**Ambassador ABS Awareness Presentations**

Awareness raising is one of the core pillars of the ABS Ambassador role – it is something that naturally our Ambassadors feel comfortable doing, whether that is via public speaking or peer-to-peer conversation. We have always encouraged Ambassadors to organise presentations at their practices or further afield to explain the work that ABS do, to reach as many people as possible.

The Ambassador Awareness Presentations are much shorter versions of the ones that ABS offers (no more than 10-15 minutes + Q&A).

We suggest you cover the following areas in your presentation:

1. Who ABS is and our services
2. A case study demonstrating our support
3. Why you are Ambassador for ABS
4. Ways to get involved
5. Our contact details
6. Q&A

**Key messages to land:**

* Fast and effective support – support designed to get people back on their feet quickly, no matter the crisis
* Support that is tailored to you - to suit individual needs and circumstances
* Support designed to help people thrive, not just to survive
* Moving towards preventative support – e.g. mental health support

**Who we are**

ABS is one of a number of long established benevolent societies, who support different professions. Founded in 1850, we are a charity dedicated to empowering those in our community to flourish and live full and rewarding lives.

ABS offers confidential advice, support and financial assistance to the architectural community and their families in times of need.

**Who we support**

ABS supports what we refer to as the ‘architectural community’, not just architects. We support everyone connected to or working in architectural spaces from architectural assistants, to landscape architects to all employees of architectural practices. Any architectural professional who has worked for 1 year (12 months) in a UK practice can all access our support and advice. Individuals do not currently need to be working in one of the named professions to receive support – as long as they have worked 1 year in practice in the UK, they are eligible.

ABS also supports anyone who has worked in practice for 2 or more years within the last 5 years, such as office managers, HR professionals and comms. We support the families and dependants of all of the above.

We also support students at an undergraduate level via our partnership with AnxietyUK.

If you are ever wondering, we have our eligibility criteria clearly shown on our website which you can use to double check. But we always encourage everyone to get in touch via the helpline or email – if we can’t directly support you, we may know who can.

**Support Services**

We offer five core support services, developed to help each individual person we support holistically. We know that often, when one area is affected in a person’s life it could be caused or affected by another. Our experienced Welfare Team will take the time to talk to you and listen to your challenges so we can get to the heart of it.

How we can help

* Money & Debt
* Mental Health & Wellbeing
* Housing advice
* Employment
* Physical Health & Disability

All our services are supported by our network of fantastic partner charities and highly knowledgeable benefit advisors to ensure you get the support that you need when you need it.

We also have lots of resources available on our website, and our Welfare team are on hand to offer advice and guidance.

**Ways to get involved**

**Chicken Run** – a 5k fun run through central London – to be held at Glenn Howells London office in June 2023. Dressing as a Chicken is optional but encouraged!

**#Time2Sketch** in September 2023– a sketching competition where participants are sent the theme and then have 1 hour to sketch before returning their drawing to us via email. Designed to encourage people to take an hour out of their day to think creatively and take a break!

**Key questions**

**How do I get help?**

ABS has a completely confidential helpline and email address, as well as an online enquiry form on the website that you can use to get in touch to discuss any problems you are facing with our welfare team. Contact details are on our website.

**How do I know if I’m eligible?**

ABS has an eligibility checker on our website which you can use to see if you are eligible for our support. However, we always recommend phoning or emailing us directly, as our welfare team have considerable knowledge of other charities, or other organisations where you might be able to find support.

**What is a dependant?**

We use the term ‘dependant’ to describe anyone who is financially dependant on one of the core groups we support, ie: Architects, AT professionals etc. (excluding children at university). For example, in the past we have supported widows or children of architects who have passed away, helping them to rebuild their lives and providing financial security.

Dependants have to be financially dependent, and if so we would consider support for a child up to 18 (or up to 25 if they have a disability), or a parent if the eligible person was supporting them financially.

We would always recommend people to contact the Welfare Team direct to ask any questions as we may be able to provide support, or to pass them on to a different charity to assist.

**How do I prove I’m an architect/landscape architect/dependant etc?**

 Our Welfare Team will ask for a CV or professional membership number to confirm eligibility. In the case of dependants, the Welfare Team will ask a few questions to determine eligibility.

**Can I refer a friend?**

No, the individual must get in touch directly with the welfare team, otherwise there are confidentiality issues.

**How do the financial grants work?**

ABS uses the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) devised by Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Loughborough University to benchmark our financial grants. MIS is not just about making ends meet, but about having a decent standard of living – a fundamental belief that we hold at ABS. This means that whilst you may be in work, you could still be eligible for a financial grant if your income is below the benchmark. Anyone applying for a financial grant will complete a financial assessment form to ensure their eligibility. In addition, ABS can refer you for welfare benefits check to make sure that you are receiving the correct benefits for your circumstances, with a view to maximising your income.

**Why should I have a longer presentation?**

The longer presentation goes into much more detail about our services, how you can access them and the role our partner charities play. We have different versions available, including a focused mental health & wellbeing presentation, which makes a case for why wellbeing is crucial in the workplace and has some practical tips included.

**How do I become an Ambassador?**

On the ABS website, under ‘Get Involved’ you can register to become an Ambassador via an online form. You will then have an informal call with the Supporter Engagement and Events Officer before a training session with other potential Ambassadors is booked in.

Alternatively, you can get in touch direct via Jessica.steele@absnet.org.uk

**CPD status of presentations**

Currently, our awareness raising presentations are not CPD accredited– we often refer to them as an ‘informal CPDs’ for this reason. We are hoping to apply for accreditation for the presentations (alongside our wellbeing webinars) in 2023, so watch this space! The important thing about our presentations currently is the awareness raising aspect – its vital people know about the wide-ranging support that is available to them.

**Where does ABS get their money?**

As a charity, all our accounts are publicly available via the Charity Commission. Our income is made up of donations and legacies, rental income from properties owned by ABS, and investments. Our corporate partnership scheme is growing and we hope to see it become a significant sustainable income stream in the coming years.

**What’s a corporate partnership scheme?**

The ABS corporate partnership scheme has been developed to encourage stronger communication and connection between ABS and the organisations that are a part of it. There are benefits to becoming a corporate partner, such as improved corporate social responsibility, visibly working to support the architectural community and employee engagement via access to presentations, events and more.

**My practice has an employee support scheme, why do I need to support or know about ABS?**

We would encourage those who have access to an employee assistance programme to use it when they need to, as it is a benefit of your employment and is strictly confidential even though the employer pays for it. However, ABS can potentially help in a range of wider ways and takes a holistic approach rather than focusing on a single issue. ABS is here specifically for the architectural industry and families. Supporting ABS is a way to support fellow colleagues in the architectural community when they need it most.