

Neighbor Network



VOLUNTEER MANUAL



**DOUGLAS COUNTY
DIVISION OF HUMAN SERVICES
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CASTLE ROCK, COLORADO 80109
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VOLUNTEER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following lists reflect the County's expectations for all Staff and Volunteers. These lists are not inclusive; upon assignment to a site you will be informed of other requirements through the training process. The following, however, is basic to the operation at all sites and in all Volunteer Positions.

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

The right to be treated as a co-worker

The right to a suitable assignment

The right to know as much about the agency as possible

The right to training

The right to continuing education, as appropriate

The right to guidance and direction

The right to advancement as skills are mastered

The right to a variety of experiences

The right to participate in decision making

The right to recognition

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves as responsible adult role models at all times

Volunteers are required to fulfill their time commitment to the agency

If volunteers who provide direct client contact are unable to be available for their assignment, they must notify the Volunteer Coordinator in advance

Volunteers who provide special services (i.e. Information/Referral, Clerical Support, etc.) are expected to schedule these services in advance

Volunteers are expected to attend supervision meetings and regularly scheduled training and in-services as required by the program

EXPECTATIONS

You as a Volunteer may expect the following from the Staff:

- * Training and Supervision
- * Performance evaluation - Feedback
- * Fair and nondiscriminatory treatment
- * Letters of reference if appropriate
- * Commitment to the Volunteer Program and whatever assistance is necessary
- * Response to all questions

The Staff may expect from you as a Volunteer:

- * Commitment to do the best job possible
- * To appear for work when you are scheduled, except in cases of emergency or illness
- * To inform Staff when you are not available
- * To give Staff feedback
- * Ask questions when you are unsure or don't understand something
- * Maintain Confidentiality as appropriate
- * While Volunteering, conduct yourself in a professional manner

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

DEFINITIONS:

- * Confidentiality is the formal relationship between the client and the service provider in which the service provider agrees to hold confidential, unless otherwise given permission, any information that is shared in the context of the worker/client relationship.
- * Client means both an individual or a group. No client shall have access to information arising from a worker/client contact in which they were not a participant.
- * Service provider means any unpaid or volunteer staff member.

REVIEW OF FILES:

- * All records are the property of the County and will be kept in locked files. They are available only to County staff (paid or volunteer). Except for supervisory review or specific visitation forms, client files will be kept on site or in the County Archive files. Clients may arrange with the Division Director to review their files. Clients will be allowed to read only that information of which they are a part.

EXCEPTIONS:

- * For research, reporting, or teaching purposes, statistical information may be drawn from case records but only when precautions have been taken to disguise the identity of the people involved.
- * In a medical emergency, to medical or rescue personnel, and at staff discretion.
- * To law enforcement agencies when it is reasonably believed the client's life is in danger or had been a victim of a crime. State laws require agencies to report evidence of abuse/neglect, or if it is believed the client may be a danger to self or others.
- * To other staff/volunteers and professionals involved in the case.
- * There may be occasions where the case record is subpoenaed by the court. In such cases, the Division Director will notify the client and seek legal council.

SELF-DISCLOSURE POLICY

INFORMATION REGARDING OTHER STAFF - PAID OR VOLUNTEER

It is the policy of the County not to give out the home telephone numbers, addresses, or other personal information to non-County related people. When a person from outside the County requests such information, politely inform the caller of the policy and offer to relay their name and phone number to the staff or volunteer in question.

PERSONAL DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

This is a sensitive issue and staff and volunteers are expected to use good judgment in revealing information about their personal lives to clients. There are times when self-disclosure can be used therapeutically! Part of your developing professionalism is knowing when to reveal your own experiences. When in doubt, either before or after a client contact, ask the Volunteer Coordinator for feedback.

BASIC COUNSELING SKILLS

A CARE PROVIDER RELATIONSHIP IS DIFFERENT THAN FRIENDSHIP!

People are friends because of mutual interests, caring, connections through other friends, etc. and many of the behaviors you have as a friend will be important for you as a care provider. However, the relation between a care provider and client is one that is **time limited**, and **based on specific needs and contracts**.

