

Volunteer Peer Support – Essential Guide

What is a Volunteer Peer?

Volunteer Peers (VPs) are amputees who share their lived experiences to support others facing similar challenges. By offering empathy, practical advice, and a listening ear, VPs help reduce isolation, build confidence, and provide hope for the future—all by dedicating just a few hours each month.

The Peer Support Process

- **Support Methods:** Peer support is typically provided via phone, video call, or in-person visits, always arranged through your local amputee group for safety and record-keeping.
- **Visit Structure:** Calls or visits usually last 30–60 minutes and can be repeated as needed.
- **Matching:** Service users are matched with volunteers based on type of amputation, needs, and interests.

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Your Role Matters:** Sharing your journey offers practical help and emotional support. Your unique perspective is especially valued by those new to amputation.
- **Empowerment:** Focus on empowering others—listen more than you talk, and let the person you support lead the conversation.
- **Boundaries:** Stick to topics related to amputation and rehabilitation. Refer to professionals if needed and avoid giving medical advice or handling money.
- **Confidentiality:** Keep all information private, except when safety is at risk.

Code of Conduct & Ethics

1. Be honest, respectful, and neutral.
2. Always maintain confidentiality.
3. Do not give medical advice or recommend products/providers.
4. Never accept or give gifts, or handle money/personal care tasks.
5. Use only approved materials and follow all policies and guidelines.
6. Empower users to achieve independence.
7. Report every visit and any concerns immediately.
8. Embrace inclusivity and respect cultural differences.
9. Communicate openly, respectfully, and empathetically.

Communication & Visit Tips

- **Introduce Yourself:** Share your name and a bit about your experience.
- **Build Trust:** Keep promises, listen attentively, and use open body language.
- **Ask Open Questions:** Encourage sharing by asking how they feel or what they need.
- **Affirm and Empathize:** Acknowledge their efforts and emotions.
- **Use Appropriate Humour:** Only if the person is comfortable.
- **After the Visit:** Submit a report to your local group within two days.

Self-Care & Support

- **Look After Yourself:** Make sure you're well, rested, and able to focus before visits.
- **Set Boundaries:** Limit calls if needed and use separate contact info.
- **Reach Out:** Get support from mentors or group leaders if you need it.
- **Stress Management:** Take breaks, enjoy hobbies, and ask for help when needed.

Training & Ongoing Support

- **Training:** All volunteers receive induction, safeguarding, and ongoing training, including topics like communication and mental health.
- **Support:** Mentors and group support are always available.
- **Recertification:** Complete recertification every two years.

Policies & Safety

- **Safeguarding:** Always report safety or wellbeing concerns.
- **Data Protection:** Keep all information secure.
- **Equality & Diversity:** Treat everyone with respect and inclusivity.
- **Complaints:** Know the process for informal and formal resolution.

Remember:

The focus of every peer visit is the person you are supporting. Listen, empower, and offer hope—no one should face amputation alone.