

Berlin, 2018



GSBTB Open Art Shelter Guidelines for the tutoring volunteers

Welcome! We are really happy that you decided to dedicate your time and skills to support our friends. Here are some basic rules that will help us stay on one page and work responsibly, safely and hopefully with much joy!

1. For the first two sessions you will be accompanied by one of the Open Art Shelter mentors, who will help you break the ice with the person, as well as friendly advice and assess your teaching, communication, cultural awareness skills. They will also answer your questions or contact you with Hania, who is in our team responsible for the psychological, ethical and technical side of the work. These two first weeks are also the time for you and us to change the mind. After that period, we expect your commitment for **minimum 6 months** (less in individual cases upon discussion).

Why so long? Learning happens through relationships and dedication. Moreover, people who have experienced sudden separations, loss, chaos of attachment, need, more than anybody else, some stability and community.

2. **Do not be a stranger.** At the first meetings talk about yourself, show photos of your family, country, a dog, etc. Encourage people to ask you questions.
3. From the very beginning, **be clear** with yourself and the person/people why and what you do. People may be asking you for help with other than language learning tasks, like bureaucracy or accompanying them at the doctors, and it is on you to **balance assertiveness and empathy.**
4. You will be working in **cultural environment** different than “typical Western world.” Especially, concept of time must be negotiated. At least at the beginning come having at least 3 hours of free time, for teaching, for hanging out, for tea and coffee or even a dinner. You will be surprised by people’s hospitality.

Remember to pay back, from time to time bring some flowers or sweets. If punctuality is important to you, remember to communicate it clearly. Explain how your days look like, why your time may be limited.

5. Cultural sensitivity starts from the **body**. In Islam, any bodily contact between a stranger man and a stranger woman is not allowed. It applies also to boys and girls from their early puberty on. So in cross-gender situations no handshakes or hugs are accepted.

When you enter a Muslim home, take off your shoes and be sure that your clothing is clean, not showing too much naked skin (If you want people to feel respected and comfortable do not visit them in short skirts, short pants, or deep decoltes. Etc.). Be sure to not create a situation when you stay alone in a room with a person of opposite sex. It is considered a violation of code of conduct and is source of guilt or anxiety.

6. Never take **photos** of Muslim women or girls. Any other photos take only after asking for permission. Never share photos on which the faces of people are visible on any type of social media.
7. Express **trauma-sensitivity**. You should never be the one who initiate topics like: life in the country of origin, reasons for the fleeing, journey to Europe, family members (the safest is to talk only about the family members that you have actually met in person), war. When people feel ready and safe with you, they will share what they feel like sharing. Of course, once the topic is touched, you can ask questions. Always observe the body reactions, ask yourself if your interlocutor is feeling safe and comfortable. Cultural rule of politeness may stop people from saying firmly "Let's change the topic". Share your own experiences, your family stories. Make an effort to break the stigma surrounding "being a refugee" and show the universality of human experience of loss, suffering, hope.
8. People who experienced trauma have strong need for grounding, stability and control over life. Be sure that you chose one day and time and try to **stick to it**. Keep asking your partner for the preferred topics, structure, ideas.
9. Trauma makes learning and focusing really hard! Stay calm, grounded and kindly encouraging (but not pushy!) when the other side shows signs of disturbance, impatience, nervousness. Accept or even better, consciously involve, some breaks, movement.
10. Be **creative**. Bring with you interesting study materials.

11. Each week send a short (can be one sentence) **report** to Hania (004917643656271 on whatsapp or hania.hakiel@gsbtb.org), just say if and for how long did you meet, what are your concerns, challenges and achievements.

12. Once per two months schedule **a coffee time** with one of the Open Art Shelter mentors to reflect on your experience.

13. Follow Give Something Back to Berlin Facebook page to stay **up to date** with meetings, team-ups, additional trainings for the volunteer community.

14. In case of any trouble, dilemma, ideas, **contact us** with no hesitation.
You work individually, but **you are part of the team!**

15. Have time of your life!

Ok! Got it!

Date and place

Full name and signature

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Your data

Phone number:

Email:

Birthday: