

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

1850 N. Northwest Highway, Suite 310
Park Ridge, IL 60068
(847) 823-0453
www.centerofconcern.org

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Welcome

The CENTER OF CONCERN (COC) welcomes you as a volunteer member in support of the administrative staff and hopes your association with the THE COC will be a mutually satisfying experience. You are joining the ranks of the many who have worked to support and grow the mission of The CENTER OF CONCERN. Volunteers have always played an important role in the development of this organization. We need our volunteers not only to supplement our paid staff but to bring a creativity and vitality that is necessary for the growth of our organization.

As you serve with your talent, time, and energy, we hope you will know that this all important gift will permanently benefit the needs of the entire community.

This handbook will provide information to help you get started as a volunteer in our volunteer program. Most services provided by volunteers do not require special skills; and a staff member will provide training, guidance, and answer your questions.

We look forward to having you join our team. Thank you for volunteering to help us provide the best in services to our clients and to fulfill our mission.

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday	9:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.
Friday	9:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON
Saturday	By appointment
Sunday	Closed

Holidays

Holidays and Closure Days:

New Years Day	January 1
M. L. King Birthday	Third Monday January
Presidents' Day	Third Monday February
Memorial Day	Last Monday May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday September
Thanksgiving	Fourth Thursday and Friday November
Christmas Day	December 25

Mission Statement

The mission of The Center of Concern is to provide housing solutions, support services and counseling for seniors, disabled and other in need, enabling them to live with dignity and independence.

Program History

1978- Agency opens as "Office of Ombudsman for Park Ridge," an incorporated 501c3, founded by Dorothea J. Heinrich, a Park Ridge resident along with four women friends.

Agency is all volunteer-driven. Initial services include: information and referral, telephone reassurance and friendly visiting to seniors and homebound residents

1982- Agency becomes a Salvation Army Service Unit providing food vouchers, rent and utility assistance to needy households.

1982- Housing counseling and referral program begins; includes Home Sharing (matching homeowners seeking extra income with homeseekers needing affordable housing).

1982- Variety of free professional services offered thanks to generosity of area professionals volunteering their time and resources to help clients.

1982- Agency name legally changes to the "Center of Concern" on Oct. 12th filed on Nov. 3rd.

1993- Dee Heinrich retires and Mary Schurder is named Director of Center.

1997- Center of Concern receives 1st Place in Governor's Home Town Award for senior involvement and volunteerism.

1999- Home Sharing Program receives a Best Practices commendation from the U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD).

2001- Center begins Transitional Housing Program funded by US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Project starts with 4 scattered site apartments to help homeless clients to find their way back to financial independence; now there are 8 apartments.

2011- Mary Schurder retires; John McNabola begins as the Center's 3rd Executive Director.

Volunteer Programs Overview

Volunteers for The Center of Concern serve in a variety of capacities including office reception, visiting homebound seniors, making holiday deliveries, planning special events, administering blood pressure tests and blood sugar tests, making friendly telephone reassurance calls, providing transportation, assisting with data entry and IT solutions, providing professional services, and fundraising.

Office volunteers receive hands on training by office personnel at pre-arranged times. This training includes the office functions they will be performing as well as familiarization with The Center's programs and other community resources and services.

Outreach volunteers, such as friendly visitors receive training from The Center's Volunteer Coordinator and/or COC's social worker and undergo reference and background checks.

Outreach volunteers do not replace paid staff, but donate their time and skills to supplement services provided by paid staff. As a volunteer you are tremendously valuable to the COC, helping in many ways such as:

- * Relieving loneliness, boredom, and frustration through telephone reassurance calls to elderly clients.
- * Bringing companionship and a feeling of being wanted and belonging.
- * Sharing a positive outlook and enthusiasm for supporting the organization.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Dedicated volunteers assist The Center's staff in the office and report to the Office Manager. Positions vary from receptionist duties (greeting visitors and answering the telephones), data entry on the computer, placing fundraising calls, and help with mailings.

The time commitment ranges from one to two days a week to an occasional morning or afternoon. Whatever time you can give The Center is most appreciated.

Duties for the front desk receptionist include answering and redirecting calls to the appropriate party, taking detailed written messages, mastering the phone transfer/voice mail system, phoning seniors on the telephone reassurance list and assisting staff with various projects.

The volunteer receptionist is often the first contact a client has with our agency. You are the first impression for the caller who is reaching out for assistance and looking for answers to their vital needs. Fundamental to our mission is the idea of service and compassion, so a patient, empathetic telephone demeanor is essential.

OUTREACH /FRIENDLY VISITING

The Center of Concern was founded as a listening post to help people find answers to their problems. For the past 36 years we have been reaching out to the lonely and needy with a variety of programs to help them remain independent and connected to the larger community. Our Senior Support Social Workers and a dedicated corps of over 160 volunteers deliver services to a caseload of close to 200 frail and homebound individuals.

The COC's SENIOR and FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS include

- Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar Tests
- Friendly Visitors
- Telephone Reassurance Program
- Shopping and Transportation for Errands/ Escort Services
- Alzheimer's Support Group
- Grief and Loss Support Group
- Money Management
- Medicare Counseling
- Legal Counseling
- Intergeneration Pen Pals Program

FRIENDLY VISITING

The Center of Concern's Friendly Visiting Program is an organized plan where trained volunteers visit our frail and homebound clients. These volunteers take responsibility for making regular visits to an individual, providing companionship and serving as a link to the outside world. Initial visits are made with a social worker present. After this introduction the visits are set up by the volunteer. The Center's Senior Support staff monitors the relationship, discussing needs with the visitor and giving advice if problems arise.

For the individual who, because of age, chronic illness or disability, cannot get out, the friendly visit provides the give-and-take conversation of normal life, the enjoyment of being wanted and liked and the pleasure of having a friend who is interested enough to call regularly. The Center visitor may be the only personal contact in the homebound person's day or week. Our friendly visitors serve as extra eyes and ears to watch over our frail clients, alerting the social workers to any problems.

Many of our visitors take the homebound individual out for lunch or a drive if that is feasible. Others enjoy a short shopping trip; however, The Center has other volunteers who do such tasks. The activities that take place during the visit are less important than the fact that someone is physically present to listen, laugh and share a confidence. The important element to the visiting relationship is the depth of friendship and trust that develops from the continuing relationship.

All ages participate in this program. Our friendly visitors are seniors, younger working people and intergenerational matches. Often a family will ask for an older person because they have no older relatives in this area. Our high school volunteers find it most rewarding to visit an older person who offers a different perspective than their peers or family. The Center of Concern's volunteers often mention that they receive much more than they give when they help our clients.

TELEPHONE REASSURANCE PROGRAM

Volunteers provide peace of mind to those living alone and their families through telephone calls at specified times to ensure that individuals are safe and well. For some clients these calls may be the only outside contacts they have.

SHOPPING AND TRANSPORTATION FOR ERRANDS/ ESCORT SERVICES

Volunteers occasionally help the homebound and disabled with grocery and pharmacy shopping or assist with transportation to doctors or medical centers.

INTERGENERATION PEN PALS PROGRAM

This program links senior clients with young people of school age in pen-pal arrangements.

BLOOD PRESSURE AND BLOOD SUGAR TESTS

Registered nurses volunteer once a month on Saturday morning to provide blood pressure screenings and administer blood sugar tests at the COC.

MONEY MANAGEMENT/MEDICARE/LEGAL COUNSELING/ EMPLOYMENT

Professional volunteers provide assistance and counseling with financial planning, estate planning, Medicare paperwork, ongoing money management, employment, wills and income tax assistance throughout the year. Counseling is available at the COC by appointment.

GRIEF AND LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Professional counseling service provided by licensed social workers which meets weekly and is open to individuals who have lost a loved one.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

Professional counseling service provided by a licensed social workers which meets monthly to assist caregivers in learning effective strategies for managing difficult behavior and coping with the stress of their responsibilities.

Benefits For Volunteers

Many of our volunteers tell us that their biggest reward comes from helping others. Our volunteer programs offer many benefits including:

- * Serving as an active and vital member of your community.
- * Making new friends and being of service to others.
- * Supporting the staff so they have more time to provide service to their clients.
- * An opportunity to brush up on old skills and gain new ones.
- * Receiving The COC newsletter.
- * Reducing taxpayer expense by supporting a volunteer-based entity in place of a government funded program.

Volunteer Rights

Volunteers are viewed as the most valuable resource of this agency, its staff, and its clients. You will:

- * Be given tasks that use and develop your education, talent and skills.
- * Be given adequate information and training to carry out your assignments.
- * Receive guidance and supervision by a staff member.
- * Be able to freely discuss problems, ask questions, or make suggestions.
- * Have a written job description and have a designated place to work.

Volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments and the right to effective supervision. In return, volunteers shall agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities.

Volunteer Responsibilities

As a volunteer your schedule in many cases is flexible, but you must be prepared to fulfill your volunteer commitments.

- * To accept only assignments you feel you can reasonably complete.
- * To learn about the agency's policies and programs.
- * To accept the guidance and direction of your supervisor.
- * To participate in any training required by the agency.
- * To respect confidentiality.
- * To be punctual.
- * To be alert, sober and drug free while volunteering.
- * Keep a record of your volunteer hours.
- * To participate on performance reviews.

Volunteer Policies

Equal Opportunity Volunteer Policy

It is the policy of this agency that there will be no discrimination or harassment in its programs, activities or employment based on race, color, sex, sexual preference, marital or parental status, religion, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, or veteran status.

Disability Policy

THE CENTER OF CONCERN welcomes volunteers with disabilities. The COC complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please contact your support person if you have special requirements so we may accommodate your needs.

Age Limitation

The minimum age for volunteers is 15 years. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or guardian before volunteering and be accompanied by a parent or guardian in some cases.

Interviewing

All volunteers must be interviewed and processed by the volunteer coordinator before any volunteer service. The interview will determine volunteer interests and skills, and appraise volunteers' qualifications as well as agency needs.

Placement

Volunteer interests along with the agency needs must be weighed in the interview process to insure the best match possible. When possible, the volunteer will have the final say in determining which volunteer position best fits his/her needs.

Position Description

You will receive a written job description before you begin your volunteer assignment. Every effort is made to place you in an assignment matching your abilities and interests.

Record Keeping

It is important that you record and report your volunteer hours by phone, letter or email. The number of volunteer hours donated to THE COC is included in the end-of-the-year report and used to apply for funding and grants.

Absences

Please keep in mind that when you make a commitment to volunteer as a friendly visitor, your senior client will be looking forward to your visits and expecting your arrival. However, if you are feeling ill or think you might be contagious, please call your senior and reschedule your visit with as much notice as possible. As a office volunteer, the staff is counting on you. Similarly, if you are feeling ill or think you be contagious, please call the volunteer Coordinator with as much notice as possible.

Volunteer Protection Act of 1977

If a volunteer is involved in an accident while carrying out the volunteer assignment, you may be protected under certain circumstance from liability under the Volunteer Protection Act of 1977.

Orientation, Training, and Supervision

All volunteers are trained and supervised by Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers will be trained one-on-one on the outreach programs and specific requirements for the activity.

Volunteer Performance Problems

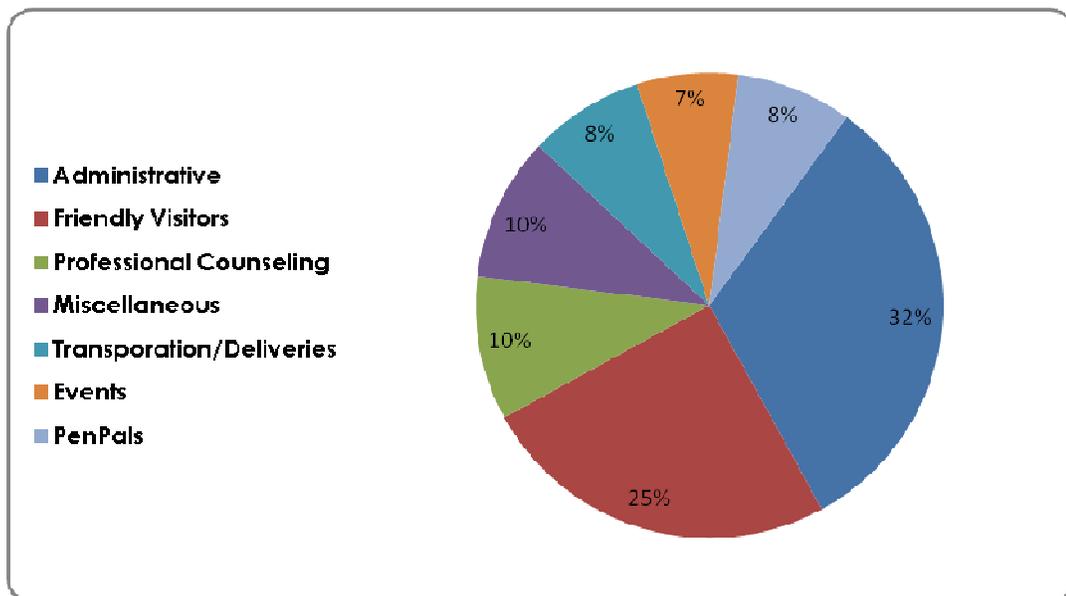
The following are considered to be serious violations and are grounds for cancellation of volunteer duties/status:

- * Falsifying reports, records or expenses.
- * Sharing client's confidential information.
- * Negligent or willful damage of property.
- * Theft.
- * Willfully endangering the safety of others.
- * Working under the influence of intoxicants.