Let's begin the work as care provider by identifying the characteristics of an effective helping agent:

1. GENUINENESS

- * Be who you are, know what you feel
- * Be congruent, keep your feelings and communications in tune

2. EMPATHY

- * Put yourself in the other person's shoes
- * Get in touch with the other person's feelings

3. WARMTH (RESPECT)

- * Let the other person be who they are
- * Accept and respect the other person's value system, even if it is different from yours

4. CONCRETENESS

- * Deal with the real issues, real feelings, real behavior, and not with theories about them

5. SELF-APPRAISAL

- * Learn to reflect on your work with a client and identify what you did that worked, that could be improved on, and what you felt during the work

In addition to the characteristics of an effective helper, there are skills you will learn for developing effective helping relationships.

TOTAL LISTENING

- * Observe and decode verbal and nonverbal signals accurately
- * Avoid cut-off responses
- * Use active listening (feedback of feelings)

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- * Identify barriers and distortion in your communication with others
- * Use feedback (reflecting) to check other's meaning
- * Use feeling messages to communicate your feelings directly

CLARIFYING VALUES

- * Understand your own values
- * Use clarifying questions and other techniques to help others clarify their values

HELPING ANOTHER MAKE A DECISION OR SOLVE A PROBLEM

- * Offer support and guidance in the decision making process **without** giving advice or taking over

UTILIZING RESOURCES

*Find out where to go for different kinds of help. Ask the Volunteer Coordinator.

CHECKLIST FOR A GOOD LISTENER

A Good Listener:

1. Is a warm, genuine, and empathic person.
2. Listens for the meaning behind words.
3. Helps the client clarify a confusing concern, sorting out the "safe" problems from the real one.
4. Allows the client to talk about this deeper, more "risky" problem.
5. Helps the speaker clarify personal values.
6. Explores alternatives and the potential consequence or outcome of each alternative.
7. Is able to ask open and feeling level questions when appropriate.
8. Makes observations and checks out assumptions based on observation.
9. Realizes that not all problems can be solved and not all people want help.
10. Knows when to refer a person to a professional.

A Good Listener Does Not:

1. Tell people what to do.
2. Try to band-aid a problem with cheap sympathy.
3. Talk mainly about self.
4. Encourage dependency.
5. Put people down.
6. Gossip about what was said in a conversation.
7. Act as if they are superior.
8. Expect all problems to be solved easily and quickly.
9. Work with someone whose problem is not appropriate.

NONVERBAL AND LISTENING BEHAVIORS

Nonverbal behavior or "body language" is as important when communicating with other people as what you actually say. The following are several examples of nonverbal behavior which you should become more aware of and begin practicing while speaking to other people.

1. **Eye Contact** - Looking at the person you are talking to or the person who is doing the talking. This tells the other person that you know he is there and that you are paying attention to what he is saying.
2. **Head nods** - Nodding your head from time to time while the other person is speaking. This lets the other person know that you are listening and understand what is being said, and also encourages him to keep talking.
3. **Gestures and mannerisms** - Various hand, leg, and body movements. These can communicate a variety of different things, such as interest, understanding or lack of understanding, feelings, and can also serve to emphasize what you are saying.
4. **Body posture and orientation** - The way you sit or stand while interacting with others (sitting up straight, slumping in your chair, crossing your legs) and the way you position yourself in relation to the other person (directly facing them, turning slightly to the side). Body posture and orientation communicate your feelings about the other person and the situation (ex., slumping in your chair communicates casual feelings) and demonstrates your role in the interaction (ex., sitting or standing straight and directly facing the other person communicates a dominant role).
5. **Loudness of voice** - How loudly or softly you speak. This communicates feelings (you speak loudly when angry) and also conveys your role in the interaction (speaking softly can communicate a friendly or a passive role, while speaking in a louder tone can communicate a dominant role).
6. **Interpersonal distance or "personal space"** - How close or how far away you sit or stand from another person. Standing close (3-5 feet) communicates friendliness and interest, while standing far away (more than 10-12 feet) communicates a lack of interest and an unwillingness to become involved with the other person. Standing too close (less than 3 feet) can communicate either affection or hostility, making the other person feel either liked or uncomfortable, depending on the particular person and situation.

