
ANKALI PROJECT VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Just like a fingerprint, every Ankali emotional support relationship is unique



The Ankali Project

A Service of the Albion Centre

150 Albion Street Surry Hills NSW 2010

Telephone +61 [02] 9332 9742 • Fax +61 [02] 9360 3243

Email ankali@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Web www.thealbioncentre.org.au/ankali

Design by Redblue Illustration

Telephone 0408 639 861 • Email redblueillustration@gmail.com • Web redblueillustration.com.au

Two decorative horizontal bars with rounded ends. The top bar is a medium green color and the bottom bar is a darker green color. They are positioned at the bottom of the page, with the top bar being longer and extending further to the right.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Ankali Project. This guide will cover some of the more frequently asked questions by new volunteers. If you still have questions after reading through this booklet, please call the Project and speak to one of the staff. We appreciate and value your commitment to making a difference by joining Ankali. Whilst the nature of HIV has changed over the years, and the challenges faced by people living with the disease are quite different these days, we continue to need people just like you.



Frequently Asked Questions

[FAQ's]

Q. When and why did Ankali begin?

The Ankali Project was established in 1985 in response to the overwhelming emotional support needs of people being diagnosed with AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). The name “Ankali” originates from an Aboriginal word meaning “Friend”. The Project is a division of the Albion Centre and is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health.

In the time since Ankali began, thousands of volunteers have provided emotional support to thousands of clients. Without the dedication and commitment of our many volunteers, this would not have been possible.

Q. What does the Ankali Project do?

The Ankali Project provides a range of services to **People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)**. The main support service is the volunteer project. Volunteers (people just like you) are matched with clients on a one-to-one basis over a short or long term period. Other services provided by the Project include counselling and psychotherapy that is provided by trained clinical staff, and client referral services.

Q. Is the Project run by volunteers?

Ankali is not run by volunteers but by fully trained social workers, who are employed by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. In addition to running and managing the Project, the staff members provide supervision and support to volunteers, design and deliver the training program, and provide social work services to clients of the Albion Centre.



Q. Does Ankali look for a particular “type” of person?

There is no such thing as a “typical” Ankali volunteer. Volunteers come from across the whole adult age range and come from a wide variety of backgrounds (including employment, sexuality, gender and gender identities, religious/spiritual beliefs, and cultural). In fact, it is this diversity that helps make the Project so successful. We therefore don’t look for a particular “type” of person, rather we look for people from all walks of life who can be **non-judgemental**, and who can make a commitment to join the Project for at least 6 months.



Q. What does an Ankali volunteer do?

The main role of an Ankali volunteer is to provide emotional and social support to someone living with HIV. This can take place in a number of different ways. Sometimes clients use volunteers as a sounding board to talk about what's happening in their life, and this may be health or non-health related. This is an important aspect of the Ankali relationship for many of our clients.

Conversely many clients require **social support** to alleviate isolation and boredom. This kind of support can be going to a movie together, going for a coffee, or doing an activity that both enjoy. Most times clients need a mixture of emotional and social support, and the balance between these needs changes, sometimes over time, and at others due to external factors.

Many clients are people who have other issues going on in their lives in addition to their HIV status, including mental health problems, difficulties with alcohol and other drugs, severe social isolation and poverty. Volunteers are not expected to be experts in any of these areas, nor to manage or deal with complex issues like these. It is our experience however, that volunteers providing an Ankali **"friendship"** helps clients in a significant way with such problems.



Q. How much time is involved?

Ankali volunteers are asked to give a **maximum** of five hours per week to supporting their client. Many clients do not require this amount of time for support, and generally contact time is between two and three hours. Sometimes however, things can change in a client's life which means they need more time than has been routinely offered. We ask volunteers to be as flexible as possible in such situations.

There is no rigid framework when it comes to providing a person with emotional support. In the case of an Ankali relationship it is about both the volunteer and the client communicating and being flexible with each other, in order for both to have a positive experience.

Volunteers are also required to attend a volunteer support group for one hour a week. This is explained a little further on.



Q. When do I have to be available?

Most volunteers have other commitments in their lives, such as work, family, relationships, study, other volunteering activities, or personal pastimes and activities. We endeavour to take into account all of these factors when looking for volunteers, and in the vast majority of occasions, manage to accommodate them. This also includes people who do shift work. We are looking for volunteers to commit some of their **free time** whenever that might be during the week.

Q. What happens if I can't keep up the commitment?

Sometimes volunteers find that things happen in their own lives and it can become difficult to keep supporting a client. We always try to be flexible and understanding, and ensure we look after the needs of the volunteer as much as the needs of the client. Ankali relationships can be suspended or ended in a safe and supportive manner for both the volunteer and the client.

