

GUIDANCE FOR EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Interaction with people who are distressed or unwell

While volunteering on event day, you may come across trekkers with personal experience of a mental health condition who are overwhelmed or distressed and in need of support.

The following are some tips to ensure you can help the person get the support they need:

- **Let the person know you're listening to them.** If possible, sit down with them and make them feel comfortable. Some people will just need you to listen to them for a few minutes, so that they feel heard.
- Use a warm and engaging tone and open body language, keep eye contact, and **ask about their support network**, particularly friends and family who might be with them on the day.
- **Explain that you are not a Beyond Blue staff member.** You can say something like, 'I would like to listen more and support you, but I do not work at Beyond Blue. Can I give you the number of Beyond Blue's Support Service so you can have a chat with someone more qualified?'
- **Give them a Beyond Blue wallet card** that they take away with them, with the Support Service details on it – 1300 22 4636 or www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport
- If you feel the person is in need of more support than you can give, **you can call Tash from Beyond Blue, on 0437 104 958.** The Beyond Blue event team will ensure you have the support you need to assist.
- **If you feel the person is in need of immediate crisis support, you can suggest that they call Lifeline on 13 11 14.**
- After the conversation, know that you have done what you can to help another person find the support they need. Don't underestimate the benefits of peer support – no matter how brief the interaction may be.

Looking after yourself

- Your wellbeing is very important to us, and we want to make sure helping at Coastrek is a great experience.
- If you're feeling upset or anxious from dealing with a distressed person, or any other aspect of your time helping, we encourage you to reach out to the Beyond Blue Support Service to talk things through.
- Self-care is very important. Events are fun but can be tiring! Things that make you feel good, like a quiet cup of tea when you get home, are a great way to recharge and take care of yourself.