Resignation

If you plan to stop volunteering we would like the chance to talk with you before your departure. Volunteers are asked to give at least one week notice when terminating their volunteer service. Volunteers are also asked to go through an exit interview upon termination. The exit interview is an opportunity for the volunteer to state reasons for leaving and for the agency to learn other volunteer concerns.

COC VOLUNTEERS BY TYPE



General Policies

Confidentiality

State law requires all volunteers respect the confidence and privacy of clients. Once you have signed a confidentiality statement, you are free to share your experience as an agency volunteer but must refrain from revealing clients' names and protect identities in keeping with government HIPAA standards and generally accepted privacy laws. The board of directors, staff and volunteers all abide by strict rules of maintaining client confidentiality.

Background Checks

A criminal records background check may be required for some volunteer assignments. A volunteer must pass this check to be given an assignment involving at-risk clients or dealing with sensitive information.

Professional Services

Volunteers shall not complete duties requiring certification or licensing unless currently certified. A copy of certification or licensing must be maintained by the volunteer coordinator.

Drug Free Policy

For the safety and welfare of employees and clients, volunteers agree to abstain from the use of alcohol and/or other drugs except when prescribed by a physician.

Gun Policy

Volunteers may not, at any time while in the COC office or at a client's residence possess or use any weapon, including but not limited to, guns.

Tax Deductible Expenses

Volunteers should consult with their tax advisor regarding possible deductions and may wish to keep a personal record of deductible expenses, including the name of the organization for which they volunteer and the details of the contribution.

Injuries

If you or someone else is injured while performing volunteer duties, please report the incident to your support person immediately. Our volunteers are covered by insurance. For your protection, be sure to fill out an accident form for any injury, no matter how minor it might seem then. This is necessary to satisfy our insurance coverage requirements.

Emergency Plan

Emergencies don't happen very often but when they do it is important to act calmly, quickly, and properly. To do this a well thought-out plan is needed. To get help quickly know the emergency numbers in your area. Learn the location of emergency exits in your client's building. Our community has a "911" emergency response system. This should be called for any fire, police or medical emergency.

Outreach Volunteer's Role

Phone Etiquette

Phones are an essential part of our business interaction with clients. They should be answered quickly, politely and proficiently. If you cannot answer the client's question, refer them to someone who can provide an answer. If they are unavailable, take the client's number and question and route it to someone who will respond.

Note: Do not give out the home phone number or last name of staff members unless they have specifically given their approval. The list of staff phone numbers is for business use only. If a caller insists it is an emergency, refer them to a paid staff member. Do not unnecessarily disturb staff members by calling them at home with business that could be taken care of during work hours.

As a volunteer, you are here to help. You are not here to solve clients' personal problems or to offer professional advice, but you *are* a person who can listen with empathy. You are a person who knows community resources and can act as a referral source. You are hearing about people with troubles, but the message they are giving demands not just concrete help but a response to their emotions.

Code Of Ethics For Volunteers

As a volunteer, believing that the organization has a real need of my services, I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics similar to that which binds the professionals in the organization in which I work.

To accomplish this service I will:

- * **Be punctual and conscientious in the fulfillment of my duties and accept supervision graciously.**
- * **Conduct myself with courtesy, and consideration.**
- * **Understand that it is imperative the THE CENTER OF CONCERN ensures client confidentiality in records, telephone contacts and references. Therefore, it is required that all possible precaution be exercised to keep any and all information related to our clients strictly confidential.**
- * **Interpret volunteer to mean that I have agreed to work without pay. I will try to make my work of the highest quality, just as the paid staff are expected to do their work.**
- * **Promise to bring to my work an attitude of open- mindedness. I will be non-judgmental. I am willing to receive training and will show interest and attention. I will take any problems or suggestions to my support person.**
- * **Remember the value of humor and joyousness.**
- * **Work with the spirit of interdependence among the individuals and departments of the organization. I will work to keep the office clean and put things back where they belong.**
- * **Realize I may have assets that my co-workers do not have. I should use my assets to enrich the project at which we are working together.**
- * **Realize I may lack assets that my co-workers have. I will not feel inadequate but will help in developing good teamwork.**

Guidelines

Our first job is to serve clients. The most important factor in client satisfaction is the treatment they receive from our staff and volunteers. You are the “friendly face” or voice of THE CENTER OF CONCERN. Their impression and satisfaction starts with you.