7. **Facial expression** - Can communicate a variety of different things, such as interest, thoughts, and feelings.

A CHECKLIST FOR IMPROVED LISTENING.....

(How many of these do you practice?)

- ___ When I give an instruction, do I obtain feedback to assure I am understood?
- ___ Do I give my listeners cues to know when "to tune me in"?
- ___ Do I understand that I not only have the right to influence others but they also have the right to influence me?
- ___ Do I know my biases and prejudices so that they do not unduly filter out certain messages?
- ___ Do I understand that when a person feels he is being understood, he tends to be less aggressive and less defensive?
- ___ Do I understand that being a good listener does not mean I must believe what I am hearing or subscribe to the values of the speaker?
- ___ Do I understand that I am learning little when I am talking?
- ___ Do I try not to over-respond to emotionally charged words?
- ___ When I disagree with something, or find something exciting, do I take pains to listen carefully?
- ___ If I am having trouble being understood, do I understand that the burden is on me to understand the other person?
- ___ Do I know when I may be intimidating listeners through threatening behavior?
- ___ Can I tell when there is a hostile, emotionally charged atmosphere?
- ___ Do I consider the person involved as well as the situation?
- ___ Have I taken pains to understand this person?
- ___ Do I listen for what is *not* being said?
- ___ Do I listen for feeling tone as well as for words?
- ___ Do I also *look* as if I am listening?

Leslie E. This, *Looking Into Leadership*, Executive Library.

EMPATHIC RESPONSE LEADS

Kind of feeling...
Sort of saying...
As I get it, you felt that...
I'm picking up that you...
Sort of feeling that...
If I'm hearing you correctly...
To me, it's almost like you are saying...
Sort of hear you saying that maybe you...
Kind of made (makes) you feel...
The thing you feel most right now is sort of like...
So, you feel...
So, as you see it...
As I get it, you're saying...
What I guess I'm hearing is...
I'm not sure I'm with you, but
I somehow sense that maybe you feel...
You feel...
What I hear you saying is that...
I wonder if you're expressing a concern that...
It sounds as if you're saying...
I wonder if you're saying...
I hear you saying...
You place a high value on...
It seems to you...
Like right now...
You often feel...
You feel, perhaps...
Sometimes you think...
Could it be that...
You appear to be feeling...
It appears to you...
As I hear it, you...
This could be a longshot, but...
So, from where you sit...
Your feeling at the present time is that...
I read you as...
Sometimes you...
You must have felt...
I sense that you're feeling...
Very much feeling...
Your message seems to be...
You appear...
Listening to you it seems as if...
I gather...

CARE PROVIDER ETHICS

Entering into a relationship as a care provider means that we are agreeing to a standard of attitudes and behavior with respect to that relationship.

- A. **Respect:** To respect another individual, even though you may not personally agree with their values and choices is a vital part of a "relationship". A relationship cannot exist without this element. If you find you are paired with another person in a care providing situation, and that you are experiencing real difficulty in respecting that person as a human being, then the honest action is to ask to have that referral transferred to another care provider. This should be done only after you have made every effort to establish that basic rapport in the relationship. This is a situation where empathy can play a part in your own decision process.
- B. **Client Self-Determination:** Both questions about a problem and the solutions to the problem are best developed by the individual you are helping. If you are allowing the individual the same rights you expect, then this value will not be difficult to apply in your relationship.
- C. **Confidentiality:** This is one value that is absolute. Trust is necessary between you and your client. This too, comes from empathy. To discuss your relationship, even with family members or close friends is simply not done. This is a bottom-line value.

EXCEPTION: Any situation that poses a threat to your client or to anyone else should be reported promptly to (a) the Volunteer Coordinator and (b) to the proper agency (i.e. the police, a social service worker, protective services). If you have knowledge of such a critical threat you are mandated to report it.