

North Shore Volunteers for Seniors Volunteer Handbook

Generously funded by



**275 21st Street, West Vancouver, BC V7V 4A5 ◦ 604 922- 1575 ◦
www.nsvs.ca ◦ www.facebook.com/nsvs.ca**

WHY VOLUNTEER?

- “It is one of the most beautiful compensations in life that no man can sincerely help another without helping himself.” Emerson
- The miracle is, the more we share, the more we have.” Leonard Nimoy

WHY DO CANADIANS VOLUNTEER?

- 92% Making a contribution to one's community
- 77% Having the opportunity to use one's skills and experience
- 60% Having been personally affected by the cause supported by the organization
- 49% Explore one's strengths
- 47% To Network with people
- 43% Because friends volunteered at that organization
- 22% To fulfill religious obligations or other beliefs
- 22% To improve job opportunities

DATA FROM 2004 CANADIAN SURVEY OF GIVING, VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATING

WWW.VOLUNTEERBC.CA

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

- is vital to a just and democratic society.
- strengthens communities.
- mutually benefits both the volunteer and the organization.
- From: The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement. www.vmpc.ca

Thank you!



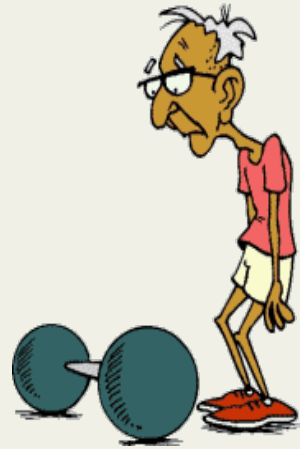
Purpose of connecting with isolated seniors

- Helps maintain personal and social activity
- Helps retain a sense of pride about living independently
- Establishes a healthy living lifestyle: social engagement is proven to have health benefits

Social isolation =

- Declining health
- Partial disability
- Lack of companionship
- Reduced mobility
- Reduced ability to deal with changing lifestyles and social patterns

Frailty characteristics



Weight loss

poor energy/endurance

Weak grip strength

slow walking speed

Low physical activity

Definition of frailty

- Age related physiological state of increased vulnerability
- Less likely to adapt or recover to normal health state after acute illness or injuries
- Can be a combination of chronic conditions and physical disability
- Predictive of death, hospitalization, institutionalization, falls and worsening health status

Three plagues and their antidotes

PLAGUE

- Loneliness
- Helplessness
- Boredom

ANTIDOTE

- Loving companionship – human and animal – the value of pet therapy
- Opportunity to give as well as receive
- Unexpected and unpredictable interaction and happenings during the day

**Volunteering with
frail, isolated
seniors can
tackle these three
plagues!**

Physical Changes with Aging

Result in

- Loss of muscle mass
- Joint changes – arthritis
- Calcium loss in bones
- Heart takes longer to recover after each beat
- Gastro-intestinal changes
- Decreased kidney function

Functional Effect

- Decreased mobility and range of motion
- Fractures easily
- Decreased oxygen – fatigue
- Constipation
- Decreased capacity - urgency
- Decreased strength

Sensory Changes

RESULT IN

- Loss of depth perception
- Loss of hair cells in ears – decreased frequencies
- Decreased smell & taste
- Decreased sense of touch

FUNCTIONAL EFFECT

- Difficulty between last step and floor
- Can't identify words – social isolation
- Loss of appetite, poor nutrition
- Difficulty dressing

Communication changes

RESULT IN

- Loss of speech due to stroke or return to first language
- Decreased comprehension due to stroke or hearing loss

FUNCTIONAL EFFECT

- Frustration, confusion
- Confusion, isolation

Mental Changes

RESULT IN

- Loss of recent memory
- Loss of orientation to person/place/time
- Loss of concentration
- Loss of motivation
- Loss of judgment, abstract thought

FUNCTIONAL EFFECT

- Confusion, talk more easily about the past
- Confusion
- Difficulty focussing
- Feeling of dependency
- Inability to make decisions

