

# Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program Volunteer Handbook



***“Be the change you want to see in the world.”***

- Mahatma Gandhi

# Table of Contents

<i>The History of VHA Home HealthCare .....</i>	<b>9</b>
<i>More Independence.....</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>Volunteering with VHA Home HealthCare .....</i>	<b>11</b>
<i>The Benefits of Volunteering.....</i>	<b>12</b>
<i>Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers .....</i>	<b>13</b>
<i>Rights and Responsibilities of VHA.....</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>Senior Visits.....</i>	<b>15</b>
Your role as a Seniors' Activity Support Volunteer .....	16
Tasks .....	16
Volunteers Can Not.....	16
<i>The Visit .....</i>	<b>17</b>
Good Ideas .....	17
Assisting a client .....	17
<i>Reporting.....</i>	<b>18</b>
Emergency Protocol.....	18
Falls.....	19
Other Situations.....	19
<i>Effective Communication .....</i>	<b>20</b>
Show You Care.....	20
Listening Skills .....	20
Effective Communication Under Special Circumstances.....	21
Confusion and Memory Loss .....	22
Cross Cultural Communication .....	22
Loss and Grief .....	23
Depression .....	23
Suicide.....	23
<i>Our Clients.....</i>	<b>24</b>
Where Do Our Clients Live?.....	24
What is Social Isolation?.....	24
Isolation vs. Loneliness.....	24
<i>Self - Care Tips.....</i>	<b>25</b>

<b><i>Program Supervisor</i></b> .....	<b>26</b>
When to call the Program Supervisor.....	26
What You Can Expect From the Supervisor .....	27
What the Supervisor Expects from You .....	27
<b><i>VHA General Policy and Procedure Manual</i></b> .....	<b>28</b>
Policy .....	29
Collection .....	30
Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism.....	30
<b><i>Volunteer Policy</i></b> .....	<b>31</b>
Position Description .....	31
Recruitment.....	31
Screening.....	31
References.....	31
Criminal Reference Check.....	31
Acceptance .....	31
Probationary Period.....	32
Performance Reviews .....	32
Maintenance of Records .....	32
Conflict of Interest .....	32
Dress Code.....	32
Identification Badge.....	32
Absenteeism.....	32
Volunteer Agreement .....	32
Confidentiality .....	33
Boundaries .....	33
Implications of Boundary Breaches.....	34
Health and Safety .....	34
Fire Regulations for Volunteers .....	36
Gifts .....	36
Telephone numbers .....	36
Driving clients.....	36
Home Visits .....	36
Inclement (bad) weather.....	37

Emergencies and Unusual Occurrences.....	37
Drugs and Alcohol.....	37
Incidents.....	37
Conflict Resolution.....	37
Orientation.....	38
Recognition.....	38
Resignation.....	38
Progressive Discipline.....	38
Grounds for immediate dismissal include but are not limited to:.....	38
<b><i>Code of Conduct</i></b> .....	<b>40</b>
We commit to our volunteers by:.....	40
Because of this important role, we expect volunteers to:.....	40
<b><i>Volunteer Position Description</i></b> .....	<b>41</b>
Position Title:.....	41
Program Description:.....	41
Area Served:.....	41
Tasks:.....	41
Time Commitment:.....	41
Age Requirement:.....	41
Skill Requirement:.....	41
Training:.....	42
Screening and Supervision:.....	42
Working Conditions:.....	42
Supporting Policies:.....	42
Benefits:.....	42
Agreement/Approval:.....	42
<b><i>Seniors' Activity Support Volunteer Log</i></b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b><i>Annual Offence Declaration</i></b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b><i>Volunteer Program Feedback</i></b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b><i>Volunteer Satisfaction Survey – End of Each Assignment</i></b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b><i>Safety Tips(Policy #I.40.0)</i></b> .....	<b>51</b>
Before You StartOut.....	51
If you have a personal cell phone.....	51

Traveling by Transit .....51

Traveling by car - before you drive, plan ahead .....51

Walking on the streets .....51

At the Client’s Home .....52

**Acknowledgement**

Thank you to Neighbour to Neighbour 2.0 from The Toronto Neighbourhood Group (TNG) for sharing their resources on volunteer training.



Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is an extension of being a good neighbor, transforming a collection of houses into a community, as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others. By caring and contributing to change, volunteers decrease suffering and disparity, while they gain skills, self-esteem, and change their lives. People work to improve the lives of neighbours and, in turn, enhance their own.

*(Making a Case for Volunteer Centres, Volunteer Ontario, 1996)*



Creating More Independence

## Vision:

Everyone receives community support and home health care when, where and how they want it

## Mission:

Creating possibilities for more independence

## Core Beliefs:

Our care must be:

- Spectacular and continuously focused on quality improvement and safety
- Client-driven, because what matters most to clients is what counts
- Integrated and collaborative to unearth innovative answers to complex challenges
- Inclusive and committed to serving the most vulnerable in our communities
- Inspired and creative, delivered by a skilled team that has tremendous heart

As a charitable not-for-profit organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors, VHA is committed to:

- Fiscal responsibility
- Ethical practices in all our operations
- Driving positive change in community support and home health care



**2000**

VHA's celebrates its 75th anniversary. Three-year accreditation status is awarded by the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation. **Extreme Cleaning Program** developed to help people suffering from mental health challenges facing eviction because of unsanitary living conditions.

**2001-2002**

Our name is officially changed from Visiting Homemakers Association to **VHA Home HealthCare**, reflecting the growing range of services. More than one million hours of care were delivered to over 9,500 clients and their families across all our programs. In partnership with COTA Health, VHA opens "Adams House," a supportive housing complex for tenants with severe mental illness who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

**2003-2004**

VHA is accredited for a second three-year term. VHA's long-serving President and CEO David Wright retires. Carol Annett is welcomed as our new President and CEO. VHA wins breakthrough CCAC nursing contracts with Durham Access to Care, North York CCAC and Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton CCACs. As a result, the nursing program grew by over 100,000 service units.

**2005**

VHA celebrates its 80th anniversary at the 2005 AGM and launches the **Heroes in the Home** (renamed **Heart of Home Care Award** in 2011) Award.

**2006**

The volunteer program is established when VHA receives funding from the United Way to provide further service to families living in the high priority neighbourhoods in Scarborough.

**2009**

The VHA family grows when COTA Health's Rehabilitation Services –offering physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, social work and dietetics– joins as **VHA Rehab Solutions**.

**2010**

VHA Home HealthCare celebrates its 85th anniversary. Today, we have over 1,600 workers delivering over 1.7 million units of service that support people to live with more independence.



# The History of VHA Home HealthCare

**1925** The **Visiting Housekeepers Centre** is founded by Barbara Blackstock Cody to provide homemaking services to families with an ill mother. Launching with only 14 housekeepers, this is the first service in Canada to bring trained, supervised workers into homes experiencing crisis from a critical illness.

**1929**

The **Visiting Homemakers Association (VHA)** becomes an independent agency and Blackstock Cody is elected president.

**1937** VHA initiates parental relief for polio victims.

**1951** Homemaker services extended to care for sick children of single working mothers.

**1958** Home care was initiated under a Federal Health Grant and VHA was a participating agency. Provincial legislation means the province now provides financial assistance to municipalities for homemaker services.

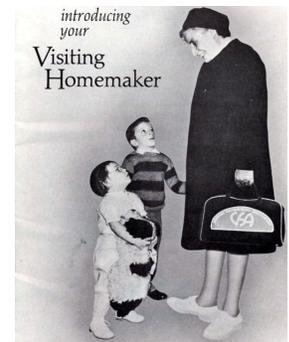
**1964** After a three-year pilot project, VHA services begin to include care for the elderly.

**1969** VHA moves to a new building donated by the **W. Garfield Weston Foundation**.

**1974** The **Parental Relief Program**, financed by United Community Fund, offers homemaking to families where the mother has a disability or one-parent families where the father has a physical disability.

**1981-1985** Demand for homemakers and provincial support increases so that by 1985, VHA provides 355,000 hours of service.

**1998** **Nursing programs** are added to our list of services to offer clients a broader spectrum of home health care.



## More Independence.

It's what individuals and their families want when they choose to receive care at home or in the community, and what VHA Home HealthCare (VHA) has supported since 1925.