Friendly Visitors:

Working in Partnership with THE CENTER OF CONCERN

- Keep in touch with the Social Worker responsible for your friend.
- Feel free to call The Center for help or if you need information.
- Report promptly any inability to accept or continue an assignment.
- Recognize that you do not have to like everyone. It is all right to ask for a reassignment if you feel the relationship is not a congenial one.

General Visiting

- Be faithful in your visits. Make them regularly. Keep your friend informed of when you plan your next visit. Then be there. If you must break your appointment, send your regrets by card or telephone.
- Respect the individual as a person.
- Keep relationships on a friendly but not intimate basis.
- Listen, but do not interfere with family affairs.
- Do not violate the confidence of the person you visit by repeating things he or she says.
- It may seem insincere if you are overly anxious to please.
- Do NOT give your friend medical advice or suggestions. Encourage checking with the doctor.
- Be cheerful, enthusiastic, and patient. Be relaxed, enjoy yourself, and smile.
- Talk in a noise-free, non-distracting place.
- Take turns frequently in conversation with a client. Use short sentences, not paragraphs. Give the participant time to answer. Clients may respond to verbalization very slowly. Allow sufficient time for them to respond.
- Avoid criticism and contradiction.
- Alert staff if a participant seems physically ill or non responsive.

- Remember that our client's long term memory is usually better than their short term memory.
- Chat about ordinary, everyday topics or subjects of interest to the client (re: history).
- Read aloud or help with letter writing.
- Games such as cards, chess, etc. can be helpful.
- Encourage development of new hobbies or renew interest in an old one such as knitting, embroidery, simple arts and crafts, growing plants, jigsaw and crossword puzzles, rug hooking, woodworking, etc.
- Encourage interest in appearance.
- Admire and give importance to something in the surroundings.
- Encourage interest in others - writing letters, sending cards, keeping up on news and, when possible, participation in community activity such as religious or senior groups, etc.
- Send cards for special occasions -- birthdays and holidays or postcards when you travel.
- In situations where practical, plan occasional outings: a short walk, visits to an old friend, shopping, etc.
- REMEMBER -- Just your visit means so much to a person who has so few contacts.

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations in this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself –Emerson

Visiting the Very Ill

What about visiting a person who may be too ill to recognize you or perhaps has become quite senile?

- **Don't ever think that your effort is wasted.** A pastor in a geriatric care home said he often had the experience of visiting patients after someone had left thinking their visit was futile, yet a lingering peace was evident because of this loving attention.
- Just holding a hand or a quiet pat on the shoulder can do wonders. Don't underestimate the warmth of your presence.

- Visiting an extremely ill person can be difficult at times, but remember, illness and pain are very personal. The one being visited wouldn't want to share these with you. So keep your spirit up and remember that the professional staff handles the physical pains and discomfort.

As a Friendly Visitor, you will be given help in understanding and meeting problems. You work with a Counselor who will discuss the person and his special needs. Feel free to call anytime you need help or wish guidance. There are many other Friendly Visitors like you. You'll meet some of them at meetings during the year and find that Friendly Visiting is a rewarding experience. In giving of yourself, you gain in return the satisfaction of doing something worthwhile with your time and talents, bringing happiness into the life of another.

"The Greatest Gift that you can give to another human being is the Gift of Yourself."

Visiting in Nursing Homes

These persons require nursing and medical care but not enough to be in a hospital. Feelings of aloneness and rejection are often based on fact. Expressions of hopelessness and depression may include: "The only way I'll leave this place is to die." Familiar surroundings are gone. Other sick people around give a fellowship of pain feeling, but other sick people - some dying - wear down morale. Tension with roommates is common. There is little feeling of personal worth. Work and family are in the past. With not much to do except eat and sleep and not much to look forward to, boredom is common.

