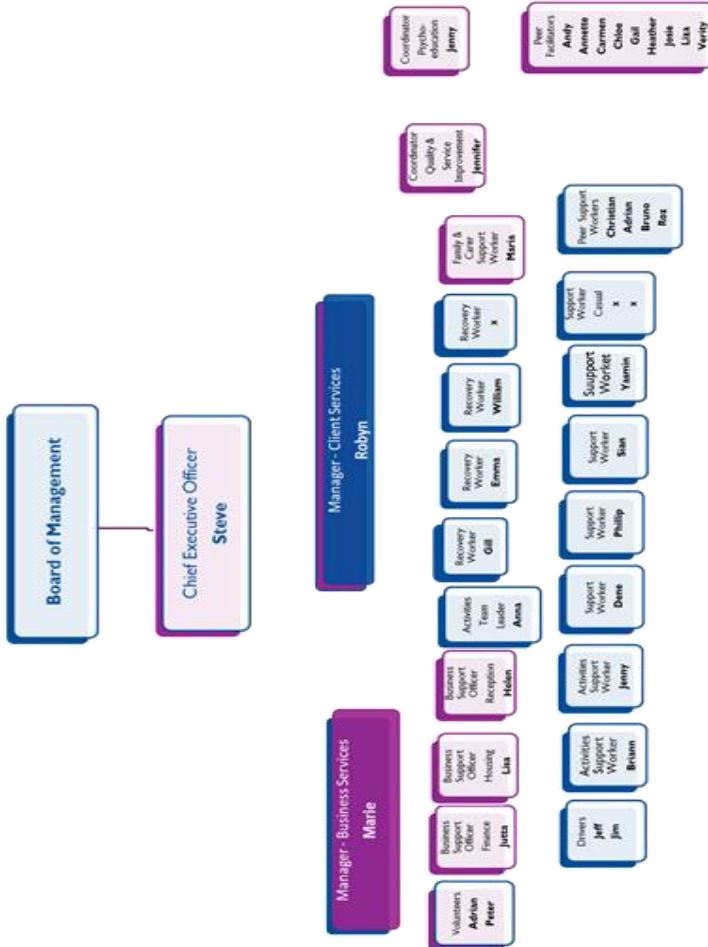
We sincerely hope that your time volunteering with us is an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

## **About Pathways SouthWest**

Pathways SouthWest is an independent community based mental health service located in the SouthWest of Western Australia. We provide support, education and advocacy to people with lived experience of mental illness, their families and carers in our region.

We support our local communities to embrace the concept of mental health recovery via community consultation, education and advocacy.

# Organisational Chart April 2024



## Our Purpose

Providing access to responsive, holistic services for consumers, carers, families and the community to reduce the impact of mental illness.

## Our Vision

Let mental health be seen ... as any door is the right door for access and client-centred care.

## Our Values

**Hope:** Belief in the potential of individuals affected by mental illness to live life to the full

**Courage:** Ensuring mental health be seen

**Respect:** Acknowledging other opinions as having value

**Humility:** Willing to appreciate others

**Responsibility:** Everyone is responsible to commit to action towards our Purpose

## Induction/Orientation

**Induction-** The aim of induction is to help you become familiar with the mission, values and work of Pathways SouthWest, and to feel welcomed into the organisation and your role.

**Orientation-** The aim of orientation is to ensure you are familiar with your work sites, and to meet the staff and fellow volunteers. Your Manager will offer you orientation on your first day. Please do not hesitate to ask questions about anything you do not understand.

It is the Manager's responsibility to ensure that you are introduced to staff, other volunteers, shown service amenities, have your Role Description and emergency procedures explained. You may be assigned a 'peer' support person (who may be a staff member or another volunteer).

**Training-** You will be required to undertake Pathways SouthWest mandatory NDIS online training module. You will also be required to familiarise yourself with the policies and procedures on Pathways SouthWest SharePoint. Please contact either the CEO or Coordinator Quality and Service Improvement whom will arrange your access to this platform.



My Performance and Behaviour, Rights and Responsibilities. Performance

To ensure that there is a meaningful and effective partnership between you as a volunteer and Pathways SouthWest, it's important for both to have a clear understanding about their respective rights and responsibilities.

