



Wiktorija's Story – The Value in Volunteering

I have always had a passion for mental health and psychology, and as much as I enjoy being a student, I was ready to gain some practical experience, connecting with people. I am an introvert by nature, but I'd reached a point where I was keen to put my learning to use.

In March 2023 I recognised that volunteering would be a great place to start. My careers tutor at university had suggested Birmingham Mind (a charity I had not considered before) and so I applied online to become a Helpline Volunteer.



Within a couple of weeks applying, I met Marion (Helpline Volunteer Coordinator at Birmingham Mind) and was invited to attend a Helpline Volunteer Induction session. I went on to complete my core training within 5 weeks around my university timetable.

To begin with I commenced a shadowing role for 4 hours a week, listening to calls and hearing how the Helpline Workers responded to those people in need of telephone crisis support, signposting or simply a listening ear. This was the most valuable part of my training.

In April 2023, I was ready to take calls on my own with the support of Andy (Deputy Helpline Manager). I recall my first phone call with a woman seeking emotional support, a moment that filled me with pride. Providing comfort and reassurance during long calls is what I enjoy most about the role. My passion lies in helping individuals, particularly women who have faced domestic violence and those experiencing PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

The role of a Helpline Volunteer was flexible to fit around my university commitments and during May and June I took a short break from volunteering to complete my master's degree. In the summer I was able to take on extra Volunteer Helpline shifts.

Volunteering with Birmingham Mind has provided me with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills I have acquired at university. I have been able to enhance my expertise by working within the mental health system and collaborating with service delivery partners at the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust. I am grateful for the professional growth and personal fulfilment that volunteering with Birmingham Mind has brought me.

For anyone thinking of volunteering for Birmingham Mind, my advice would be to just go for it. You really do get to make a difference to the lives of the people you talk to and see the change in the people we support.

Volunteering has hugely benefitted my own mental health, alongside my hobbies of journaling and playing video games. The opportunity to meet and work with a wonderful team of people, has expanded my social network and has given me structure and routine, two things that I crave for my own wellbeing.

In September 2023 I interviewed for and was offered a part-time paid position with Birmingham Minds' Helpline. In March 2024, I accepted a fulltime position which has given me the financial stability to go and complete my PHD.

For more information about our Helpline and Volunteering with our Helpline visit



[Helpline - Birmingham Mind](#)