Our caring team of professionals provides nursing, rehabilitation, personal care and home support services to people who need help at home, school, work or a long-term care facility. Many of these services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

But VHA strives to do *more*. We inspire our staff and service providers to bring *more* to their work with responsive, skilled and compassionate care.

### We offer:

- Nursing
- Personal care/support
- Homemaking
- Rehabilitation services:
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Physiotherapy
  - Speech-language pathology
  - Dietetics
  - Social work services
- Caregiver relief/respite
- Information and referral



As a charitable, not-for-profit organization and founding member of the United Way of Greater Toronto, we also deliver *more* to our communities through innovative and invaluable programs that help those who couldn't afford support otherwise.

VHA also provides a range of in-home support services on a charitable basis funded by the United Way, the City of Toronto, federal or provincial government grants and by VHA's own charitable dollars.

### Current Community Support programs include:

- Parent and Child Support
- Parent Relief
- Parent and Child Volunteer Services
- Homemaking
- Hoarding Support Volunteer Services
- Rebound and Reconnect Caregiver Relief
- Activation Volunteer Services
- Extreme Cleaning
- Private Services

# Volunteering with VHA Home HealthCare

## Welcome to VHA Parent Relief Volunteer Program!

Congratulations on your decision to become involved in the community and join our team of dedicated volunteers! This will be a journey of remarkable adventure, accomplishment and experiences that you will remember throughout your life!

We live in a multicultural society. Culture is about the way we do things, how we feel, how we act and what we believe and aspire to. Some ways in which our multicultural community is reflected in our society include the food we eat, our customs, entertainment, language and history. While volunteering, you are sure to meet many fellow volunteers and clients who are culturally diverse. It is important to accept and respect the diversity of Scarborough and its residents and recognize the positive value diversity brings to our lives and society.

“Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale...it does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds”

*Bill Clinton*



# The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering offers you wonderful opportunities for professional development and personal growth:

- To improve and give back to the community
- Personal growth
- Develop social and professional networks
- Explore new career options
- Develop new skills
- Enhance existing skills
- Encounter new challenges
- Enhance responsibility
- Build your resume
- Pathway to employment
- **Because it's fun!**



**“Too often we under-estimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”**

**-Dr. Felice Leonardo Buscaglia**

# Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

## As a volunteer you have the right to:

- Be treated with the respect and dignity
- Work in a healthy and safe environment
- Have the support of other volunteers and staff
- Be given accurate and truthful information about VHA
- Be provided with orientation to the organization and your role
- Know what your job is and be given a detailed position description
- Be provided with appropriate training and support to carry out your role
- Be appropriately supervised
- Have your personal information kept confidential
- Develop new skills
- Be informed of any changes that will impact your job
- Receive ongoing guidance, feedback and recognition from VHA staff
- Report any comments or concerns regarding working conditions or clients to the Volunteer Coordinator



## As a volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- Be reliable and punctual
- Be accountable for your actions
- Be committed to the organization
- Undertake training as required by the organization
- Understand and show interest in your volunteer position
- Be courteous to clients, staff and other volunteers
- Respect confidentiality
- Value and support other team members
- Not give out personal information to clients
- Ask for support when you need it
- Accept support and supervision of the Volunteer Coordinator
- Carry out the specified position description according to the position description
- Give notice before you leave the organization
- Let the Coordinator know (preferably 24 hr. notice) as early as possible if unable to attend a visit
- Take advantage of learning opportunities that are presented by the organization

## Rights and Responsibilities of VHA

### VHA has the right to:

- Make decisions about appropriate placement of its volunteers
- Review volunteer performance according to organizational policies and procedures
- Expect volunteers to perform their role to the best of their ability, be prompt and reliable
- Expect from all volunteers, respect and courtesy towards all clients, paid and voluntary staff
- Set the parameters and guidelines of the volunteer work positions
- Release a volunteer who is not appropriate for the volunteer work



### VHA has a responsibility to:

- Provide a clear outline of duties
- Provide orientation and necessary training
- Provide safe and healthy working conditions
- Include volunteers in relevant decision-making processes
- Set clear lines of communication about complaints and conflict resolution procedures
- Provide supervision and support
- Provide emergency procedure guidelines
- Provide required documentation relating to the volunteer work to be undertaken

**“The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.”**

**-DeAnn Hollis**

## Senior Visits

The volunteers will provide in-home support for 1.5/2 hours weekly for 2 months during the pilot program. Two hours a week may not seem like a lot of time, but these two hours make a world of difference for a senior client who is experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

The support you provide is tailor made to each client. Volunteers offer vital links into the community, helping isolated seniors engage in meaningful activities and get connected to community resources.



The first match will be conducted between the program supervisor, the volunteer and the client. The Program Supervisor will discuss practical issues around the visits, answer any questions and set a schedule for future visits. Areas for discussion may include; the purpose of the visits, role of the volunteer, expectations, times, days and duration of visits, procedures to follow if volunteer/client cannot attend a scheduled visit, confidentiality and boundaries.

Don't forget to complete your visit log after every visit and e-mail it to the Program Supervisor.

We understand that people become ill or have family emergencies. We ask that you contact the Program Supervisor as soon as possible so that she can notify the client that you are unable to make the visit. When the Supervisor is not available please contact the Volunteer Coordinator. If you know you are going to be unavailable at a certain time (planned vacation) it is imperative to notify the Program Supervisor. You are expected to make up any missed visits due to illness or unforeseen emergencies.

Volunteers are to work within the responsibilities outlined in the position description. It is important to stay within the assigned tasks that you and your supervisor set as limits for your position. If new issues arise or you have some new ideas, discuss them with the program supervisor prior to making any changes. If you are uncertain about a client's request contact the program supervisor for guidance. It is okay to say "No" or "I need to check that out first."

During visits, volunteers are asked to turn off their cell phone to prevent any distractions. You might want to purchase a pair of slippers from the dollar store to wear in the client's home. Remember as a direct service volunteer you represent VHA and an organization is judged in part by the people who represent it.

## Your role as a Seniors' Activity Support Volunteer

### Tasks

- Arrange a suitable time to visit in advance and be prompt
- Call the client if you will be late or need to reschedule the visit
- If you cannot make the visit let your program supervisor know
- Visit reliably for approximately 1.5-2 hours weekly
- Engage in activities such as games, cards, going for walks etc.
- Be compassionate, considerate, patient and engage in active listening
- Maintain confidentiality of the client
- Encourage the client to maintain independence
- Participate in the evaluation of the program
- Promptly report any concerns or problems to your program supervisor
- Discuss areas of concerns regarding the client's wellbeing with your program supervisor
- Assist in identifying client needs (i.e if you notice or the client discloses to you that food security is an issue for them, notify your program supervisor)
- It is important that as volunteer you seek to understand your own boundaries and limitations. Please communicate these to your program supervisor. We want to know!

### Volunteers Can Not

- Sign as a witness on any legal documentation or complete banking transactions for clients
- Administer ANY medication (including over-the-counter medication such as Children's Tylenol or cough syrup), give medical treatments (including activities such as cutting nails) or give health/ medical advice
- Drive a vehicle for the purpose of client family transportation
- Lend money
- Disclose personal information
- Judge families when they don't agree with your suggestions
- Physically discipline or restrain any child
- Protect a parent whose parenting is putting a child at risk
- Investigate suspicions of child abuse
- Promise not to advise the coordinator of a concerning situation or promise not to contact Children's Aid Society
- Express personal, religious or political beliefs
- Perform duties of unionized personnel
- Bring friends or relatives with you while volunteering
- Receive or make personal telephone calls during your visit, except in the event of an emergency

# The Visit

## Before

- Set up a time that is mutually convenient
- Call before the visit to confirm
- Be on time and call if you will be late
- It may be helpful to set up a schedule of pre-arranged visits (i.e. every Monday at 3pm)
- Allow for extra time if you are planning on going somewhere together

## During

- Be attentive and practice effective communication
- Aim to do an engaging activity together that is meaningful to the client
- Take notice of the client and their surroundings; How are they feeling? What are they talking about? How does their home look? Report any concerns to your program supervisor
- Respect your own boundaries, limits and wishes
- Respect clients' boundaries, limits and wishes
- Encourage the client to maintain their independence

## Good Ideas

### What Can You Do Together?

#### Here are some ideas:

- Go for a walk
- Go out for coffee
- Play a game
- Go to a community event
- Learn a skill together
- Watch a movie together
- Teach each other something
- Help the client make a phone call

## Assisting a client

As a volunteer, you have a role in assisting the person you are visiting. Some people need help with looking up phone numbers, writing letters or using cell phones. These are all things you can help them with. The following are some assisting roles that you as a Seniors Activity Support volunteer should not assume. If the person you are visiting is asking you to help them with the following tasks, let your program supervisor know.

