



# **VOLUNTEER** **HANDBOOK** **HANDBOOK** **HANDBOOK** **HANDBOOK**



Our volunteers are working towards a brighter future for adolescents with mental health problems in Sri Lanka.

Established in 2017 by a group of passionate youth, Project Bloom's vision is for better mental health care, better mental health advocacy and a productive future for adolescents living with mental health problems.

Hello there!

# WELCOME TO PROJECT BLOOM!

We are excited for you to join our Bloom team, this booklet will take you through your responsibilities, guidelines, and the processes of your life as a volunteer to get you started :)

Just for starters, we mainly work with adolescents with mental health issues. Adolescence is proven to be a very important time of rapid learning and brain development. It is also a period of vulnerability and opportunity. It's a very crucial time period in a person's life and it can also be a very confusing and intense time period.

We believe that there are countless fun and effective ways to help adolescents with mental health issues, apart from traditional psychiatric treatments that are generally used in the local healthcare system.

Project Bloom uses more holistic and therapeutic approaches to mental health care that anyone can learn and use to help themselves, their peers and their community.

# OUR CULTURE

At Project Bloom, we value our people, as a volunteer-run organization our core values of *kindness* and *empathy* have built a strong foundation of trust and consistency within our organization.



# OUR PROJECTS

## **NIMH SESSIONS**

**01.**

THIS IS OUR OLDEST AND MAIN PROJECT, THIS IS WHERE PROJECT BLOOM WAS CREATED, WHERE WE WINGED IT WITH 5 VOLUNTEERS AND A BOX OF STATIONARY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 2017



## **ONE OFF TRAINING AND ADVOCACY PROJECTS**

**02.**

WE ENGAGE IN COUNTLESS SUBPROJECTS ONLINE AND IN-PERSON ALL YEAR FROM TIME TO TIME TO EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS AND OUR COMMUNITY ON BETTER APPROACHES TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

**03.**

BE IT FUNDRAISING OR COLLABORATING WE ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO REACH OUT TO OUR COMMUNITY AND CONNECT WITH MORE PEOPLE, AIMING TO BROADEN THE ACCESS TO OUR SERVICES AND COMMUNITY

# GETTING STARTED...

Once you are all signed up through our website you will be directed to Timecounts.

Timecounts is an online volunteer management platform, which every volunteer should register into as a part of your initial sign-up process. On Timecounts, Project Bloom will be able to credit you for the hours that you volunteer and the skills that you gain.

Click to login:



We also hope that you make out your time here at Project Bloom become a positive learning experience. For starters here's a [link](#) to a video to give you a better understanding of the adolescent brain.





# NIMH SESSIONS

## EXPLAINED

In partnership with the National Institute of Mental Health in Sri Lanka, which is the largest government-based hospital that offers tertiary services to individuals living with mental health issues, Project Bloom has been conducting sessions at the adolescent unit since 2017.

Our aim here is to interact with the adolescents housed at nimh as young people and deliver sessions in the form of fun activities that promote mental well-being and healthy cognitive development that we research and prepare in advance

### THINGS TO REMEMBER WHILE AT NIMH:

[HERE'S A FEW THINGS WE NEED TO REMEMBER AT THE NIMH AS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INSTITUTION IS BASED ON OUR MUTUAL TRUST THAT WE'VE WORKED REALLY HARD TO BUILD OVER THE YEARS]

**Strictly no photographs** without the supervision of your session leader. We do not click photographs of the adolescents at NIMH to protect their right to privacy.

We **do not share or flash our phones or devices with the adolescents** even at the most sincere request, please refer to a nurse or your session leader in case the adolescent is very insistent on using your devices, it's best to put your devices on silent and away before the commencement of a session.

Ideally, we would like our volunteers to speak in Sinhalese so we don't make our adolescents feel left out, for those of you that don't speak good Sinhalese, we hope you make this a fun learning opportunity!

We do not question their conditions or seek any reasoning as to why they are there. As volunteers our goal and responsibility is to ensure a positive friend in need, if they decide to open up to you **please refrain from giving any advice and focus on active listening.**

# IMPORTANT SKILLS

*when working with us*



## **ACTIVE LISTENING**

As a volunteer you may be the only external contact that the adolescent get while within the hospital so it's important to let them speak their mind and your role in it is to offer a kind listening ear.



Building empathy will allow you to put yourself in another persons shoes and better understand their circumstances, emotions, feelings and reasons for their actions.

## **EMPATHY**



## **PATIENCE**

Patience the is key.  
All things are difficult until they become easy.

YOU CAN FIND SHORT VIDEOS THAT WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THESE SKILLS BY CLICKING ON THE ICONS ON THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE ABOVE GRID.



# OUR TEAM

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*@projectblooms*



Lahi  
Poddalgoda



Rehan  
Meemaduma



Chamath  
Gunawardena



Senali  
Amarasinghe

We are excited to get to meet and welcome you to our Bloom family. Thank you for contributing your time, we admire you for helping us make a difference!



**project  
bloom.**



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