

**Could you be a friend to someone with AIDS? : the Buddy Service /
Terrence Higgins Trust.**

Contributors

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

Could **you**
be a friend
to
someone
with **AIDS?**



The Buddy Service

The Terrence Higgins Trust



Could **you** be a friend...

The Buddy Service was developed by The Terrence Higgins Trust to provide people with AIDS someone they could count on, someone who could give them friendship and support when they needed it.

There are currently over 600 buddies in the Greater London area. However, there are always people with AIDS waiting for a Buddy of their own, although the need is more acute in some parts of London than others.

WHAT IS A BUDDY?

A Buddy is a volunteer who has made a commitment to become a friend to someone with AIDS. They have been specially trained by the Trust.



He or she is someone who can be there when no one else seems to understand.

As well as offering emotional support a Buddy can also give practical help. They will do the shopping, walk the dog, help with the washing, cook a meal, anything that makes life a bit easier.

Buddies need to be people who can withstand a lot of emotional

pressure.

If you become a Buddy, you must realise there will be frustrating times. You may feel you're being blamed for everything.

The person you are buddying may go through periods of depression which may affect you. You may also need to prepare for the death of the person you are buddying and the grief that accompanies it.

Being a Buddy to someone is a very demanding role, but the rewards far outweigh the disadvantages.

Because of the emotional strain involved in this challenging role we have local Buddy support groups which meet on a

monthly basis. Here you get to know other Buddies and talk about any problems you're having. It is part of a Buddy's commitment to attend all of these support meetings. We may have to withdraw you from the Buddy Service if you are unable to attend, because the giving and receiving of support is a crucial element of being a Buddy.

WHO CAN BECOME A BUDDY?

Anybody can apply to become a Buddy.

At present we have Buddies aged from 19 to 74. Some are in full-time employment doing a wide variety of jobs, others are unemployed, students or retired. What they all have in common is their commitment to the Buddy Service.

They are prepared to buddy from home or from work and sometimes travel quite a distance. All Buddies must have a phone at home. After they've been trained they make a commitment to the Buddy Service for a minimum of one year, often longer.

Buddies are people who must be able to accept lifestyles and values which may be very different to their own, without making judgments. They all have an ability to maintain strict confidentiality about what they are doing.

When the buddying relationship begins, things may not always seem right for you or the person you're buddying. However, you must be prepared to buddy anyone we ask you to and work hard at making the relationship work.

It is possible it won't suit the person you are buddying and they may reject you. They are allowed the choice. You are not. That is one of the important reasons for

attending your support group.

The first time you meet you will be strangers to each other, expected to develop a relationship rooted in very personal and



"She's seen me at the worst possible time, so full of anger that I'm unable to speak..."

intimate issues. As one Buddy put it:

"At the time I got into this I didn't really know what to expect. I had a sort of mental picture of me - a well, cheerful person clutching a bunch of daffs - visiting this terrible crumbling wreck. How wrong I was!"

"When you qualify as a Buddy you are allotted a name of a faceless person. All the training is working up to a point when you meet. It's a very phony situation really. Sure, you're expected but it's like turning up on someone's doorstep and saying, 'Hi! I've come to be your friend.' But you know you are prepared to work at it to make it work."

SO YOU WANT TO BE A BUDDY?

If you think you may have the qualities that will make a good Buddy, the first thing to do is contact the

Volunteer Office at the Trust. We will send you an information pack and an application form to fill in.

Maggie on her first buddying relationship: "I buddied a person with AIDS before Jim and it didn't really work out. So I knew what rejection felt like and I was a bit wary... but I knew how well the Buddy Support Group worked for me then."

We'll then ask you to attend an information evening where you will meet volunteers who are working as Buddies at the moment, and an Induction Day for all new volunteers. If after an interview with Buddies in your area we think you are the sort of person we are looking for, you will then be required to go on an intensive residential training weekend. Here we will discuss all aspects of a Buddy's role - the particular needs of people with AIDS, the needs of their friends, lovers and relatives, and your own motives and needs.

Once you've completed the course you may not be assigned to someone immediately. You may have to wait until there is someone in your area.

When you have been assigned to a person with AIDS, you will be asked to contact them at least once, but no more than three times a week.


If you think you could be a Buddy then call us on 071- 831 0330 and ask for the Volunteer Office.



"I had a sort of mental picture of me visiting this terrible crumbling wreck. How wrong I was!"

...to someone with **AIDS?**

**When
somebody
develops AIDS
they may find
they cannot
get the
emotional and
practical
support they
need from
family and
friends.**

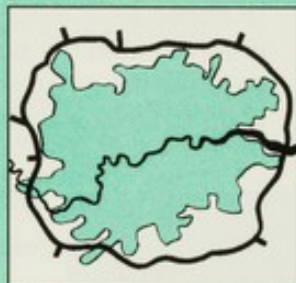


The Buddy Service
Friends in deed

WHO CAN HAVE A BUDDY?

Anyone who has a diagnosis of AIDS and lives in the Greater London area can have a THT Buddy. Many people with AIDS have said how much they benefited from having a Buddy, especially if they arranged one soon after their diagnosis. Should their health deteriorate they know they will have someone who can be there for them, who understands them and can liaise with medical and social work staff if necessary.

A Buddy can be available on either a short or a long term basis depending on the person's needs.



Jim: "For a long time I didn't want a Buddy - although I knew they were a 'good thing'. When I finally came round to the idea of having one, I didn't want another gay man. I specifically asked for a woman. And that she should enjoy ironing because I hate it! Even at that stage I suddenly thought, 'I've got enough to do in the evenings - what am I going to do with this woman?' "

If you would like a Buddy, you can call us yourself, or ask a friend, nurse, doctor or social worker to call for you.
Ring 071-831 0330 and ask for the Buddy Liaison Officer.

ABOUT THE TRUST

When Terrence Higgins died with AIDS his illness was hardly understood and his needs barely met. His friends, shocked and saddened by the lack of information and support available, decided to set up a voluntary organisation to provide support and help for people living with AIDS and HIV infection. That was in 1983.

The Trust's pioneering Buddy Service is one of the mainstays of the work we carry out.

In our fight against AIDS, innovations such as buddying are helping to make the lives of anyone affected by AIDS easier to manage.

We are there for anyone whose life has been touched by AIDS.

The number is constantly increasing.

Will you be there for them too?

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52-54 Grays Inn Road London WC1 8JU

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