

Orientation & Training



5. Orientation and Training

Orientation

Through orientation and training you prepare volunteers to perform their role(s).

All volunteers must receive an orientation to their work and surroundings before or during their first shift.

It is also strongly recommended that staff persons receive an orientation to the volunteer program. Information about the goals of the volunteer program, the roles of volunteers within the department, and the nature of the relationship between staff and volunteers will strengthen the staff/volunteer partnership.

Volunteer Orientation Content

Orientation can be held on an individual or group basis. On an individual basis the orientation can be tailored to the specific needs of the volunteer. If a number of new volunteers are recruited at the same time a group orientation can be held.

The orientation must include:

- **A review of the Volunteer Handbook.** The handbook contains policies and procedures which are to be followed by all volunteers, as well as helpful information to enhance their volunteer experience;
- **Provision of a WRHA identification badge** (issued by Volunteer Services);
- **Provision of a Time Sheet** (available on the WRHA INSITE) to record their hours of service;
- **Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) education and signing of the PHIA pledge form. The signed original pledge form must be forwarded to the WRHA Privacy Office and a copy appended to the volunteer’s file.**
- **Review of Corporate Confidentiality and a signed form; and**
- **Review of Infection Prevention and Control practices.**

The orientation should also include:

- Welcome and introductions to other staff members in the Program/Service area;
- A brief description and history of the WRHA, including programs, services, and clients served;
- A tour of the site, including practical information such as the location of the coat rack, a place to secure valuables, the supply cupboard, washrooms, emergency exits.

Training

The training you provide for new volunteers is designed to teach them specific information and skills they need in order to do their volunteer activities. Training is specific to the site or program and for the volunteer role. The volunteer needs to feel comfortable and prepared for his/her role in your program.

Not all volunteer activities require formal training. Groups providing a specific and limited service may be encouraged to arrive 30 minutes prior to their first shift for an introduction to the program. Less formal training can be applied to one-time projects, such as special events

Planning for Training

- Review the activity description;
- Identify competency areas. What skills, information and attitudes do volunteers need to be successful in their role?
- Identify the specific information or skill you will teach;
- Explain the importance of learning the content;
- Use appropriate teaching activities.

Training that is organized and well-conducted builds confidence and enhances your credibility. Remember that new volunteers will require time to be fully competent and confident in the work they do.

Training Prior to the Start of Volunteering

Learning begins at first contact with the volunteer. Training should address immediate performance needs. Volunteers need information combined with practical examples so they can perform their duties with confidence.

Opportunities to provide information include;

- The interview;
- The orientation; and
- Specific work preparation (identify activities or tasks to be done, explain the purpose of the role, what results are needed, why and by when, create an awareness of current issues related to the activity).

Through each of these contacts the volunteer is gaining important information about the WRHA, our clients and the volunteer program.

Ongoing Training

This is the process of continuing to develop the person, to improve skills, to extend knowledge and to enhance performance. Ongoing training can take many forms. You can provide specific learning experiences such as classes, lectures or workshops. You can coach the person, provide a mentor, create a buddy system, or encourage self-directed learning.

The goal of the ongoing training is to enable people to perform their assigned task to the best of their ability.

Coaching

The goal of coaching is to enable the volunteer to gain greater ability and achieve autonomy.

Coaching is often ongoing training. It can be used to introduce new concepts or reinforce old ones. It helps the volunteer work through an issue and come to his/her own conclusions.

What do Effective Coaches Do?

- Enhance the competence and confidence of the volunteer;
- Build and maintain positive working relationships;
- Clarify goals and objectives;
- Remove obstacles to achievement of goals;
- Offer training (mostly on an on-going basis).

Concepts to be Communicated to Volunteers

These are most important ideas you want to share with the volunteers. Keep the concepts list short to ensure understanding and retention by the volunteer.

As a coach, you want to ensure the volunteer is strengthened in the long-term.

You will:

- Identify systems and supports that will strengthen the volunteer;
- Focus on making sure the results of the training session are acted upon;
- Ensure the volunteer has the help needed to apply learned concepts successfully; and
- Identify improvements that will benefit other volunteers.

In offering support to a volunteer, you will often identify resources that would be helpful for all volunteers.

Focused Training Events

Volunteers benefit from new knowledge and the opportunity to share their experiences with others. Shared discussion is valuable for team building and reduces expensive duplication of effort. Strong working relationships enhance volunteer commitment and reliable performance.

Continuing Education

Learning is a life long process. In order to provide the best possible service to your clients, and to maximize the potential of volunteer involvement, volunteers need to be engaged in continuing learning activities. Continuing education meets the needs of the more experienced volunteers. It allows them to continue to grow intellectually, acquire new information, improve their skills, prepare for more responsibility, be involved in teaching others, adapt to change, understand context and theory and prevent burnout.