Q. Do I need to be a trained counsellor?

Volunteers are not expected to be counsellors or health professionals. The beauty of the Ankali relationship is the **non-professional** support volunteers bring to clients lives. All volunteers bring their own life experiences with them to the Project, and also learn new skills during their time here. This richness of experience and mixture of skills is what makes Ankali relationships special and unique.

Q. Will I get support from Ankali?

We believe that it is essential that volunteers receive supervision and support in the work that they do with clients. This takes place in two ways:

Firstly, all volunteers commit to attending a support group of other volunteers. The groups meet for one hour each week in order to talk about how things are going for each group member and their Ankali relationship. Groups are led and facilitated by two experienced and trained volunteer group leaders. The group process is an extremely effective way for volunteers to talk confidentially about how things are going in their client relationships. It provides an opportunity to ask questions, get feedback, and to support other volunteers in the group. Group attendance is a **compulsory** element of the Ankali commitment as it is essential that volunteers receive the support needed for this type of volunteer work. Groups run on weekday evenings and we also have a weekday daytime group.

Secondly, each member of staff is responsible for supervising a number of the volunteer support groups. Staff members attend group meetings at least once each month, and group leaders provide telephone check-ins on the weeks the staff member is not there. This way the social work staff have an oversight of all of the relationships within the Project, thus providing another layer of professional supervision and support. In the event of complex or more difficult situations arising, the social work staff provide individual supervision and support to the volunteer.

It is our belief that the level of support Ankali volunteers receive correlates directly with the satisfaction volunteers get from the Project and their work with us.



Q. How do I become an Ankali Volunteer?

There are four basic steps involved in becoming a volunteer:

Step 1] Read this information guide.

Step 2] Complete the attached application form. Please read this form carefully and complete all the questions. Once completed, return it to us either electronically to: ankali@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au or mail to:

Ankali
150 Albion Street
Surry Hills
NSW 2010

ALL applications are treated with the strictest of confidence and you will receive notification of its receipt.

Step 3] Volunteers are contacted to attend an informal interview with one of the staff members. This is important as it allows prospective volunteers an opportunity to find out more about us and for us to find out more about them.

Step 4] The final step in becoming a volunteer is to attend the training programs. We conduct three training programs each year, usually in March, July and November. Volunteers are required to attend the entire training, which is run over two consecutive weekends. The dates of our training programs are posted on our website at www.thealbioncentre.org.au/ankali.

The training program is designed to provide you with an understanding of the many issues that people living with HIV and Ankali clients in particular, may be dealing with. The training uses a mixture of training techniques including **formal** face-to-face presentations, electronic or **e-Learning** completed individually at home, and **experiential** sessions. The aim of the experiential sessions is to provide you with some hands-on experience before you take on a client.

We would like to thank you for taking the time to enquire about Ankali and for reading this information. We hope that it has given you the impetus to become a volunteer with the Project. If this is the case we look forward to receiving your application in the near future and to having you join our volunteer team. Please remember, if you have any questions, please call and talk to one of our staff members.



THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL
AND VIEWED ONLY BY ANKALI STAFF



Given Names:			Family Name:		
Preferred Name:					
Address:					
Suburb:			Postcode:		
Home:		Work:		Mobile:	
Email:					
Date of Birth:		Gender:		Age:	
How do you identify your sexuality? (i.e., gay, lesbian, heterosexual, etc)?					
Occupation:				Full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/>
Are you currently studying? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Where? <input type="text"/>			
Name of Course:		<input type="text"/>			
How did you hear about the Ankali Project?		<input type="text"/>			
Have you been a volunteer before? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Where? <input type="text"/>			
In what capacity? <input type="text"/>		How long were you a volunteer? <input type="text"/>			
Do you have access to a car? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		First Language? <input type="text"/>			
Other Languages (including sign language):		<input type="text"/>			
Interests / hobbies:		<input type="text"/>			

In a minimum of one page (you may write more than one page), please tell us why you want to be an emotional support volunteer. Please cover the following points.

- Why do you want to volunteer with the Ankali Project?
- What are your feelings about HIV?
- Do you have any personal experience with illness and what was the effect this had on you?
- Do you have any personal experience with grief?
- What kinds of clients do you anticipate would be the most difficult to work with and why (e.g. clients with alcohol and other drug issues; clients with mental illness; etc.)?
- What is the source of emotional support in your life?
- Do you have a spiritual/religious background, or beliefs and practices?
- What are your feelings about a six month commitment?
- What would you like to gain from being an Ankali Volunteer?
- Anything else you want us to know.

Signature:	<input type="text"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>
------------	----------------------	-------	----------------------

Please return your completed application to: ankali@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au or Ankali Project
150 Albion St
Surry Hills NSW 2010



Ankali Project

A Service of the Albion Centre

150 Albion Street Surry Hills NSW 2010

- Telephone +61 [02] 9332 9742 • Fax +61 [02] 9360 3243
- Email ankali@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au
- Web www.thealbioncentre.org.au/ankali