

Reaching Out Foundation



'helping communities help themselves'

Social Cafe

Toolbox

Social Cafés (Dining with Dignity)

Social cafés, as the Reaching Out Foundation have initiated in our region, are a unique approach to providing a service to the socially isolated or disadvantaged utilising the energy and compassion of the local volunteer workforce. They are community based cafés which aim to provide high quality food for free or for a small donation within a community setting that is warm, inclusive and affirming of individual dignity. Services provided by these cafés vary depending on the resources available and the needs of the individual guests. Services offered range from a single weekly midday meal to a number of midday and evening meals during the week, shower and barber facilities, direct access to a range of providers including legal and housing services and financial advice.

A major strength of social cafés is that they are volunteer based and it is most common that all chefs, kitchen staff, waiters and servers, welcomers and cleaners provide their time and skills freely. It is their enthusiasm and energy that creates the 'social' nature of the café offering an environment of acknowledgement and acceptance.

Guests at a social café, who often become regulars, are invited to eat a sit-down three course meal chosen from a menu. They will be served at their self-chosen table and eat at a restaurant quality table setting.

The social café is normally supported and sustained by a volunteer steering committee who are committed to the aims and values of the 'social café'. In turn there is often a parent organisation which can provide the legal and physical parameters necessary for successful operation of a social cafe. In addition, representatives of a variety of support functions such as legal, financial and homelessness services may regularly attend the cafes.

How to Start a Social Café

Initial Idea

It is important to realise at the outset whether there is a need for a Social Café and to seek answers to these questions:

Who would it benefit?

Is there a suitable location?

Are there readily available sources of food and utensils?

Are there sufficient potential volunteers?

What is the proposed timeframe?

How often will you run the café?

It is important to research the local area and consult as widely as possible. The Reaching Out Foundation is available to provide advice and assistance.

Hold a Public Discussion

This is an important step as the more community support you can attract the easier your job will be.

Often an initial 'show of interest' meeting can progress the idea and get people involved.

By holding a public meeting you will not only find potential volunteers but organisations and businesses who may provide support to the Social Café in the area.

This is the ideal forum for the project to really start to gain momentum and identify potential needs of the community.

Actions:

Plan a meeting

- Try and find a free venue
- Contact the local council to see if you can use the Community Hall or try Churches or local Clubs
- Identify a key person to lead the meeting – the Reaching Out Foundation can assist by providing a person
- Develop an Agenda
- Seek speakers from other Social Cafes and/or the ROF who could provide information about the experience of other cafes.
- Contact local people who may assist with catering

Advertise

- Place posters in any frequently visited area such as shop windows, notice boards, Doctor and Dental surgery waiting rooms and local pharmacies

- Contact your local newspaper
- Ask the local Council to put a notice on their website
- Use word of mouth
- Contact the local radio station
- Notify local charities and service providers

Invitations

- Local Council
- Members of Parliament
- Service clubs
- Health services
- Sporting clubs
- Seniors groups
- Local identities
- Aboriginal Elders

Run the meeting

- Present the idea for a Social Café
- Introduce speakers to outline how a Café operates
- Open the floor to suggestions and discussion
- Invite volunteers to establish a Steering Committee
- Seek volunteers to run the Café and to raise funds. Be sure to get full contact details from all potential volunteers
- Outline the next steps

Form a Steering Committee

- This Committee will guide the establishment of the Café and oversee the operations once it is established
- By appointing a Steering Committee you will share the load by allocating roles and responsibilities
- You will now be a team with the same goals, moving in the same direction and utilising individual skills and attributes
- Define roles such as Chair, Secretary and Volunteer organiser
- Develop a communication strategy within the Committee, with volunteers and externally to start promotion and publicity

Establish a relationship with the Reaching Out Foundation

The Reaching Out Foundation can support you to establish your Social Café, in accordance with its guiding model and principles. The level of interaction and support will vary depending on your needs.

The Foundation is a Public Benevolent Institution, endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient. It is run entirely by volunteers, and supported by donations and grants where possible. Further information is available on the website – www.reachingout.org.au

You will be able to draw on the Foundation's experience in assisting other communities to establish Social Cafés, and to access the network of organisations sponsoring or otherwise involved in supporting the Foundation.

They can also share the experiences of those involved in operating other Social Cafés and provide ongoing support where needed.

