

CVA Volunteer Buddy Case Study

CVA Volunteering Role: *Volunteer Buddy (in Partnership with Croydon Mencap)*

*LB (volunteer) Currently provides weekly support to 2 Croydon Mencap members
LB has been providing support via zoom session carried out over a period of 4 weeks amounting to approx. 7hr of face to face volunteering (with additional time for report updates)*

The WHY

Why you were looking to volunteer and what attracted you to this project?

I have wanted to volunteer for a long time but with a busy job, I never seemed to have the regular spare time need. Last year covid changed everything, and after a prolonged period on furlough I decided to look into volunteering. I wanted to support a local charity, and was keen to find a project which would utilise interpersonal skills as well as be interesting, educational and fun. The Buddying project with CVA/ Croydon Mencap seemed ideal and something I could do in person or online/ by phone which was ideal.

PRE – VOLUNTEERING (PROCESS)

How have you found the application process, training and support provided?

The application process was easy, and there has been support and feedback provided by phone and email. Online training courses (some compulsory others optional) were a great learning tool. We also had to partake in zoom meetings, which were interactive and provided a good insight to situations and possible challenges we could face as well as our contractual obligations.

VOLUNTEERING in ACTION

How is volunteering in the project going for you?

With the pandemic continually changing the parameters of the project, getting started did take a while but we were kept informed and regularly updated. I'm really enjoying getting to know both my buddies, they are both have different personalities and every week we learn more about each other and we are all looking forward to a time when we can do activities together in person

BENEFITS

How do you feel this is benefiting your buddies?

I know my buddies look forward to our weekly zoom meetings, as do I. I try to ensure that we cover how they are feeling, what they have been doing and also try and do a game/ activity for fun. I know that both buddies usually have busy social lives, and both are active going to the gym, dance classes and drama groups. Since the pandemic, many of their regular activities are not running, or have closed. Having a regular meeting just to chat, play games and get to know each other is something that we can continue to do, despite being in tier 4.

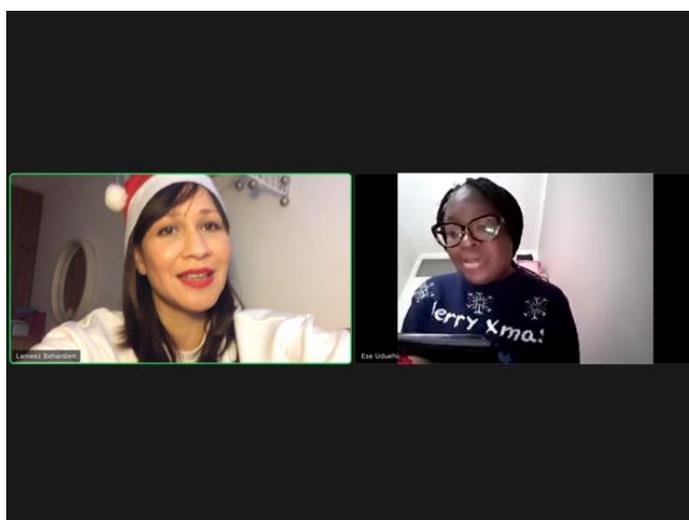
OVERCOMING HURDLES

Are there struggles due to Covid and how this has helped/hindered your relationship?

Due to Covid, we have been unable to meet up in person and bond over shared interests and activities. I think one of my buddies feels anxious about getting back out whilst the pandemic is still at large, so building a relationship online is very useful. Bonding and creating a connection online are more challenging, but we have been making good use of both phone calls and zoom catch ups together and individually. Having to video call keeps me on toes, as I'm always thinking and researching ways to keep meetings fun and interesting.

What do you think it would be like for you and your buddies if this project did not exist?

For me, the project is both enjoyable and educational. After being made redundant last year, as well as the ongoing pandemic, I really needed something to be positive about. The project has given me a real boost! A thirst to learn again, doing something positive within my community and has opened my mind possible career change. I believe that the project has a positive impact on my buddies. With so much uncertainty caused by the pandemic, the regular group meetings and individual buddy meetings offer a safe and stable environment to talk, ask questions learn and have fun!



This a shot of zoom session having a Christmas singalong- Silent night!