- Your visit may be the only one by someone from the outside that week. A few minutes of your time will be the bright spot.
- Staff members simply do not have much time for personal visiting, even if they want to. It's all they can do to keep up with the routine work. It's hard work and deserves our respect.
- Medical problems should not be discussed except in a general way.
- Accept patients' complaints without agreeing or disagreeing. Say something like: "You feel the food could be better." NOT: "The poor food must really bother you." and NOT: "Oh, I'm sure the food isn't bad."
- Major complaints about anything should be relayed to the head nurse and the administrator - without hesitation. Nursing homes are run as a business. Good service is to be expected by those paying for it.
- Check out all personal requests with the head nurse - letter writing, contacts with relatives and especially food because of special diets.

Gifts can be brought, but try to bring something for each person in the room. Good ideas: flowers, children's art, perfume, cheery magazines, toiletries

OFFICE / RECEPTION

Our first job is to serve clients. The most important factor in client satisfaction is the treatment they receive from our staff. You are the “voice” of THE CENTER OF CONCERN to every caller. Their impression and satisfaction starts with you.

About 80% of our problems with clients will come from 20% of our clients. That is normal. Everyone has a bad day occasionally. We can't let these clients ruin our days. We must continue to be cheerful, helpful, friendly, and accommodating. Help them by keeping the following things in mind:

- * These people are a good barometer of how good our service really is. If we can please these people we're in great shape with everyone else.
- * These are frequently the most appreciative clients once they receive whatever it is they need. We should try our best to make them happy; frequently no one else can. If we do, they become loyal clients.
- * As fellow human beings give them patience and understanding.

Tips On Handling Complaints

A few simple procedures can help anyone who has to deal with client complaints. You can learn to handle complaints by following the simple procedures outlined below:

- * Listen to the entire complaint. How else will you find out what the client wants? Don't interrupt. People who complain about a product or service are feeling a need to tell you something.
- * Accept the feelings of the client. Let the client know it is all right to feel upset. The client's need to “tell you something” is often complicated by the feeling of frustration, or even embarrassment about complaining. The best way to deal with feelings is to accept them.
- * Don't take the client's complaint as a personal offense. Chances are it is not really directed at you. Don't defend yourself or your organization either. If you oppose the feelings, they will continue; if you accept them as valid for the client they tend to diminish.
- * You may feel like disagreeing with many things the person is saying. The key is to look for that feeling with which you can agree and then tell them that you understand. Manage to filter through the client's feelings by accepting them, then move into solving the specific problem.
- * Clarify the complaint. Now filter out the feelings to find out exactly what it is the client wants you to do. Simply ask, “How can I help you?”
- * Take action immediately when possible. Don't just stand there, do something! The complaining client wants action! Even if the complaint isn't in your department show some interest.
- * Follow through on anything you say you are going to do. Don't ever promise something you don't intend to do. If you are authorized to handle the matter then take care of it without delay, preferably in front of the client. That client wants action not just words.

- * Remain cheerful and helpful. Your attitude can ease the situation greatly if you handle it correctly. Smile! Be courteous and gracious; try to be really helpful.
- * When you are dealing with an unhappy client you have an unparalleled opportunity to create a positive impression of yourself and your organization. This is the time to be at your very best.
- * Refer matters that you can't handle to someone who can. If you can't take immediate action on the client's complaint yourself, refer them to someone who can.
- * If it is a matter of referring them to another agency or office, be helpful in providing the name, address and phone number, suggesting exactly what steps they should take. At the very least, take down their name, address, phone number and the nature, location and date/time of the problem and give it to your supervisor.

Remember: The person with the complaint is probably most upset because they don't feel they have been treated with fairness. This has offended their sense of self-worth. You can restore that sense of well-being by showing real attention and interest in their problem. Accept the reality and validity of their feelings. Try to resolve the problems or find the person or agency who can. Don't ever let the complaining client go away without showing them that someone does care about them and their problem. Isn't that what you would expect if you had a complaint?

Telephone Inquiries

Answer on the first ring if possible. Greet the caller pleasantly. You might say; "Thank you for calling THE CENTER OF CONCERN. This is (your first name), how may I help you?"

Use the client inquiry forms provided near each phone to write down their personal information along with the information they need. Take complete, accurate information and write legibly! If the caller is looking for information that we don't have, feel free to refer them to the appropriate program.

If you don't understand something the caller has said, ask them to repeat it. Wrong information means an unhappy client!

Walk In Inquiries

The client is the reason you are here and should be treated as the priority. When a client walks into the office, stand, greet them pleasantly and ask if you can be of any help. If you are engaged in another activity or in conversation with another staff person, break off quickly.

If you are busy helping another client, take a second to acknowledge the new client. Pleasantly let them know you will be right with them. Show the guest the brochures and other information.

Tips On Giving Good Information

- * Provide only correct information. The only thing worse than not knowing an answer is giving the wrong answer! Never be too proud to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out for you." If you don't know an answer, say so. Then do your utmost to find the correct information!
- * Don't assume anything. Ideas that may be clear and easy for you may not be to a visitor.
- * Be specific. When directing a client to an address of a service provided, use terms that are universal (north, south, right, left). Don't use terms that are only known locally, like "next to the Jones' place." Use names of streets and landmarks when possible. Give specific measurements if possible (four blocks, one half mile).
- * Speak slowly and distinctively.
- * Give added information when it will help. Be careful not to confuse when giving added information.
- * Recheck. Let the client repeat the information back to you if they want to and listen for points of possible confusion.
- * Be patient and considerate, especially with people who have speech and language difficulty. Think how you would like to be treated if the situation were reversed.
- * Maintain a helpful attitude. Be friendly and courteous. You should try not to rush the client. Don't let the client leave until you both feel you have a clear understanding.
- * Speak with confidence. True professionals provide their information and answers with quiet certainty, because they know their material. They know they are doing their job well. Learn to be a true professional in everything you do. Your confidence also will help put the visitor at ease.

You will need to be able to supply accurate information on a variety of subjects. Learn everything you can detail about the services available. Read the brochures in the lobby and familiarize yourself with the resources available in our community. There is much information to keep track of and you will need a system to keep things organized and up-to-date. Some of your basic resources are brochures, staff lists, printed lists of community services and contact information, and handouts. It might be helpful to have a brochure notebook with a sample of each brochure that is available.

Working With Clients

To be helpful in working with people I must show:

- * Awareness of my attitudes, feelings and prejudices so that they do not interfere as I begin to offer help to others.
- * Understanding that people usually react to situations with feeling rather than intellect.
- * Appreciation that people are different in physical and emotional makeup, family background, education, and life's experiences. They are alike in their basic needs to be loved, have security, be adequate, achieve and be recognized.

- * Insight that people form attitudes based on how they see a situation. They may read meanings into situations that are not there. They may hear only what they want to hear.
- * Realization that people want to control their lives and make their decisions. Help is seldom acceptable unless it is sought, and the individual has the right to reject it.
- * Recognition that behavior has meaning only to the individual and may not appear to be sensible or logical.
- * Appreciation that each person has needs and reacts in ways that attempt to meet them.
- * Understanding that a person's responses usually have little to do with me as a person. He/she may be reflecting worries and concerns that have no bearing on the current problem presented.
- * Acceptance of people as they are and where they are with their problems.
- * Understanding and ability to reassure the person that I recognize his/her problem and wish to work with him/her on it.

Telephone Reassurance Calls

- * Speak to clients with respect. Do not confuse diminished hearing with diminished intelligence.
- * It is often helpful to prepare a conversation starter. Discuss the day, the weather, upcoming holidays or local news.
- * Encourage them to take pride in themselves. Compliment them!
- * Respect their confidences and their privacy.
- * Make your interactions personal by learning about participant's interests and needs.
- * Be flexible and willing to follow their interests. Be ready to change the subject.
- * Guard against personal jokes; they may be misunderstood.
- * Be cheerful, enthusiastic, patient. Be relaxed, enjoy yourself, and smile.
- * Be objective and understanding.
- * Talk in a noise-free, non-distracting place.
- * Respond to the message, not to the words. "I'm sorry you're upset. I know this is confusing."
- * Take turns frequently in conversation with a client. Use short sentences, not paragraphs. Give the participant time to answer. Clients may respond to verbalization very slowly. Allow sufficient time for them to respond.
- * Avoid criticism and contradiction.
- * Alert staff if a participant seems physically ill or non-responsive.
- * Remember that our client's long term memory is usually better than their short term memory.

In Closing

We appreciate your willingness to volunteer with THE CENTER OF CONCERN. We hope you will enjoy your experience as a volunteer. As you learn your volunteer duties feel free to ask questions. Our staff is happy to help you. It is your commitment and that of volunteers like you that allows THE COC to most effectively serve our client's needs. Thank you.