The Foundation may assist in:

- identifying possible venues to house your café
- providing funding where possible
- accessing relevant grants where possible
- promotion and awareness raising activities
- legal advice where this can be sourced pro-bono

Find a Venue

You will need to consider:

- a central location which can be accessed easily
- the size of the café
- suitable kitchen facilities
- storage for food and utensils
- public transport and car parking
- the suitability of the neighbourhood and the likely views of local residents or services
- the cost

In order to identify a suitable site you could contact your:

- local council
- local MP
- Church groups
- Service Clubs eg Lions, Rotary
- community groups
- local businesses

Promote

It is important to get as much publicity as possible. If you are well known it will assist you when you are seeking donations, grants and volunteers.

The local media are always looking for stories, so use them to:

- explain what the Café is about
- provide an update on progress
- publicise the Café opening times
- celebrate milestones

Consider branding for the café including:

- signage
- letterhead
- brochures

Consider a Facebook page or website. The Reaching Out Foundation will place a link to your page on their website. Keep the information updated and provide regular stories on your progress.

Get Active

Getting active in the community will not only keep the momentum of your Committee going, but can help promote your café and raise valuable funds and support.

Visit other cafés and speak to other Steering Committees about their experiences and ideas. Contact details for other cafés are available from the ROF.

Fundraising

Identify possible donors for food, equipment or funds. These could include:

- food collection agencies such as Oz Harvest
- local food suppliers and retailers
- nurseries
- market gardens.

There are a variety of grants available from time to time. The Foundation is available to assist in identifying grant programs and writing grant applications.

You can also generate income by encouraging people from the community who are able to pay to access the café and make a contribution. This has the added benefit of expanding the contact your clients have with a broad range of people from the community.

How to Run a Social Café

Operational Plan

The Steering Committee will be responsible for operating the café as well as ensuring long term viability. An Operational Plan will assist in ensuring all aspects of governance and management are addressed including:

- details of café operations and costs
- funding and donation sources and arrangements
- composition and skills for the Steering Committee members and volunteers
- roles and responsibilities of members and volunteers
- recruitment of members and volunteers
- frequency of meetings

- communication internally and with the public
- training
- legal and administrative requirements

Café Management

The Steering Committee will manage the day to day operations of the cafe. Attached to this Toolbox are a number of templates to assist the Committee.

The Steering Committee should provide good leadership by:

- Ensuring effective management
- Directing the activities
- Providing sound financial management and ensuring resources are properly managed
- Ensuring potential risks are managed
- Ensuring health and safety issues are dealt with and managed
- Ensuring volunteers are appropriately trained and managed

Volunteers

Social café volunteers reinforce the philosophy of ‘dining with dignity’. They fill a variety of roles including chef, waiter, welcomer or a member of the preparation or cleaning teams. They are supported and nurtured in their roles through informal training and structured certificate programs such ‘Safe food handling’, ‘Mental health first aid’ and ‘Workplace health and safety’. They expect respect, appreciation and ownership of the roles. They will invariably report from their experience of working in a social café, that they have received more than they have given.

Volunteers working in Social Cafés or as part of Steering Committees will:

- respect the dignity and nurture the self-respect of clients
- act compassionately
- behave honestly and with integrity
- treat everyone fairly, equally and with respect, in particular taking account of cultural differences; and
- recognise the strengths and weaknesses of others, in particular taking account of how they may be affected by our actions.

Culture

A ‘dining with dignity’ experience is one offered in a friendly, accepting, well-managed, well-supported and inclusive environment. The social experience is augmented with attractive healthy and nutritious meals designed to complement existing lifestyles. The aim is to provide a ‘total experience’ and the meals are sometimes accompanied with entertainment or other socially engaging activities. When carers attend with their guests, they will receive the same level of care and consideration. Occasionally local high school students

will attend to complement the staffing or to provide a learning experience for both students and guests.

Rostering

A key to an effective and efficient social café is a considered and well-ordered rostering system. Often prepared on a monthly or four weekly bases, a quality rostering system will:

- reflect the interest and skills of the volunteers
- empower those rostered to manage roster changes and emergencies
- provide online access to all volunteers
- make changes to the roster easy to identify by the roster coordinator
- avoid under-utilising or over-burdening rostered volunteers

Training

There are a range of training needs which are required by law or which will assist in ensuring the Café runs smoothly and safely.