**PERSONAL CARE** Volunteers are not expected nor advised to provide personal care or counseling to clients.

**CLEANING AND/OR LAUNDRY** Volunteers are not expected nor advised to help the client with extensive cleaning or laundry.

**BANKING** Clients may develop a trusting relationship with you and ask your assistance with banking. While you may accompany the client to the bank, do not do any banking on behalf of the client. Do not acquire

knowledge of the client's bank account numbers, pin numbers or personal financial information.

**MEDICATION** Do not give or assist a client in taking any kind of medication. This volunteer limitation includes taking pills out of bottles or pouring or measuring any drugs for the client.

**GROCERY SHOPPING** Many clients need assistance with groceries. You may accompany the client to the store and, if you are comfortable doing so, assist with carrying grocery bags. The client must make the payment for their own groceries. **Do not** do grocery shopping for the client.

## Reporting

### When and What to Report?

Volunteers are expected to work within the definition of their volunteer role. Regular contact with clients can allow volunteers to make important observations about changes in the health and wellbeing of the person they are visiting. Volunteers are expected to report such observations to their program supervisor.

These are some changes you should report to your program supervisor right away:

- Changes in the client's health such as eating or sleeping problems
- Changes in the client's behaviour
- Concerns about the safety of your client or others in the home
- Concerns about your own safety
- Changes in the client's physical appearance
- Changes in the client's home surroundings (e.g. a usually tidy home is suddenly messy)
- Anything else that you are concerned about or think staff should know

### What to report on a weekly or monthly basis?

- How often you visited the client
- What activities you did together with the client
- Any non-urgent/unconcerning updates (e.g. family visitors, trips, etc.)

\*You will be given a document to help you track and record these non-urgent updates.

## Emergency Protocol

### Emergencies

This protocol covers

- 1) When you are with a client and an emergency situation arises
- 2) When a client is not responding to their doorbell, knocker and/or buzzer An emergency situation or event is one in which:
  - A person's (including both the client and volunteer) life safety is at risk and/or
  - Serious bodily injury has occurred

### When you are with your client and an emergency event occurs:

- Make sure you are safe

- Call 911
- If you can, try to open the door so emergency services can enter
- As soon as possible, report the emergency to your assigned staff emergency contact

**When a client does not respond to their doorbell, knocker, and/or buzzer:**

- If you have the client's number available, call them
- If the client lives in a house, and you feel safe doing so, observe what you can (e.g. notice if the door is unlocked or damaged, if the windows are closed or open)
- If the client lives in an apartment, try to inform the superintendent that you had a planned visit and you cannot reach the client
- Report to your program supervisor and follow the directions given to you for the specific client you are matched with.

**Falls**

If you are with your client and they have a fall:

- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE THEM
- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LIFT THEM
- If the person can't get up on their own, call 911
- Understand that a person has the right to refuse help

**Other Situations**

For all other non-emergency situations that have not been outlined above you can call your assigned emergency staff person.

The Toronto Seniors Helpline is also here to help. They offer 24/7 support for seniors The Toronto Seniors Helpline: 416-217-2077.

# Effective Communication

## General Do's and Dont's

### DO

- Make eye contact and center your attention on the person you are visiting Use clear and simple language
- Be patient
- Ask the person to repeat something you didn't understand
- Give the client time to process and understand what you are saying Listen attentively
- Call the person you are visiting by name Be clear

### DON'T

- Don't present false hopes or make promises you can't keep; be honest and realistic Don't make decisions for the client
- Don't blame or accuse. Approach troubling subjects with openness (e.g. "I feel" not "You").

## Show You Care

- Be sensitive to the hopes, fears and tensions of the person you are visiting.
- Acknowledge client's emotions such as fear, anger, frustration, happiness or excitement.

## Listening Skills

Communication has three components<sup>1</sup>:

- Verbal - the words (7%)
- Content - the message (38%)
- Non-Verbal - the tone and body language (55%)

Good listeners are attentive to all three components! If you pay attention to what someone is saying, not saying, and how they are saying or not saying it, you can better interpret the true meaning of the message. This allows for the listener to give useful feedback.

Feedback: We use feedback to express our understanding of what was communicated to us. We can give feedback in a negative or positive way. Here is an example of negative feedback: "you do not try hard enough." This is what positive feedback sounds like: "I see that you are trying and it seems that you are doing much better."

When both listening and providing feedback it's important to do so empathically. Empathy means "to feel in" or to put yourself in the place of another person to understand their feelings.

To convey you both understand and are interested in what another person is saying try:

**Passive listening:** listening without a spoken response. This can tell someone:

<sup>1</sup> Vera N. Held (1996)

- You want to hear what they have to say
- You accept their feelings
- They are in charge in that moment

**Silence:** This can be nodding or looking into the person’s eyes. Silence can be effective because it shows the speaker you are concentrating on their words.

**Active listening:** mirroring the message. Here is an example: Speaker: “I feel like I can’t get anything done, I’m busy all the time and have no time for myself.” Listener: “I hear that you are overwhelmed.” This is often the most effective listening skill as it shows the speaker that you are trying to understand what they are communicating.

## Effective Communication Under Special Circumstances

Remember that because someone has a disability like blindness or deafness does not mean that person is incapable of comprehension or decision making. Treat the person with respect and communicate in a normal adult manner.

### Hearing Impaired

Here are some guidelines<sup>2</sup>:

- Supplement your verbal messages with visual cues like facial expressions, gestures or body movement.
- Speak only after you have attracted your client’s attention. Make sure they are seeing you.
- Speak in a normal conversational tone without shouting and avoid exaggerating lip movements. Speaking in a slightly lower pitch and at a slightly slower rate of speech can be helpful. Using complete short phrases and sentences is also helpful.
- Be aware of the light source in a room: avoid standing with your back to a window or light as shadows on your face can make it difficult to see.
- Avoid walking around while talking.
- Decrease external noise as much as possible.
- Allow for longer intervals between sentences. This allows the hearing impaired person time to process and respond.
- Avoid eating or chewing gum while talking.

### Visually Impaired

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) suggests the following when interacting with visually impaired individuals:

- Introduce yourself at once. Shaking hands is a friendly means of contact.
- Be natural when using words like “blind” and “see”
- Placing a blind person’s hand on a chair, railing or door frame can allow for the individual to assist her or himself.
- Offer your arm.
- Doing things like reading aloud or writing letters can be appreciated by visually impaired or blind

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Hearing Society and the Locke-Windsor Consulting Group  
Resources current as of 2018

individuals.

## Confusion and Memory Loss

Individuals can have memory loss and confusion for a number of reasons. Dementia is an umbrella term for a disorder that exhibits the primary symptom of deterioration of mental functioning. Dementia is not a “normal” part of the ageing process. Some symptoms of dementia include: memory loss and errors in judgement, reduced interest in activities, general apathy, mood swings (depression, irritability, anxiety, frustration), tendency to be distant and self-absorbed, tendency to fabricate stories (possibly to hide confusion), feelings of suspicion and paranoia, and increasing aggressiveness.

It is important to remember that the individual is unable to control these symptoms. When communicating with someone with confusion or memory loss keep the following points in mind:

- Avoid open-ended questions. Try asking questions with limited choices like “Would you like to go for a walk or go for coffee?” and keep questions short and simple.
- Minimize the use of pronouns; repeat the name of the person
- When giving instructions, break down the tasks into simple steps. Give one step at a time.
- Repeat yourself and restate critical facts several times when relaying messages.
- Try to modify the topic so that topics are focused on familiar situations or things that are directly observable.
- Be literal.
- Providing visuals may assist you in communicating. Drawings or pictures can be helpful.
- Establish eye contact before addressing the person.
- Use gestures. Physical cues can aid in communication.
- Avoid environmental distractions as it is often easier to hold attention in quiet environments.
- Do not agree to things you don’t understand. Repeat and search for clue words to assist you in connecting with the person.
- Give the individual time to respond. If a response does not occur repeat yourself.
- Be patient. If you or the other person begin to get frustrated, take a break from communication attempts and try again later. Both you and the person with dementia can sense emotions such as frustration and anger.
- Both you and the person with dementia can also pick up on positive emotions. It is helpful to speak in soothing gentle voice and have a calm presence.