## **Volunteer Rights:**

### **As a volunteer you have the right to:**

- Be given a Role Description which will help you to understand the main tasks and responsibilities of your role and the related attributes, qualifications and skill requirements needed to undertake your volunteering role;
- Be provided with an induction and orientation session;
- Be provided with sufficient training to fulfil your role;
- Be occupied in your volunteering role in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination law;
- Volunteer in a safe and healthy work environment;
- Be covered by Pathways SouthWest insurance;
- Be supported in your role with suitable leadership and supervision and receive timely feedback about your performance;
- Be provided with an effective process for resolution of grievances; (see Employee Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure)
- If possible, be given the opportunity to participate in alternative volunteer roles when programs/services cease operation;
- Have your confidential and personal information protected (in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988 as amended by the Privacy Amendment Act 2012);
- Be informed of relevant changes in policy and procedures; (this will occur via email from Quality and Service Improvement Coordinator)
- Be given the opportunity to contribute continuous improvement by present ideas, and share skills and knowledge.

- Decline or change your mind regarding your volunteer role; and
- Be recognised for your continuing commitment and contribution to Pathways SouthWest.

**As a volunteer you accept that Pathways SouthWest has the right to:**

- Assess and manage your performance;
- Maintain a probation period for your volunteer role for period of 3 months;
- Require the accomplishment of tasks to a specified minimum standard;
- Request your participation in relevant learning and training activities;
- Engage only volunteers who meet clearly defined criteria required for the volunteer role;
- Make volunteer roles redundant where services/programs are no longer operational; and
- Offer alternative roles or respectfully cease your volunteer engagement.

**If you are not able to meet the requirements for the role.**

As a Pathways SouthWest volunteer, you represent the organisation in the community and therefore must behave in a manner consistent with the Pathways SouthWest Code of Conduct and fundamental values:

**As a volunteer we expect you to:**

- Treat all people with respect, sensitivity and consideration;
- Be a notable representative of Pathways SouthWest and desist from any conduct/activities that would reflect poorly on Pathways SouthWest and/or raise questions about the integrity of the organisation;
- Comply with Pathways SouthWest Code of Conduct, policies, procedures, instructions and rules;
- Carry out your role with diligence as described in your Role Description;
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of consumers/participants, volunteers, staff and members of the public;

- Maintain professional standards and understand and respect boundaries with consumers/participants, fellow volunteers, staff and members of the public;
- Work as a team member;
- Give and receive constructive feedback as appropriate;
- Be willing to undertake orientation, complete mandatory training (induction & safety training), participate in further training as required, and to seek guidance/ direction on an ongoing basis to support you in your role;
- Be punctual and reliable, always notifying the office as soon as possible if you are unable to attend work;
- Remain impartial (non-judgemental) of consumers/participants, fellow volunteers and staff;
- Comply with all reasonable instructions to protect your health and safety and that of others;
- Complete agreed commitments or renegotiate commitments if necessary;
- Undertake your role according to mutually-agreed times/locations; and
- Give adequate notice of resignation— preferably a minimum of two weeks.





## Personal Conduct

**Attendance and Punctuality**– It is anticipated that volunteers will be punctual and regular in their attendance. If a volunteer is unavoidably absent due to sickness or any other reason, they should notify their Manager (or appropriate staff) promptly (preferably before their normal starting time). Managers may contact volunteers who have not contacted them when they are absent from work to learn why they are absent and to ensure their welfare.

**Dress and Appearance**- Pathways SouthWest is a well-recognised and respected organisation that projects a particular standard to its consumers/participants and the community it serves. Volunteers must ensure that their appearance is neat, clean and appropriate for their particular area of work. A high standard of personal hygiene is expected at all times.

**Smoking**- Passive smoking can impact other volunteers, staff and the community. Pathways SouthWest does not promote or encourage smoking. Smoking is not permitted in Pathways SouthWest vehicles, buildings or in the immediate vicinity of entrances Pathways SouthWest offices or Activity buildings (Turkey Point). Smoking is only permitted in designated smoking areas. (see No Smoking Policy and Procedure)

**Drugs and Alcohol**- Pathways SouthWest expects volunteers to perform their roles with skill, care and diligence and, accordingly, and should not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances while they are volunteering. Possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs on Pathways SouthWest premises is not permitted.

Pathways SouthWest premises include, but are not limited to, all buildings, vehicles, car parks, meeting rooms and open spaces. Any such activity will be immediately referred to the police and Pathways SouthWest will take disciplinary action. This may include termination of your volunteer role. Please immediately notify your Manager if you are taking any legally prescribed medication that may affect your performance and/or the safety of others.

**Email and Internet-** Telephone, Email and Internet Telephone (including mobile phone), email and internet facilities may only be used by volunteers for the business purposes. Inappropriate use of Pathways SouthWest IT systems and computers exposes the organisation to risks, including loss of sensitive information, virus attacks, compromise of network, systems and services and legal issues. Intentional inappropriate or illegal use of Pathways SouthWest communication systems (including using the internet to download material without permission) will be taken seriously and may result in termination of your volunteer engagement.

**Gifts-** Volunteers must to notify Management of any gift, reward or benefit that they are offered. Volunteers should not accept any gift where there is, or where there may be the perception of, a conflict of interest with past, present or future duties or where the object of the gift is to maintain or return a favour. Under no circumstances is cash money to be accepted as a gift.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers may have access to sensitive personal and/or commercial information. This information is to be used for Pathways SouthWest purposes only and must remain secure and confidential. The community must have confidence that any information acquired by Pathways SouthWest is only used for the stated purposes for which it was collected. Volunteers must not discuss or release to any person, inside or outside of the organisation, any confidential or sensitive information relating to Pathways SouthWest and/or its operations. *(See Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure)*

Any documents, plans, ideas, photographs and other data/information belonging to Pathways SouthWest or created for Pathways SouthWest within your role as a volunteer is confidential and subject to intellectual property (IP) rights. Pathways SouthWest advises that use of its IP is prohibited without prior written consent from Pathways SouthWest Chief Executive Officer Only authorised personnel may speak to the media on behalf of Pathways SouthWest— volunteers should refer any media enquiries to their Manager.

Pathways SouthWest in Australia has a social media policy which helps volunteers, officers, soldiers and employees communicate and engage on social media. Anyone engaged with Pathways SouthWest in a volunteering capacity is a representative of the organisation.

It's important that Pathways SouthWest's mission and values of integrity, compassion, respect, diversity and collaboration extend to the online space. In line with these values, this social media policy provides guidelines for how representatives of Pathways SouthWest should communicate on social media and outlines the consequences if the policy is breached. *(See Social Media Policy and Procedure)*

## **Relationship Boundaries (professional boundaries)**

Boundaries are the essential supporting structure that helps to keep us safe and ensure that our relationships with consumers/participants, fellow volunteers and staff remain professional. To be effective, boundaries need to be respected and applied on a consistent and ongoing basis. *(See Professional Boundaries Policy and Procedure)*

As a volunteer with Pathways SouthWest it is important that you have a clear understanding of where the responsibility of your role begins and ends. It is important to recognise that a power imbalance can exist—especially when a consumer/participant seeks assistance and may experience a degree of reliance from staff. This reliance can arise from the seemingly harmless giving/accepting of a gift/s, to the formation of an economic relationship, through to the feelings of sexual attraction to or from a staff member or service user, volunteers are frequently challenged by, and need to remain aware of, the limits or boundaries of the volunteer/staff/ service user relationship. Volunteer/staff/ service user boundaries are interpersonal in their construction and at times it can be difficult to work out what boundaries are appropriate. In these instances it is important that you speak to your Manager and seek guidance as needed.

**Self-disclosure-** It is not appropriate to disclose any of your personal details to Pathways SouthWest consumers. This includes your full name, phone number, place of work or home address. This is for your own safety and to maintain a professional relationship with our consumers/participants. It is also important

to respect the privacy of fellow volunteers and staff and not to disclose personal information pertaining to them. **Becoming Friends-** It is important that you do not befriend Pathways SouthWest consumers, but you at all times provide a friendly service. Consumers are in a vulnerable situation and this creates a power imbalance. It is for this reason there is an even stronger need for clear boundaries so that the volunteer/service user relationship is appropriate. If a service user invites you to socialise outside of your volunteer activity, then you should speak to your Manager about whether this is healthy.

**Physical Contact-** There are a variety of ways of using touch to communicate nurturing, understanding and support, such as a pat on the back or shoulder, a hug or a handshake. Such touch can, however, also be interpreted as sexual or inappropriate. Therefore, as a general rule, touch should not be used for purely supportive reasons. So at all times convey your understanding through your tone of voice and through active listening body language. An exception to this may be if a service user needs physical support because they are unwell. If you are likely to encounter this situation within your volunteer role, then your Manager will discuss this with you, and provide training and guidance on what is considered appropriate given the particular circumstance.



## Communication

Good communication is necessary in helping to build healthy and professional relationships and to prevent unnecessary misunderstandings. Guidance and training may be necessary for you to know the most appropriate and effective way to communicate in your volunteer role, especially if you are interacting with consumers/participants whom are experiencing mental health symptoms. For instance, if you are likely to be confronted with challenging behaviour, mistrust and aggression, then your Manager will discuss this with you. Below are some general guidelines for reasonable communication and these can be applied to how you communicate with fellow volunteers, staff, consumers/participants and the community.