These include:

- **Safe food handling** - Critical to the effective operation of a social café is for volunteers to have developed skills and knowledge in safe food handling. ROF can assist volunteer managers by facilitating face to face food safety training or, if preferred, the local Council may provide access to food safety training. The Bega Valley Shire Council offers free online training via the following webpage: https://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-CBU-38-23-04.
- **Workplace health and safety** - Operating a safe workplace is critical to the success of any volunteering business. Safe Work Australia has developed a resource kit for volunteers to understand work health and safety issues. It can be accessed via the following webpage https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1703/volunteers_guide.pdf .Volunteering Australia also has a range of resources to assist volunteer managers. Their resources can be accessed via the following webpage: <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/volunteering-resources/volunteer-managers/>. ROF has access to a range of different forms to assist Volunteer managers as well.
- **Mental health awareness** - It is important for volunteer managers to recognise that some of the guests may have some level of mental health impairment. To assist volunteers in understanding the needs of these people and how best to relate to them, the ROF can arrange mental health awareness training for volunteers. Trained professionals can deliver face to face training for volunteers.

Establishing as a Legal Entity

In order for you to operate you will need to establish the Café as a legal entity. This will assist with obtaining grants and insurance, and entering into contracts. The process for incorporating an Association in NSW is set out www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

Insurance

You will require insurance coverage for public liability. An insurance broker in your local area would be able to advise on appropriate policies for the Social Café.

Appendices

Attached are a range of templates to support the operation of a Social Café. A big thank you to the Steering Committee of Peals Place at Pambula, NSW for developing these templates and allowing us to use them in the Toolbox to assist other communities.

Appendix A.....Volunteer Registration Form

Appendix B.....Volunteer Agreement

Appendix C.....Checklist for Dining Area

AppendixD.....Kitchen Cleaning and Food Safety Checklist

AppendixE.....Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Volunteer Registration Form

(Name of Organisation) is a special place for those who might be homeless, lonely, having a tough time or are just looking for friendship and a welcoming place to enjoy a good meal!

How can you help?

To make (Name of Organisation) a success we need volunteers who can make our guests feel welcome and can also help our chef prepare and serve delicious meals for our guests to enjoy.

Answering the following questions will help us to make sure that your experience as a volunteer is rewarding, productive and enjoyable.

Personal Information

Name: -----
Please Print *First Name* *Last Name*

Date of birth: ----- Gender: Male / Female
 (please circle)

Address: -----

Town/suburb: ----- Postcode: -----

Home Phone: ----- Work Phone: -----

Mobile: ----- Email address: -----

Who should we contact in an emergency?

Name: -----

Address: -----

Phone: ----- Mobile: -----

Do you have any special needs we should be aware of? Yes/No (please circle)

Details: -----

Do you have any impairment or medical condition that could restrict you in any of the activities we may ask you to do?
Yes / No (please circle)

I will have difficulty carrying out the following tasks:

Volunteer Experience and Specific Needs

Have you had any previous experience as a volunteer? Yes/No
(please circle)

If so, with what organisations, and what kind of work did you do? -----

So that we can make the best use of your time volunteering, please list the skills, experience or qualifications you would like to use while volunteering?

Skills can include and are not limited to clerical /administration, cooking, media and public relations; photography; graphic design; grant writing; planning and strategic development; supervisor skills.

Please list: -----

If you have hobbies or interests we would love to know about them: -----

How do you prefer to work? (Please circle all your preferences)

- Directly with people *e.g. meet and greet guests; serving at tables*
- Behind the scenes *e.g. food preparation, cleaning; dishwashing; set up and pack up; collection of food*
- Help with administration *e.g. join the steering committee; record keeping*
- Volunteer Co-ordinator/Supervisor of Pearls Place
- No preference

Attainment

Do you hold a current Safe Food Handling Certificate? Yes / No
(please circle)

Do you hold a current First Aid Certificate? Yes / No
(please circle)

If yes, what date did you receive it?

Have you completed a Working with Children Check (WCC) Yes /
No (please circle)

If yes, please include the WWC check number

If no, do you agree to obtain a WWC Check? Yes /
No (please circle)

Do you agree to a police check? Yes /
No (please circle)

Do you agree to have the above information entered on (Name of Organisation)
volunteer database management system?
Yes / No (please circle)

Information you provide will be used only for the purpose of ensuring your safe
and enjoyable participation as a volunteer at (Name of Organisation). This
information will not be shared with any other organization. All information will
be destroyed once you are no longer a volunteer at Pearls Place.

Volunteer availability

Date you can begin volunteering? / /

Are you interested in volunteering for special events/projects? Yes / No
(please circle)

Signed: ----- Date:
/ /

Please return to:
Mailing Address
(Name of Organisation)

Or bring the completed form to (Name of Organisation)

Office Use:
Details entered in volunteer database: Yes / No
Date entered: / / By Whom:

Volunteer Agreement

Every volunteer must sign the Volunteer Agreement before commencing volunteer tasks with Pearls Place.

I, *(name)*volunteer to assist **(Name of Organisation)** and

1. I understand that as a volunteer I will not receive a wage or salary.
2. I agree to participate in essential orientation and ongoing training arranged by , **(Name of Organisation)** as required.
3. I agree to inform the Coordinator if I am unable to attend a rostered session.
4. I agree to sign the Attendance Register at each volunteering session.
5. I agree to abide by **(Name of Organisation)** Workplace Health and Safety Policy.
6. I agree to work in a manner that is safe to other volunteers, members of the public and myself.
7. I agree to support a non-discriminatory and harassment-free environment.
8. I understand that **(Name of Organisation)** has Public Liability Insurance for volunteers and this cover extends to accidents that may occur during the hours I volunteer and only where **(Name of Organisation)** are proven to be negligent. I understand that this insurance does not cover any loss of income I might incur as a result of an accident or injury I sustain while carrying out my voluntary duties at **(Name of Organisation)**
9. If I am injured through an accident in the course of my duties as a volunteer I will immediately report the matter to the Supervisor on duty at the time and fill in an Incident Report.
10. I understand that all information I become aware of as a volunteer at **(Name of Organisation)** is in strictest confidence and must not be discussed or divulged to any unauthorised person or organisation.
11. I understand that it is my responsibility to remove myself if I do not wish to appear in photographs, videos or audio recordings.

Volunteer's name (please print):

Volunteer's signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return to:

(Name of Organisation)

Or - return form in person to

Office Use:

Details entered in volunteer database: Yes / No
Date entered: / / By Whom:

Appendix C

Checklist for Dining Area

Date _____

Action	Checked	Signature
BEFORE SERVICE		
Floor cleaned if necessary before setting up the tables		
Tables checked for cleanliness and stability. Place mats checked for cleanliness.		
Cutlery checked and cleaned if necessary then placed on a folded serviette (Knife, fork and spoon)		
Glasses and mugs placed upside down.		
Jugs filled with water		
Tea and coffee ingredients set up		
Plates removed promptly after clients have eaten		
AFTER SERVICE		
Tables and place mats cleaned		
Floor cleaned		
All benches cleaned and sanitised		
Appropriate pest control taken if or when required		
Chairs stacked		
Tables stacked		

Kitchen Cleaning and Food Safety Checklist

Date _____

Action	Checked	Signature
Waste foods disposed of away from food preparation areas		
Garbage and waste removed from the kitchen regularly		
Pest inspections carried out and appropriate action taken		
Prior to being refrigerated or frozen, foods were cooled		
Food to be refrigerated or frozen was correctly labelled on the packaging container		
Dishes were cleaned according to the procedure		
Floors were cleaned appropriately at the end of service		
All preparation surfaces and kitchen benches were cleaned and sanitised before food preparation and after service		
Oven and stove top cleaned after use		
Bainemarie emptied and all trays and surfaces cleaned		
Range hood cleaned		
Approved cleaning chemicals were used		
Fresh food on hand was assessed for quality and spoilt food discarded		
Stock take done to ensure foods used prior to best before date including fresh fruit and vegetables.		

Comments/further attention:

Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Introduction

The Social Café is a special place run by volunteers who prepare healthy meals for the local community to enjoy in a warm, welcoming environment.

All are welcome - especially those who are disadvantaged by age, income, disability or social isolation. Families are also welcome.

At the café we want to ensure that every guest receives an excellent standard of service and that these standards also apply in our dealings with colleagues, supporters and local community stakeholders.

This Code of Conduct has been developed to assist café volunteers to participate in a manner that demonstrates commitment to the organisation's mission, philosophy and values. It also provides a collective understanding and expectation of the way we behave as individuals towards each other, our guests, partners and supporters.

The Code also works in conjunction with any legal obligations in areas such as Work Health and Safety (WHS), Equal Opportunity and Privacy.

The Code will be reviewed annually.

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to be familiar with this Code of Conduct and the appropriate policy and procedure documentation. All volunteers are responsible for ensuring their behaviour is consistent with the requirements outlined in the Code.

Code of Conduct

Respect^[L]_[SEP]

I will demonstrate this by:

- Treating everyone fairly, with courtesy, respect and professional integrity and valuing^[L]_[SEP] each person as an equal, regardless of their position or their life situation^[L]_[SEP]
- Recognising, accepting and valuing the differences and contributions of each^[L]_[SEP] individual^[L]_[SEP]
- Working as part of a team and being open and respectful to the ideas and contributions^[L]_[SEP] of others^[L]_[SEP]
- Abstaining from all forms of unacceptable or unlawful behaviour, such as discrimination, bullying or harassment^[L]_[SEP]

Professional Boundaries – Privacy and Confidentially

I will demonstrate this by: [L] [SEP]

- Being sensitive, caring, accepting and responsive to those in need of our assistance. [L] [SEP]
- Supporting guests who are socially isolated to develop friendships and stronger community links [L] [SEP]
- Protecting information that is private and confidential in nature about guests, volunteers [L] [SEP] and the organisation unless disclosure is required under law or with express permission by Supervisor/Manager. [L] [SEP] will also refrain from:
 - sharing personal phone numbers or addresses with guests [L] [SEP]
 - providing guests with any additional service or task outside the services [L] [SEP] provided by the café

Health, Safety and Welfare

I will demonstrate this by: [L] [SEP]

- Complying with the café policy and procedures (particularly Food Safety) and [L] [SEP] actively assisting in minimising risks through participating in training, hazard identification and reporting and by carrying out the duty of care required in my activities at the café [L] [SEP]
- Advising the volunteer coordinator when I am sick and where necessary, arranging for a replacement volunteer [L] [SEP]

Integrity - Accountability and Conflict of Interest

I will demonstrate this by: [L] [SEP]

- Behaving in an honest, reliable, and transparent way [L] [SEP]
- Delivering the highest quality and standard of services and being open to opportunities [L] [SEP] that improve the way we do things [L] [SEP]
- Developing and maintaining competencies by keeping skills and knowledge current [L] [SEP]
- Respecting and protecting the property of the café [L] [SEP]
- Responsible use of resources and equipment, avoiding unnecessary waste, duplication [L] [SEP] or extravagance. I understand resources and equipment are to be used only for the café related activities [L] [SEP]
- Assisting in ensuring the café services are accessible, appropriate and acceptable to [L] [SEP] all guests [L] [SEP]

Dress Code

I understand:

- Uniforms are not provided and I am to wear clothing appropriate to the tasks to be done and in a manner that will not be found provocative or offensive by guests, colleagues or professional contact.
- Closed-in footwear is required at the café and it is my responsibility to use sunscreen sun protection during the café outdoor activities.
- Jewellery that can be dangerous when working with children or other guests should be avoided.

Smoke Free Workplace I understand:

- The café has adopted a smoke free workplace policy. This means that volunteers, guests and visitors are not permitted to smoke in any of the buildings used by the café.
- Smokers must note any smoking restriction signage, and smoking within sight of guests (including outdoor activities) is not permitted.

Gifts and Gratuities I understand:

- I am not allowed as a volunteer to accept gifts or financial rewards for my personal use except for the most nominal token gifts such as homemade goods and confectionery. I am also not permitted if asked, to give money or financial assistance to guests.
- Donations of money, supplies and materials are always welcome for the café and must be declared through its normal record keeping processes.

Drugs and Alcohol at the Workplace I understand:

- Volunteers are not permitted to carry out activities for the café while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If I am required to take prescription medication that may have a negative impact on my ability to perform the duties of my role, I must notify the volunteer coordinator immediately.
- On occasions the café may sponsor events and celebrations where alcohol is served and I should take care to ensure that my behaviour is appropriate as a representative of the café.

Code of Conduct Agreement

As a volunteer of the Social Café I have read and understand the contents of

The Social Café Code of Conduct for Volunteers. I agree to abide by this Code and I understand that this supplements the various legal and policy obligations I have as a volunteer of the café.

I,

—

of

Address:

—

Signature:

—

Date:

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