IF YOU NOTICE A CHANGE IN THE CLIENT’S COGNITIVE ABILITY NOTIFY YOUR PROGRAM SUPERVISOR RIGHT AWAY. IF THE MATTER IS URGENT FOLLOW EMERGENCY PROTOCOL.

## Cross Cultural Communication

Patterns of communication differ across cultures. For example in some cultures it is customary to avoid eye contact when speaking with another person; in other cultures, getting very close to another person while relaying a message is the norm. Some cultures use touch to feel close and connected while other cultures avoid touching. Understand other cultures helps reduce communication barriers across culture.

## **Loss and Grief**

Loss can come in many forms. Loss can happen from the death of a family member or friend but feelings of loss and grief can also occur due to the loss of a job or even the death of a plant. Grief refers to the feelings experienced when a loss occurs and can encompass deep sorrow, anger, guilt, and confusion. When communicating with someone who has experienced a loss, encourage them to tell you what they feel and avoid telling them what they feel. Listen and express understanding.

## **Depression**

See additional resource from Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health: Depression in Older Adults: a guide for seniors and their families

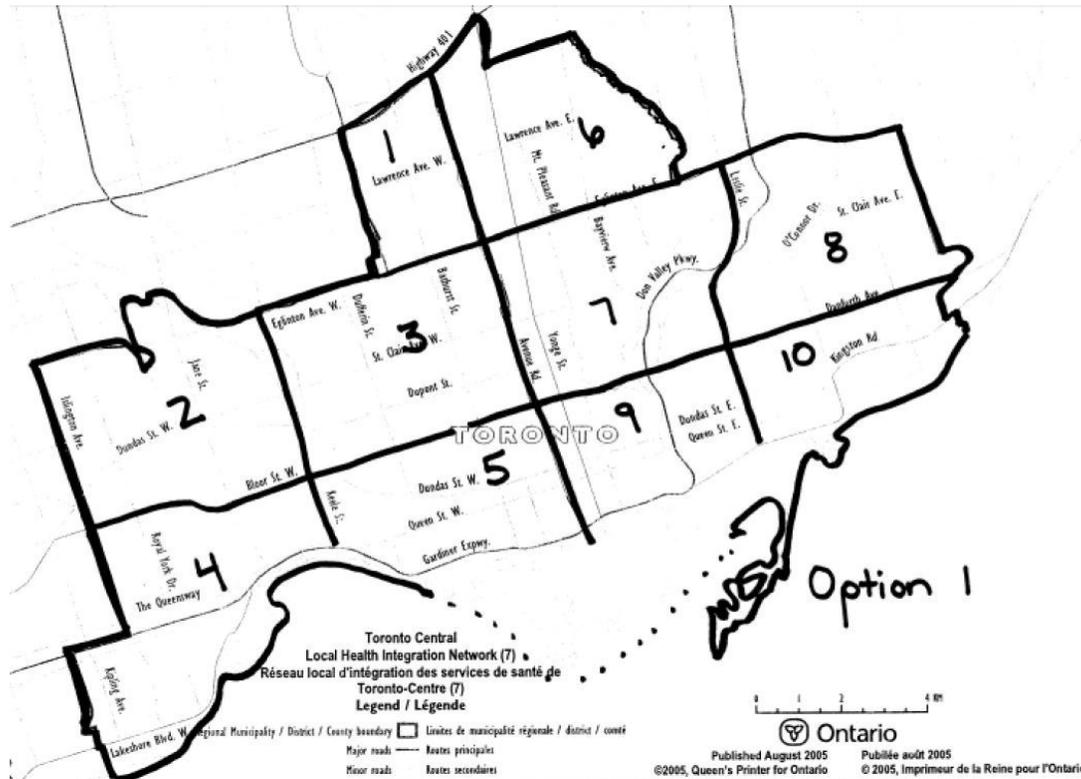
## **Suicide**

See additional resource from Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health: Suicide Prevention Among Older Adults: a guide for family members

# Our Clients

## Where Do Our Clients Live?

The clients reside within the following boundaries:



## What is Social Isolation?

Social isolation is commonly defined as a low quantity and quality of contact with others. It can affect anyone. Older adults are at a greater risk because of increasing likelihood of life circumstances like: loss of social group, health and physical issues, loss of social role (e.g. employment), loss of partner and other contributing factors. Research shows that people who have a strong social group live longer, healthier lives. They are sick less often and recover from illness more quickly. Social isolation can negatively affect the overall health and wellbeing of an individual.

## Isolation vs. Loneliness

These are not the same thing! Loneliness is a feeling and isolation is a circumstance. Someone can feel lonely without being isolated and someone who is isolated may not feel lonely. Clients in our program are socially isolated older adults who often feel lonely.

## Self - Care Tips

Staying healthy while you volunteer is very important. If you aren't feeling physically or emotionally 100 per cent you won't be able to do your volunteer work as effectively as you would if you were feeling well.

There are many ways you can ensure you feel up to doing the work. These include making sure you look after yourself, at work and at home.

### Here are a few tips:

- Ensure you are in the right volunteer role
- Look for the positive and set realistic goals for your volunteer time commitment
- Establish your personal priorities
- Avoid committing too much of your time
- Be realistic about your goals and ambitions
- Avoid setting unrealistic deadlines
- Move on or change roles when your role is no longer fulfilling
- Accept there are some things you can't change
- Seek help from others when you need it
- If your volunteer role is stressful, debrief with your Volunteer Coordinator.
- Don't be afraid to take time off
- Exercise
- Keep things in perspective
- Attend monthly support meeting regularly
- Have fun and remember to laugh!

**Remember to give yourself some recognition as well!**

***"Our sense of self-worth is defined not by what we get from the world, but what we give to the world".***

***Justin Trudeau***

# Program Supervisor

The supervisor is responsible for the ongoing management of the pilot program and is the first line of support for volunteers. The supervisor will discuss the program and the position description with you. This discussion is an opportunity for you to ask questions and to receive information to guide you in your volunteer activity. All information you provide is confidential.

## When to call the Program Supervisor

It is important to know when to contact your supervisor. Here are a few instances:

- In an emergency after 911 has been called
- If you suspect abuse
- When the client has become too demanding
- To answer any questions or concerns
- If you move or change your phone number or e-mail
- If you plan to take a break from volunteering at any time
- For information on resources for clients
- To give suggestions, ideas, or to request a specific training
- If there are any health or safety concerns in the client's home
- If you hear about a crime, either past or present
- If you need emotional support or just to hear a friendly voice
- If the client is not home for your scheduled visit

## What You Can Expect From the Supervisor

**Orientation:** The supervisor conducts training and provides you with a clear description of your role. Included is a plan for dealing with any difficulties or emergencies, should they arise.

**Regular Contact:** The supervisor maintains regular contact and is available to discuss any concerns.

**Feedback:** On a regular basis, the supervisor communicates with you to review your volunteer activities. This is an opportunity for the supervisor to learn how you are doing, and for you to share ideas about the program.

**Reference Letter:** After the completion of the pilot program, Volunteer Services would be pleased to write a letter of reference to support the volunteer's goals. Please provide two weeks' notice for a letter to be produced.

## What the Supervisor Expects from You

There are many different kinds of volunteers and many different jobs, but all volunteers have one thing in common: **Volunteers Make a Difference.**

Your commitment to the Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program means that you must be:

### Dependable

- Attend orientation and training sessions
- Arrive on time for scheduled shifts
- Inform the supervisor when unable to complete or can no longer be a volunteer

### Willing to communicate with the supervisor with regard to:

- Any immediate questions and concerns you may have
- Reporting regularly as required
- Participate in feedback sessions aimed at improving service

**Discretion in Working with VHA Clients:** You may hear personal and private information. It is important that you respect and follow VHA guidelines regarding confidentiality and share this information only with designated VHA staff and volunteers

**Knowledgeable About Your Volunteer Role:** Understand the responsibilities that are or are not part of your role and **question anything that is not clear.**

**Enthusiastic:** An enthusiastic volunteer is our best public relations person. We constantly count on you to help us find ways of improving our service program.

# VHA General Policy and Procedure Manual



VHA recognizes the individual's right to privacy of personal and health information. While individuals do not have the property right to their record and its contents, they have the right of protection and accuracy of all information contained therein and a right of control and access.

Personal information includes both client and employee information. Personal information is that which contains the client or employee name and/or other data that makes the identity of that person readily ascertainable.

The President/CEO has ultimate accountability for protecting the personal information of clients and employees. VHA has appointed a Privacy Officer who is responsible for developing policies and procedures on privacy matters, training regarding privacy, receiving questions on privacy matters and overseeing compliance with VHA's policies and procedures on privacy.

VHA's clients, employees and volunteers are informed of their privacy rights and a summary is posted on our website.

**“The greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but to reveal to him his own” Benjamin Disraeli**

## Contact Details

Program Supervisor:	Nadine Narain, OT Reg. (Ont.)
Contact phone number:	416-489-2500 ext. 1090
Alternative Contact:	Volunteer Coordinator
	Dawn Ashford, BSW
Contact phone number:	416-489-2500 ext. 4327

## Policy

- All personal information collected by VHA must be maintained in strict confidence. Personal and health information about a client communicated to VHA in the course of considering a request for service or the delivery of services is also confidential information.
- Individuals must be assured that their personal information will remain private and confidential.
- Individuals have a right to know who can access, view, use and disclose their personal information.
- Data quality is critical to the delivery of services. All data must be accurate, reliable, accessible, up-to-date and secure.
- Collection of personal information shall be limited to only that which is necessary for the purposes identified. No one will collect personal information without a service-related purpose.
- Only authorized VHA staff, service providers and volunteers will be given access to personal information and only on a need-to-know basis. All new staff, contracted employees, volunteers and Board members will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon commencing their association with the organization. Outside contractors will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement as part of their contract(s) with VHA.
- Personal information shall not be used or disclosed for any purposes other than those for which it was obtained, except with the consent of the individual or as required by law.
- All personal information shall be maintained in designated private areas inaccessible to unauthorized personnel by sight and sound, and be subject to strict security controls.
- All personal information, while in active use, must be in the care and control of designated persons only. All personal information must be returned to the designated, secured area following active use.
- Personal information must never be left accessible or available for reading by unauthorized persons.
- Personal information being transported, transmitted or released in any way shall be protected from viewing or interception by unauthorized persons.
- An employee will not share their personal access authorization or password to VHA's network with any other employee or third party. Any violation of this policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. In the event of an emergency situation, personal access authorization and/or passwords may be asked for and given to a Manager.
- Written or verbal information regarding an individual cannot be released to a third party without the knowledge and consent of that individual (except in emergency circumstances or as required by law.) Personal information will be shared as necessary among the "care team."
- The transmittal of personal information will be done securely within the limits of current technology, and will indicate that the information is strictly confidential, only for the use of the identified recipient and only for the intended purpose.
- Personal information will be destroyed in accordance with legislation. Periodic destruction of inactive or outdated personal information will be conducted in a formal manner with destruction being witnessed by designated staff and clearly documented as to what was destroyed.

## Collection

- VHA collects personal information with respect to its clients for the sole purpose of providing nursing, personal support/homemaking, and extreme cleaning services, and quality monitoring and risk management with respect to those services. If personal information is to be used for any other purpose, this purpose will be communicated to the individual and consent obtained prior to that use.
- VHA also collects personal information with respect to its employees and volunteers for the purpose of fulfilling legal, legislative and contractual obligations within the employer and employee relationship and for the protection of the clients that it serves. If personal information is to be used for any purpose other than the stated purpose, it will be communicated to the individual and consent obtained prior to that use.

## Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

- VHA is committed to ensuring that its mission, operations, and services embrace the entire community we serve. Our services are sensitive to the needs of culturally and racially diverse groups and promote positive ethnic/race relations and attitudinal change. We celebrate our diversity and learn about each other by encouraging the sharing of and learning about the many cultures of our staff, clients and volunteers.

# Volunteer Policy

The Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program accepts volunteers from the community providing they meet the requirements of the program.

A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by VHA before beginning any client visits. Volunteers agree that VHA may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate a volunteer's involvement with the Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program.

A volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to end their relationship with the VHA Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program. Notice of such a decision should be given to the program supervisor at least two weeks prior to the volunteer's departure.

## Position Description

Each volunteer will be given a current position description outlining the duties and responsibilities of the job they are expected to fulfill. The position description will be used in the management and evaluation of volunteers. The position description will include: the purpose and tasks of the job, a time frame for the job completion, a list of qualifications/skills, a description of benefits and who the volunteer reports to.

## Recruitment

Volunteers will be recruited on a proactive basis, with the goal of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement of the community. The recruitment of volunteers shall be based on their suitability to perform the tasks of the Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program.

## Screening

All volunteers applying to the Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program will be interviewed to ascertain their suitability and interest in the position. The purpose of the interview will be to determine the qualifications of the volunteer, their commitment to the program, and address any questions that the volunteer may have about the position. Interviews will be conducted in person.

## References

Each volunteer shall provide two names of people that can act as their references. These people cannot be family members or friends. Satisfactory reference checks are a condition of volunteering with VHA.

## Criminal Reference Check

Volunteers will be asked to submit the Consent to Disclosure Form to the Police Service in their area of residency. Criminal Reference Checks are required prior to visiting a client's home and an Annual Declaration of Criminal Activity is to be signed by the volunteer if they choose to renew their commitment to the organization after one year.

## Acceptance

Volunteers will begin volunteering once they have been officially accepted into the Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program and have completed all necessary screening, training, and paperwork. At this time each volunteer will receive a copy of their position description with an agreement of service with VHA.

## Probationary Period

All volunteer placements shall initially be done on a probationary period to be determined by the volunteer coordinator. This period will not exceed three months.

## Performance Reviews

This is an evaluation process that allows us to see how the volunteer is doing. It gives the supervisor the opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and assess the volunteer's performance. The volunteer has the opportunity to provide feedback regarding their experience and identify additional training needs.

## Maintenance of Records

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer, including date of service, position held, duties performed, evaluation of work performance and recognition bestowed. Volunteers will be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the volunteer coordinator in a timely and accurate fashion. Volunteers' personal records shall be accorded the same confidentiality as staff personal records.

## Conflict of Interest

No person who has a conflict of interest with the volunteer position or organization, whether personal, philosophical or financial, shall be accepted or serve as a volunteer. A volunteer may not provide goods, services or any actions that may cause the volunteer to gain (financially or otherwise) from their working association with a VHA client. This is a major breach of policy and is grounds for discipline up to and including termination. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the VHA Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program as specifically indicated within their position descriptions.

## Dress Code

As a volunteer representing VHA it is expected that you will maintain a professional appearance at all times. Volunteers are asked not to wear perfumes or cologne during their shift. It is recommended that you wear comfortable shoes with low or no heels. Bring a pair of indoor shoes or slippers to the client's home to wear. We ask that you do not wear T-shirts with offensive language or imagery on them. Avoid wearing earrings or other accessories that can be grabbed or pulled. Avoid wearing conspicuous jewellery or religious symbols.

## Identification Badge

All volunteers are required to have a photo identification badge. This badge must be worn during every visit. The ID badge must be returned upon completion of your volunteer service.

## Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to show up for their scheduled visits on time. If a volunteer is unable to attend a scheduled visit, he/she is required to inform the Program Supervisor in advance.

## Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Agreement. This agreement outlines your responsibilities and commitment to the agency.

## Confidentiality

Please be mindful of the information you share with others while carrying out your volunteering duties. As a volunteer you have access to personal information about clients. No information about clients, including their identity, should be given to any person or agency outside of our organization, unless there is legal requirement to do so.

VHA is committed to ensuring confidentiality of client information. We respect the privacy of client, staff and volunteer information. We acknowledge our ethical as well as our legal obligation to protect client information.