**Listen-** Good communication is a two-way process, and so listening is essential. When someone is speaking, focus on their face rather than letting your eyes wander, as this lets them know that you are actively listening and aware what they are saying.

**Be Patient–** Sometime we may need extra time to consider our words and to formulate sentences. So allow time to finish what people are saying, rather than trying to finish their sentences for them. You may also experience difficulties in being understood. If this is the case, slow down your speaking pace and use short, clear sentences. Try not to raise your voice as this is generally unhelpful and can a trigger and distress to those living with mental health issues. If someone is still struggling to speak for themselves or to understand what you are saying, it may be appropriate to use other means of communication, like hand gestures, miming or sketching.

**Be Neutral-** It is especially important when you are interacting with consumers/participants that you remain neutral and particularly non-judgmental. Some consumers/participants may not be totally in control or aware of what they are saying. Remain calm and use clear language. If you are unsure how to respond or are concerned for your safety, seek assistance from your Manager immediately.

**Be Clear-** Clarity means the quality of being coherent and intelligible. You want that person to interpret your words with the same meaning you have in mind.

Achieving this goal can be difficult as each individual experiences are not identical, and many words have different meanings to different people. So make your message clear, use direct and accessible (familiar) language, and include examples, illustrations and other visual aids (if useful), and always provide the time and space for others to ask questions and to seek clarification if needed. To make sure you have clearly understood what someone else has said to you, try rephrasing it and saying it back to them.

**Be Positive and Realistic-** A positive viewpoint can help to create an enjoyable environment for everyone. Being positive is also important to make sure you are being realistic. For example, be upfront with your Manager about what time you can and cannot commit to your volunteer role. Don't take on more than you can realistically manage. Also, be genuine with consumers/participants. Do not over-promise as this can lead to distrust and further stress issues. Many consumers are experiencing an extremely difficult time, and it is important they have the space to show distress if needed.

## Work Health and Safety

Pathways SouthWest is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all volunteers, staff, contractors and visitors to our offices and places of work. It is the Chief Executive Officers responsibility to ensure that the workplace environment is a safe and healthy place.

Pathways SouthWest seeks your help in making our equipment, buildings and grounds as safe as possible for all the people who use them. Should an incident, injury or near injury occur, inform your Manager as it will be necessary to complete an 'Incident Report Form'. If you are unsure as to whether something counts as an incident or injury, or is a potential hazard, ask your Manager. It is best to act on the side of caution.

### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Ongoing volunteers across Australia can access EAP directly. EAP, through Pathways SouthWest's provider Richardson Partners, a professional counselling service that provides confidential, short-term support for a variety of work related and personal problems. These may be issues that are affecting volunteers in their role or at home. The service provided is to the EAP service

only, and does not include other services. EAP does not extend to a volunteer's family members.

## **All Volunteers must:**

- Know and comply with Pathways SouthWest work health and safety processes, requirements and instructions;
- Think before acting and where necessary modifying your approach or asking for advice or assistance to eliminate or minimise risks;
- Use and following instructions, training or other information provided with regard to work, health and safety; and
- Report all incidents, accidents, injuries and hazards to management for action.

*(Please see OSH Policy and Procedure and other related risk management policies and procedures)*

Ensure you are familiar with all the emergency procedures specific to the area where you are volunteering before you start your role. This includes orientation to new venues regarding fire/emergency evacuation processes and assembly areas. It is your responsibility to ask if you are not sure. You must be aware of what you can and cannot do and your level of responsibility.

Most importantly, familiarise yourself with the following procedures:

- Emergency evacuation of the building;
- What to do in case of a fire;
- What to do in case of armed or potentially threatening intruders/consumers/participants;
- Emergency telephone numbers; and
- Infection control. *(See the Infection Control Policy and Procedure)*

You must sign your Orientation Checklist – Non Staff form before commencing your volunteer role.



If you have not yet done this, you need to request this form from your Manager.

Pathways SouthWest is insured against medical liability if it arises during the course of your volunteer duties. If you are injured while undertaking your volunteer role, it is vital that you alert your Manager immediately. Your Manager will then write a report to outline all details of the incident and make direct contact with Pathways SouthWest Manager Business Services.

**Motor Vehicle-** Your volunteering role may require you to use a Pathways SouthWest fleet vehicle. You will have completed a driver declaration form on the commencement of your role and provided a copy of your Driver's Licence. Use of your own private vehicle while carrying out your volunteer role is not covered by Pathways SouthWest.

**Police Clearance-** Volunteer roles require a Police Clearance before a volunteer can start.

*So a huge welcome from the team at Pathways SouthWest.*

NOTES: