



Client Support Volunteer

Position Description

Reporting to: Coordinator of Volunteers

Role Summary Outline:

The Client Support Volunteer will establish a supportive relationship with the client and their family/friends and promote and enhance a meaningful quality of life for all clients by providing emotional and practical support.

Screening Procedures:

All applicants, with the submission of an application, will provide Hospice of Waterloo Region with three references. Applicants will attend an initial interview with the Coordinator of Volunteers and possibly a second interviewer (volunteer or staff member). After this initial interview, the interviewer(s) will decide if the applicant is to be accepted into the Client Support Volunteer Training Program.

Training:

All trainees must attend 33-hours of training, before they can be placed within the community as a Client Support Volunteer. The following pieces of information will be gathered *during* the course of the training:

- Police Vulnerable Sector Check – Applicants must provide a clear police records check.
- Signed confidentiality agreement.
- If volunteer will be driving clients, must provide Driver's Abstract, proof of automobile insurance and a valid driver's license.
- Immunization records.
- TB test – One-step test required for all Client Volunteers.

All necessary documentation must be present in the volunteer's file before they will be matched with a client.

Evaluation:

The Coordinator of Volunteers will evaluate the Client Support Volunteer three months after being matched with a client, or placed at Lisaard House or area hospital for service. Feedback will be provided on an ongoing basis.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Visit the client/family once a week to develop a supportive relationship.
2. Provide respite care (an interval of relief) for family/friends and maintain a supportive relationship with the client through the end-stages of life until death. This may include changing the location of your visits i.e. from home to hospital, and bereavement support.
3. Assist with comfort measures as an extension/substitution of the family's role:
 - Assist with errands, feedings or personal grooming (hair, makeup, fingernails)
 - Assist with sponging of face and hands (before/after eating, toileting)
4. Engage client in relaxation/diversionary activities such as:
 - Reading aloud (newspapers, magazines)
 - Watching TV, listening to music, playing cards
 - Writing letters, notes
5. Liaise between client and staff or client and family when necessary.
6. Participate in other client services when possible, such as:
 - Accompanying the client to appointments
 - Shopping
 - Accompanying client/family upon discharge or readmission to the hospital
7. Maintain telephone contact with client/family when appropriate.
8. Report on a regular basis to the Coordinator of Volunteers or the appropriate intake/assessment staff member, when:
 - the Volunteer's role is unclear.
 - there is an increase in client's level of pain or client is experiencing increasing weakness or is falling.
 - there is a change in appetite, sleep patterns or awareness
 - there is a change in the client's location, i.e. admission to hospital.
 - there is a termination of services by the client/family.
 - there is unusual/urgent situations or unexpected family problems.
 - there is a need for additional service.
 - there is suspected abuse and incidents involving injury or accident.
 - death occurs.
9. Assist the family with funeral arrangements, if requested.
10. Communicate with the family during the bereavement period. Volunteers may continue to provide bereavement support to the families with whom they have worked for up to 6 months, if the family wishes.
 - Attendance at the funeral service or memorial service of client is encouraged.
 - Volunteers are encouraged to seek bereavement support for themselves through the Coordinator of Volunteers.

Timeframe:

Volunteers are required to visit their clients 2 – 4 hours per week. Hospice of Waterloo Region requires a minimum of one year of service.

Volunteer Site:

At a mutually agreed upon time, the Client Support Volunteer will visit their client where the client resides, whether that be a residential home, a long term care facility, a residential hospice or a hospital.

Qualifications:

- Ability to be flexible in time and role to meet the changing needs of the client and family.
- Possess a valid driver's license if transport of the client is to be a part of *your* responsibilities as a Client Support Volunteer
- Ability to apply the principles of active listening (patience, not prying, thinking before responding, being attentive and reflect understanding)
- Excellent communication skills
- Non-judgmental

Benefits:

- Satisfaction from helping people affected by terminal illness by providing compassionate presence and emotional/practical support.
- Hospice of Waterloo Region will reimburse mileage and parking expenses when the volunteer accompanies the client to out-of-town appointments.
- Active volunteers may apply for an Education Bursary to supplement costs of educational workshops/seminars in the hospice palliative care field.
- Opportunities for support, additional learning and skills development will be made available to volunteers at monthly Volunteer Connection meetings (excluding summer months) or through other educational programs/seminars offered by Hospice of Waterloo Region or outside sources.

For Further Information:

Contact: Katie O'Donovan, Coordinator of Volunteers

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I, _____ have read the Client Support Volunteer role description, and understand the responsibilities of the position, and the standards of conduct to which I am held accountable.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____