- Volunteers are expected to take every reasonable precaution against unauthorized viewing of client information and loss or damage to VHA client records
- Volunteers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all information they have access to as a result of volunteering at VHA including information from and about clients, other volunteers and staff
- Volunteers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all information they have access to as a result of volunteering at VHA including information from and about clients, other volunteers and staff
- Volunteers will not discuss VHA clients with other clients, family members or other volunteers, other than the volunteer coordinator or others involved in the client's care plan without authorization from the volunteer coordinator
- Volunteers will not be picked up or dropped off at a client's residence by anyone
- Care will be taken when transporting client information

Confidentiality also applies to the volunteer. It is strongly recommended that the volunteer not give out their phone number to clients so that your confidentiality and private time is respected. Clients are instructed to call the program supervisor if they wish to change plans or get a message to the volunteer. Volunteers should not, during their time with VHA or after leaving the organization, use or disclose any confidential information about a client/staff or fellow volunteer.

## Boundaries

### What are they and why do we need professional boundaries in volunteer roles?

- Boundaries set the parameters of what is and is not acceptable behavior by staff, volunteers and clients in the workplace.
- Boundaries help to protect and inform both staff, volunteers and clients by clarifying what types of behaviour is and is not acceptable.
- Establish structure, create order in our lives and gives us clear indications of hierarchy
- Clear boundaries help to develop trusting relationships with clients who will know what to expect from staff and volunteers.
- Boundaries help to develop professionalism by encouraging high standards of work and consistency between staff, volunteers and clients. (The Volunteer Strategic Partnership).
- Boundaries provide a clear framework so that volunteers can recognize when to stop and question what they are doing.

## Implications of Boundary Breaches

- Create safety risks
- By going over and above, you might increase client expectations, more than you are able to deliver
- If you go outside of your assigned duties, you no longer represent what the service we offer aims to achieve
- Serve the volunteer's needs more than the client's needs
- Could potentially put your volunteer position at risk

## Health and Safety

VHA views employee and volunteer safety as paramount in all work conditions. The homes that the volunteer visits will already have undergone a safety check.

**Immunization and Good Health** – You are important so make your health a priority. By practicing good hygiene habits, you will aid in preventing the spread of infections. The following suggestions will help to ensure your good health:

- Eat healthy as per Canada's Food Guide
- Get plenty of rest, recreation and keep fit
- Engage in appropriate storage and preparation of food
- Insure your immunization is up to date. Adults should have tetanus and diphtheria every ten years

The influenza vaccine is also suggested and the rubella immunization should be up to date for childbearing women

**Hand Washing** – This is the single most important thing you can do to protect yourself and the client. Nothing else can replace this action. Hands are the most common method of spreading germs and viruses. Make sure you always wash your hands:

- Before and after all direct client contact
- Before and after handling food
- After using the washroom
- After changing diapers
- Before feeding an infant or child
- After sneezing and coughing
- After wiping or blowing your nose or helping a child to do this (remember to discard the used tissue into a garbage with a lid)
- After using play material such as play-doh and paint
- When hands are dirty

If you are feeling ill with a cold, the flu or other symptoms do not report for your shift. Make sure to notify the volunteer coordinator that you will be unable to attend your shift as soon as possible. You are responsible for rescheduling your shift at a later date when you are feeling better.

# Smoke-Free Ontario Act

Volunteers will not smoke on the client's premises while on or off duty, under any circumstances. Volunteers may request that clients refrain from smoking and/or open windows while they are there.

Protection for home health care workers (this also applies to volunteers)

**9.1 (1)** Every home health care worker has the right to request a person not to smoke tobacco in his or her presence while he or she is providing health care services. 2005, c. 18, s. 9.

## Right to leave

**(2)** Where a person refuses to comply with the request not to smoke, the home health-care worker has the right to leave without providing any further services, unless to do so would present an immediate serious danger to the health of any person. 2005, c. 18, s. 9.

## Restriction

**(3)** A home health care worker who has exercised his or her right to leave shall comply with any procedures set out in the regulations. 2005, c. 18, s. 9.

## Regulations

**(4)** The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations setting out procedures that must be followed if a home health care worker has exercised his or her right to leave. 2005, c. 18, s. 9.

## Definition

**(5)** In this section, "home health care worker" means a person who provides health-care services in private homes, that is provided or arranged by,

- (a) a community care access corporation within the meaning of the *Community Care Access Corporations Act, 2001*, or

an entity that receives funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care or a local health integration network as defined in section 2 of the *Local Health*

## Fire Regulations for Volunteers

Listed below are the steps a volunteer should take to safely evacuate themselves as well as their clients in case of a fire:

- Know the location of exits and stairwells in client homes/buildings. In the event of a fire, exit the client's home immediately through the nearest safe exit and assist the client/client's family to exit immediately.
- If you are unable to assist client (e.g., wheelchair bound client lives on upper floor of building and elevators are shut down), immediately notify fire officials of the client's location. In addition, to the extent possible, assist any other person(s) who may be in immediate danger.
- Close all doors behind you to confine the fire. Dial 911 when at a safe location, giving information on location of fire. Notify Volunteer Coordinator after calling 911.
- Do not return until home/building is declared safe by fire officials

## Gifts

We ask that volunteers do not personally accept any gifts or donations if offered to them by clients. A cup of tea or a small token on a special occasion may be accepted if refusal will cause offence, but the line between a gift and a payment must never be crossed. If you have any doubts, please discuss them with your supervisor.

## Telephone numbers

Volunteers must never give out their home, work or mobile telephone numbers to clients. If the client needs to contact you, this should be done through the office. The volunteer however, may be given the client's phone number. If phoning them yourself, please ensure you dial \*67 prior to the number to block your number.

## Driving clients

Transportation of clients is not permitted in volunteer's personal vehicle. Volunteer is not permitted to ride in client's vehicle.

## Home Visits

These visits should be a positive experience for both volunteer and family, we want to ensure that your volunteering experience is safe and rewarding. The Program Supervisor will pass along all relevant and necessary client information to the volunteer. Volunteers are required to keep all client information confidential. The volunteer should always wear the VHA identification badge, given to you by the Supervisor. Please respect clients' privacy and personal circumstances and avoid making comments about their living conditions (which may vary greatly).

If at any time you feel unsafe in an environment in which you are providing service on behalf of VHA, the volunteer must seek support/assistance in whatever way is suitable to the circumstances. For example:

- Call 911
- Call the Program Supervisor/office
- Exit the home/area and call the Program Supervisor

**Inclement (bad) weather**

We are concerned for your safety and the safety of our clients. If you can safely visit your scheduled family, please do so. Do not put yourself at risk. Please call the Program Supervisor if you are unable to attend and to reschedule the visit if it is too dangerous to travel. The Supervisor will inform the client of the change.

**Emergencies and Unusual Occurrences**

It is important that you always feel safe and comfortable while volunteering. At any time, if you find yourself in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, politely excuse yourself and leave immediately, call the Program Supervisor to make her aware of the situation. If the client is verbally abusive, try not to respond as this may exacerbate the situation, leave immediately. Report the incident to the Program Supervisor. If you are unable to reach the program supervisor then follow the steps outlined in the contact sheet.

**Drugs and Alcohol**

While on duty as a volunteer with VHA, volunteers are expected to abstain from alcohol, controlled substances and any involvement with illegal drugs that could affect your ability to perform your work.

**Incidents**

If you are in any kind of accident while volunteering with VHA, report the incident immediately to the Program Supervisor.

**Conflict Resolution**

If you have a complaint about a client, another volunteer or a VHA employee, contact the Program Supervisor for investigation and follow-up.

## Orientation

We provide orientation for all new volunteers. Orientation sessions are scheduled as needed. Volunteers must attend an orientation before starting their visits with a client. The Volunteer Coordinator will notify the volunteer by email the date of the next session.

## Recognition

VHA endeavors to recognize and celebrate its volunteers both informally and formally throughout the year. Informal support and recognition is provided through a variety of ways such as newsletters, monthly meetings and regular contact with the Supervisor. We pay tribute to our volunteers on International Day of Volunteers (December 5th) and during National Volunteer Week (April). Special events are planned to show appreciation to volunteers.