Social Changes

RESULT IN

- Loss of home and possessions “downsizing”
- Loss of family and friends
- Loss of financial control
- Loss of privacy

FUNCTIONAL EFFECT

- Loss of independence, choice, decision making
- Social isolation
- Loss of individuality

Emotional Changes

RESULT IN

- Loss of self-esteem
- Lack of motivation
- Loss of interest
- Loss of physical self-confidence
- Feelings of emptiness

FUNCTIONAL EFFECT

- Depression

Guides for Meeting with Vision Impaired Seniors

1. Speak when entering and leaving a room . Identify yourself by name.
2. Speak before touching so the person knows you are there.
3. Do NOT change location of objects in the room.
4. ALWAYS replace articles back to the original position if they were moved.
5. Leave doors completely open or closed, never partially open.
6. If the person uses a cane, approach on the opposite side of the cane.
7. When walking with the person, offer your arm – to provide a better sense of balance and direction.
8. ALWAYS tell the person when you are approaching stairs, a curb, or an incline. Pause briefly before beginning to step up or down.
9. If the person has a guide dog, do not pet it while it is in harness. If the dog is out of harness, you can ask its handler for permission to pat it.
10. Use everyday language – don't worry about using terms such as “see” and “look” when talking.
11. Describe points of interests if you are outside for a walk.
12. Use the clock method to describe where foods are located on a plate –
“Your rice is at three o'clock and your steak is at seven o'clock.

Guides for Meeting with Hearing Impaired Seniors

1. Get close – about 1-2 metres – to the person. Be in the same room when you are talking.
2. Approach in the line of vision.
3. Wave your hand to attract their attention.
4. Touch them lightly on the shoulder or arm.
5. Face them when talking.
6. Make sure the light falls ON your face, not behind you – to avoid shadows.
7. Eliminate background noise: music, tv, street sounds from open windows.
8. Speak a little louder than usual, but don't shout' speak a little slower.
9. Write down key words or draw pictures.
10. Beware of “bluffing” where the person smiles and nods but doesn't really understand.
11. Keep your hands away from your face.
12. Don't eat or chew gum as it makes understanding difficult.
13. Use facial expression and gestures.
14. Fatigue happens quicker because of the energy needed to listen.

Tips for pushing a wheelchair

1. Check that the brakes, handgrips, arm and foot rests are secured.
2. If there's a seatbelt, ensure it is fastened (two finger rule).
3. When pushing, speak loudly enough to be heard – if possible speak face to face at eye level.
4. ALWAYS apply the brakes when stopped and helping someone transfer in or out of the wheelchair.
5. Watch where you are going – avoid pot holes, uneven sidewalks, soft ground, bumps, puddles, mud.
6. Step on the tipping bar for leverage when tilting back to lift from wheels for curbs, stairs and uneven ground.
7. Approach curbs squarely. To go up, tip chair back using the tipping bar and position both feet on wheels atop curb. Lift rear of chair by handgrips and push rear wheels onto curb.
8. Only attempt ramps and inclines if you know you can support the weight of the person! You will have more control if you go down backwards.

From the HUB Resource, p.45,46.

Social Visiting Ideas

1. Where were you born?
2. How long have you lived in Canada?
3. List significant places you have lived.
4. What type of work did you do?
5. What community groups have you been active in?
6. List some of your volunteer experiences.
7. What is your best achievement, or life experience, to date?
8. Tell something unusual or unique about yourself.
9. What quiet past times do you enjoy? (reading, knitting, woodwork, card games, jigsaw or word puzzles).
10. What active past times do you enjoy? (exercising, gardening bowling, dancing).

Remember to share some information about who you are! What was YOUR first job? Ask about photos you see around the room. Play a game of cards or do a crossword puzzle. Read the newspaper.

If you are interested in
volunteering with seniors and
receiving further training
opportunities, please contact us
at 604 922-1575

or email us at

volunteers@shaw.ca

Thank you!