## Resignation

Volunteers are expected to provide two weeks' notice of their intention to leave VHA. Volunteer ID badge and manual must be returned upon resignation before a reference is provided. All volunteers leaving VHA are encouraged to participate in an exit interview. References will only be given after a volunteer has fulfilled their agreed upon commitment.

## Progressive Discipline

Any problems that may occur can normally be resolved quickly between the volunteer and the Program Supervisor by a discussion which will always be the initial approach. However, there may be times when this approach doesn't succeed thus, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) Meeting with the volunteer will be scheduled: the purpose of this is to identify the problem(s) or issue(s) and then agree on ways to alleviate them.
- 2) Probation: the Volunteer's subsequent performance will be monitored for a specific length of time.
- 3) Follow-up interview will be held at the end of the set time to determine if progress has been made.
- 4) Concluding the Volunteer Relationship: if the volunteer's performance has not improved within the set time period, then the volunteer will be interviewed again and asked to refrain from volunteering.

## Grounds for immediate dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Breach of confidentiality
- Being impaired while under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the performance of duty
- Theft or misuse of client or agency funds, equipment or materials
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts
- Abuse, harassment or mistreatment of clients, co-workers or volunteers
- Exceeding the boundaries of the position description

**Thank you for your time and dedication to the  
Seniors' Activity Support Pilot Program.**

**“Everyone can be great because anyone can serve.  
You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You  
don't even have to make your subject and your verb  
agree to serve.... You only need a heart full of grace. A  
soul generated by love.”**

*Dr. Martin Luther King*

# Code of Conduct

At VHA we believe volunteers are a valuable human resource and play an important role in striving to meet the mission of our organization: Creating more possibilities for Independence

## We commit to our volunteers by:

- Offering a volunteer program that has adequate resources, is well managed and has the appropriate infrastructure to ensure volunteers are working in a supportive environment
- Ensuring every volunteer receives a thorough orientation and training and that at this training, the mission of the organization is clearly communicated
- Providing the necessary supervision and accessible support so that you can fulfill your commitment to the organization
- Informing you of all new programs, services and changes to policy that impact the services offered to our clients
- Providing you with a detailed, current volunteer position description that not only clearly outlines your volunteer role but also how you will give and receive feedback
- Creating an environment where there is open communication, a sense of teamwork and respect for diversity between volunteers and staff
- Providing ongoing opportunities to learn and grow which includes the opportunity to experience various positions while you are volunteering with our organization
- Recognizing you for your contributions and accomplishments in both formal and informal ways
- As a volunteer at VHA Home HealthCare you act as an ambassador of our organization.

## Because of this important role, we expect volunteers to:

- Participate in orientation, training and ongoing development opportunities
- Work within the boundaries of your volunteer position description while supporting the vision, mission and policies outlined by our organization
- Act as an ambassador of VHA Home HealthCare by taking ownership for actions and decisions made while volunteering
- Approach your volunteer assignment as a professional commitment
- Engage in discussions with the Program Supervisor in order to express your comments, suggestions, or concerns
- Promote a team spirit by respecting differences in people, valuing diversity of opinion and working with others to achieve the goals of our organization
- Value the importance of providing exceptional quality service to our clients that is second-to-none by being friendly, informed and respectful
- Fulfill your commitment to your assigned family

# Volunteer Position Description

## Position Title:

Seniors' Activity Support Volunteer

## Program Description:

To provide support seniors in their homes and in the community to promote engagement in meaningful activities. The aim of the program is to reduce social isolation and loneliness through social interaction and engagement in client-centred activities.

## Area Served:

Neighbourhoods in Toronto

## Tasks:

- Arrange a suitable time to visit in advance and be prompt
- Call the client if you will be late or need to reschedule the visit
- If you cannot make the visit let your program supervisor know
- Visit reliably for approximately 1.5-2 hours weekly
- Engage in activities such as games, cards, going for walks etc.
- Be compassionate, considerate, patient and engage in active listening
- Maintain confidentiality of the client
- Encourage the client to maintain independence
- Participate in the evaluation of the program
- Promptly report any concerns or problems to your program supervisor
- Discuss areas of concerns regarding the client's wellbeing with your program supervisor
- Assist in identifying client needs (i.e if you notice or the client discloses to you that food security is an issue for them, notify your program supervisor)
- It is important that as volunteer you seek to understand your own boundaries and limitations. Please communicate these to your program supervisor. We want to know!

## Time Commitment:

Minimum 2-month commitment required. Volunteers will visit clients once a week for 1.5-2 hours. Opportunities will be available to help more than one clients. Days and times are negotiable between volunteer and clients.

## Age Requirement:

Must be 18+

## Skill Requirement:

- Friendly and caring attitude
- Experience and sensitivity to working with culturally diverse families
- Creativity in planning and implementing activities

- Good listening skills
- Previous volunteer experience an asset
- Occupational Therapy or related discipline an asset
- Understanding of the aging process, impact of aging on the individual and family an asset
- Background in gerontology, recreation, activation an asset
- Related experience with older adults an asset
- Knowledge of community resources an asset

### **Training:**

- Orientation to the agency and volunteer program
- Training on various aspects of experience of social isolation and loneliness and aging

### **Screening and Supervision:**

Application form with 2 references

Interview

Signed Agreement

Criminal Reference check including a Vulnerable Sector Screening

Reports to Program Supervisor on a regular basis

Program Supervisor will be available for feedback and support

### **Working Conditions:**

Visits occur in the homes of clients.

### **Supporting Policies:**

Volunteer Handbook

Volunteers will be governed by VHA policies

### **Benefits:**

Professional training

Enhance personal growth

Increase communication skills

Decrease the feeling of isolation felt by the parents being served

Facilitate learning targeted to specific needs of children

Apply current skills, learn new, transferable skills

References letter given after fulfillment of commitment

### **Agreement/Approval:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Program Supervisor's Signature

# Seniors' Activity Support Volunteer Log

PLEASE FILL OUT AFTER EACH CLIENT VISIT

**Date of Visit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Activities:**

.

**What am I doing to bring out the clients strengths:**

**What resources in the community would the client like to learn about:**

**What have I learnt about the client:**

**Program Supervisor's Notes/ Suggestions:**

# Annual Offence Declaration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: Volunteer

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Phonenumber: \_\_\_\_\_ DateofHire: \_\_\_\_\_  
(dd/mm/yyyy)

Have you ever been convicted of a crime for which you have not received a pardon? Y  N

Have you been granted a conditional discharge within the past 3 years? Y  N

Have you been granted an absolute discharge within the past year? Y  N

If \*yes, please provide details on all convictions (if more space is needed, please attached additional pages.)

<u>Offence</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Penalty</u>

The existence of a conviction will not necessarily preclude you from volunteering with VHA Home HealthCare. Details of the offence are requested and will be discussed with you by the HR Manager. Thank you for your cooperation.

I swear that the above answers are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

VHA Home HealthCare  
Confidentiality and Non-Competition/Conflict of Interest Agreement

**Policy: Confidentiality/Non-Competition/  
Conflict of Interest for Board Members,  
Office Staff and Suppliers**

**Policy #: H.02.0**

**Original Date: September 2000**

**Revised: 5/03; 11/03; 11/05**

**Position Responsible: President/CEO**

**Status: Approved**

---

**Policy:**

**Confidentiality**

All staff, board members, students, volunteers and suppliers/consultants associated with VHA Home HealthCare must agree to maintain confidentiality of client information, employee information and corporate information as a condition of employment, holding office, volunteering or receiving service contracts.

For clarity, confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- client information (including client lists and preferences)(see G.01.0 and G.02.0);
- corporate information (including any and all business, operations and activities of VHA and its customers, suppliers and personnel, such as operations, orientation, and training manuals);
- financial information (including cost and performance data and financial statements);
- operational and technical information (including trade secrets, products and specifications, know how, data, work methods, practices, improvements, devices, inventions, discoveries, concepts, ideas, designs, photographs, graphs, drawings, samples, research and development, work-in-progress);
- marketing information (including current and anticipated client requirements, price lists and information concerning suppliers);
- employee information (including personal data, employee lists, resumes, organization structure, labour relations information, recruitment, remuneration, bonus structure, performance evaluations and personnel training techniques and materials);

whether or not such information is considered confidential or private under any applicable legislation or in common law.

Written consent of VHA management must be received for disclosure of any confidential corporate information. With respect to employee information, consent of the employee is required in most circumstances (see H.90.0). With respect to client information, refer to Policies G.01.0, G.02.0, and G.25.0.

**Non-Competition**

**Employees**

All office employees and students working in VHA's offices must agree to refrain from engaging in any business or enterprise relating to the delivery, design or coordination of in-home homemaking, personal support, nursing or extreme cleaning services;

**Employees, Board Members, Volunteers, Students and Consultants**

Office employees, board members, volunteers, students and consultants must agree to:

- refrain from soliciting, calling upon or accepting any business of any firm, person or company who is or was a customer, client or supplier of VHA;

VHA Home HealthCare  
Confidentiality and Non-Competition/Conflict of Interest Agreement

- take no action which may impair the relationship which VHA has established with its customers, clients, suppliers, employees or others or which may potentially cause damage to the reputation of the Company or be detrimental to its business interests.

In addition, before their term of office, appointment, or contract, board members, volunteers, students and suppliers/consultants will declare any potential conflict of interest particularly one related to involvement in the design, delivery or coordination of services of the same nature as those provided by VHA.

**Exception**

An exception to the non-competition provisions of this policy may be granted with prior written consent of VHA.

**Procedure:**

- HR will ensure that all staff, board members, students, volunteers, and suppliers/consultants read this policy upon hiring or before executing a contract.
- HR will ensure that every office employee, board member, volunteer, student working in one of VHA's offices and supplier/contractor signs the Confidentiality and Non-Competition/Conflict of Interest Agreement (attached below) upon hire/contract, and that a copy is maintained on file.
- HR will ensure that every field staff person and student working in the field for VHA signs the VHA Field Staff Confidentiality Agreement (attached below).
- On an annual basis, staff, board members, students and volunteers will re-sign the relevant agreement. Staff will sign it at their annual performance appraisals, students and volunteers will sign it at the time of their annual reviews, and board members will sign it before each annual general meeting.
- Suppliers/contractors will re-sign the agreement at contract extensions and renewals.

**Risk:** Litigation; breach of contract; violation of legal obligations; harm to VHA's reputation.

**Resources:** VHA's privacy policies (G.01.0; G.02.0; G.25.0; H.90.0); P-HIPA.

VHA Home HealthCare  
Confidentiality and Non-Competition/Conflict of Interest Agreement

**Confidentiality and Non-Competition/Conflict of Interest Agreement  
For Administrative, Office and Management Staff,  
and Board Members**

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ (month), \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the terms stated above in Policy  
H.02.0

regarding confidentiality and non-competition.

I will keep confidential all client, staff, and corporate information to which I am exposed while employed at or contracted with VHA, both now and after my employment/contract with VHA is over. I understand if client, staff or corporate confidentiality is broken on purpose or through willful negligence, it will be considered a serious breach of trust and/or contract, and will result in appropriate action by VHA.

I declare that I have no conflicts or potential conflicts of interest except as stated below:

---



---



---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee     Board Member     Volunteer     Student     Consultant

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Position of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## CONSENT TO FILM/PHOTOGRAPH AND INTERVIEW

VHA Home HealthCare has a website, publishes newsletters and other promotional material to raise awareness of VHA Home HealthCare, our services and programs. VHA also recruits new staff through promotional material.

VHA would like to interview and possibly film and/or photograph you. The film, photographs and interviews may be used on our website, in recruiting forums or in other promotional material—including articles in magazines, trade publications and newspapers.

If you are a client of VHA, your consent or refusal to be filmed, photographed or interviewed will have no impact whatsoever on your services.

If you are a staff member of VHA, your consent or refusal to be filmed, photographed or interviewed will have no impact whatsoever on your employment.

If you are willing to be filmed, photographed and/or interviewed for VHA's use as described, please sign your name below.

---

### CONSENT:

I consent to the use of my image (photo and/or video) and my words by VHA Home HealthCare. I understand that my image/words may be used either in whole or in part in promotional materials about VHA Home HealthCare, its services and programs, and the community care sector. This includes on VHA Home HealthCare's website, in videos, electronic and print newsletters, magazines, newspapers, letters to donors, advertisements, television commercials, posters, or other material displayed to the public for promotional, educational, recruitment, fundraising or information purposes.

I fully acknowledge that my photo/image (and interview if any) have been donated to VHA, that they belong to VHA and that I waive any fees for payments.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Volunteer Program Feedback

Thank you for the time and energy you have devoted to our volunteer program. Your responses on this form will help us evaluate and improve our services. Your responses are confidential.

**Dates of volunteer service:** \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

1. *Did the training you received when you first arrived as a volunteer help you carry out your role?*

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Was the Program Supervisor available when you needed help?* Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Did you receive sufficient training and support for your volunteer work?* Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. *Were your questions or requests addressed in a timely manner?* Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_

5. *Did you feel that you were part of the program and that you were valued as a team member?*

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Please give examples:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *Would you recommend VHA as a place to do volunteer work?* Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_

7. *Overall, how satisfied are you with your volunteer experience at VHA?*

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

8. *What do you feel you have gained from your Seniors' Activity Support volunteer experience?*

*Please provide any comments you have about the Seniors' Activity Support (Pilot) Program and suggestions on how the program could be improved?*

# Volunteer Satisfaction Survey – End of Each Assignment

**Volunteer Name:**

**Date**

VHA is always striving to improve the performance of our volunteer co-ordination. As one of our volunteers, we would appreciate your help to identify what we might do better. Please be as honest as you can when answering these questions. All of the information which relates at a personal level will be compiled in the strictest confidence but will be used to help ensure that others who volunteer receive the best possible treatment.

1. How long did you visit the client?
2. Were you matched with a client in a timely matter?
3. What did you enjoy most about visiting the client?
4. What did you enjoy least about visiting the client?
5. Did you link the client up to community resources? If so, which ones?
6. Would you have like additional training?

Suggestions or feedback?

## Safety Tips (Policy #I.40.0)

Below is a compilation of “tips” that all staff/independent contractor service providers/volunteers should read and become familiar with. Staying safe is a combination of good judgment, eliminating unnecessary risks and being aware of others and your surroundings at all time.

### Before You StartOut

- Familiarize yourself with your work area
- Plan the safest route to and from the client’s home either by transit or car Check out the local transit route (schedules and times)
- The office must know your schedule; inform the office of any changes.
- Be aware of special client issues e.g., any known history of aggression or violence or infection

### If you have a personal cell phone

- Program in emergency numbers
- Do not give clients personal numbers.
- Use call block when calling clients.

### Traveling by Transit

- Wait in well-lit, high traffic areas
- Sit near the driver
- Ask the bus driver to stop in a well lit area or near your destination if it is late at night

### Traveling by car - before you drive, plan ahead

- Give yourself plenty of extra time to reach your destination, allowing for emergencies or traffic jams
- Avoid aggressive driving
- Be alert to signs of fatigue and pull over for a break or rest as needed Wear your seat belt
- Keep your eyes on the road Obey the new hands-free law
- Keep your car in good running order
- Check fuel levels and keep the gas tank topped up
- Check for directions before heading out Park your car in a well lit area
- Keep your car doors locked
- Prior to getting out of the car, check the area for suspicious activity When walking to your car, keep your keys in your hand
- Check the back seat before entering your car
- If you think you are being followed, drive to the nearest safe place such as a gas station

### Walking on the streets

- Keep to roads/sidewalks that are well traveled and well lit; walk on the side with the lights.
- Avoid passing alongside areas which are covered or bordered with large bushes or vegetation Always stay alert and mindful of your surroundings
- Do not wear ear plugs or use an iPod or MP3 players Walk with a purpose, head up, and shoulders straight Avoid using Automated Teller Machines(ATMs) at night Carry essential identification only

- Limit the amount of cash you carry Carry a personal alarm
- In the event of a robbery, in handing over your purse or wallet, throw it as far as you can away from you in a direction that gives you a clear escape route, then run

### **At the Client's Home**

- Avoid walking through a crowd to get to the client's home
- Use elevator safety – do not enter if you are suspicious of anyone inside
- Schedule visits in the morning when there is less undesirable activity in the neighborhood If you are in a life-threatening situation in an elevator, push all the buttons
- If you are in an apartment building and need help, yell ``Fire`` and knock on doors

