

# Home Visits Training

Materials in Volunteer 'packet': Volunteer Handbook, Volunteer Training Information, VicNet Procedures, Emergency Contact Information

## What are home visits?

Volunteers will offer members home visits for the purpose of companionship or care-giver relief.

I. Companionship Visits: for the purpose of providing companionship and social contact in a member's homes to members who may be socially isolated, either temporarily or longer-term; and

II. Caregiver Relief Visits: to provide an opportunity for member caregivers to leave the home for a short while providing companionship to the household member.

## What do these visits include?

- The visit can include activities such as conversation, reading, puzzles, watching television, or similar activities based upon the needs and interest of the member.
  - The volunteer can find out member interests through descriptive field, during initial phone contact and visit.
- If volunteer is willing and member ambulatory and capable of short walks or sitting outside, this activity can be included. If it is Caregiver Relief visit, clear this first with caregiver.
- Visits are limited to two hours, once per week.
  - Visits can range from 15 minutes to two hours, depending on capacity of member.
  - Caregivers may occasionally require more than two hours if an arranged appointment. This will be in service request and volunteer will confirm duration during initial phone contact.
  - Caregivers will be present when volunteer arrives and volunteer remains until caregiver returns.
  - Sometimes extenuating circumstances for a *short duration* may require additional visits, requiring prior authorization by the Coordinator.

## What do these visits NOT include?

Volunteers are not permitted to:

- Provide personal care
- House work or cooking.
- Dispense medications to our members.
- Physically lift a member, but may provide assistance for support.
  - If a member falls, call 911 for assistance.
- Bring food to the member, as we are not aware of their medical restrictions.
- Help member by writing checks or paying bills.
  - Resource Hub can provide information on check-writing services if member requests available resources.
- Provide medical or financial advice.
- Accept gifts. Offers of baked cookies are acceptable.
  - If member is insistent, recommend they may consider a donation to Staying Connected.
- Discuss religion, politics or other beliefs or philosophies held.

- Share information about members with anyone outside Staying Connected (as per signed confidentiality agreement).

### **How do I accept a Request for Service?**

- Volunteer will follow VicNet instruction handout provided at training to access VicNet and select assignment.
  - Contact Volunteer Coordinator if questions on accessing VicNet
  - If a volunteer has a preference between a Companionship or Care Giver Relief type of visits, information in the 'description field' will assist the volunteer in the decision to accept the opening.
- Once a volunteer have accepted the opening, they will contact the member *right away* to discuss a mutual time and day for visit and a general idea of what type of visit the member would like (conversation, cards, etc.).
- Volunteer will call member *evening before or morning of* appointment to confirm the visit and to reduce the chance of member forgetting and not being home.

### **After accepting assignment, what should the volunteer ask during the initial phone contact?**

#### Companionship Home visit

- Is the listed time or day flexible? Would another time work better?
- How would you like to spend visit? Are there things you like to do, such as talking, puzzles, cards, dominoes, picture books, picture albums

#### Caregiver Relief Home Visit

- Is the listed time or day flexible or is it for an appointment?
- Tell me about the person that I will be visiting - mobility, alertness, and naps calming methods. Are there particular things like to do (see above)
- Are there any special arrangements? Food, exercise, bathroom (reminder: provide no personal care, but can help walk to bathroom)
- Would you like me to come early to spend some time with you so that you are comfortable leaving?
- How can I contact you if need to? (reminder: confirm contact information)
- What time are you expected to return? (reminder, volunteer remains until caregiver returns)

### **During the Visit, things to consider:**

- In conversation, the member's interest in other direct services or resources may be mentioned. Remind member they can initiate a request for service by calling the Hub at 843-705-2258. Requests regarding information on available outside resources can also be initiated through calling the Hub.
- If a member requests the volunteer's return visit, volunteer will discuss the process that the member follows to request the service by calling the Hub. If volunteer wishes to accept repeated visits, this will be done by accepting openings on VicNet.
- If a volunteer does have repeated visits and detects changes in member's condition, behavior or environment, please contact Home Visit Coordinator, who will follow-up with Member Coordinator to obtain further information.
- If volunteer is requested to do something not within their scope of responsibilities or which makes them uncomfortable, they are to communicate that to the member or caregiver. Remind them of their

agreement of the provided services discussed with them at time of Home Intake visit and in the Member Handbook. The volunteer will report situation to Home Visit Coordinator, who will follow up with Member Coordinator.

## **Unexpected Situations before the visit**

If the situations described below do occur:

- During Hub hours, Volunteer will contact Hub, who will in turn contact appropriate Coordinator or designee until someone is reached. .
- After Hub hours, Volunteer will directly contact Coordinator/designee, as listed on the provided 'Emergency contact' form until someone is reached.

### Non-response when calling to confirm visit:

1. If member does not answer when volunteer calls to remind member of the day's appointment, volunteer leaves message. Call again in the morning.
2. If no response to message and morning call, volunteer will arrive at member home at time of appointment.
3. At member home, if no response to both several attempts at calling on phone and knocking at door, Volunteer will call Hub (843-705-2258), who will report situation to Home Visit or Member Coordinators or designee until someone is reached. *Volunteer or Hub will not call the emergency contact, as that is responsibility of Member Coordinator.*

### Non-response at door although appointment confirmed:

1. Volunteer has spoken with member when called to confirm the day's appointment.
2. At member home, if no response to both several attempts at calling on phone and knocking at door, Volunteer will call Hub (705-2258), who will report to Home Visit or Member Coordinator or designee until someone is reached. *Volunteer or Hub will not call the emergency contact, as that is responsibility of Member Coordinator.*

Note: when calling Hub, it is very important for volunteer to clarify whether they had actually spoken with member when called to confirm appointment either evening before or that morning **OR** if having left a message and not receive call back in response. This is important information for Member Coordinator, who will continue to follow procedures as described under Staying Connected's 'No Response' Policy and Procedures.

## **Unexpected Situations during the visit**

### Companionship Visit:

1. Always notify Hub or Home Visit Coordinator of situation and for guidance on how to handle situation. Hub will contact appropriate Coordinator or designee until someone is reached.
2. If the member becomes ill during the visit, call 911 if appears to be an emergency or if volunteer not certain of situation. Always provide name and address of member. Notify Hub of situation and if need support. Hub will contact Coordinator or designee until someone is reached.
3. If member becomes ill but is not an emergency, contact Hub who will notify Home Visit Coordinator or designee until someone is reached. The Coordinator will follow up later in the day to see how member is doing and determine whether additional follow-up necessary.
4. If member falls and is not able to get up with a little assistance, call 911.
5. Coordinator or designee will come to home to be with volunteer if requested or deemed appropriate.
6. If volunteer becomes ill, call Hub and Coordinator will respond. Hub will make contact with coordinator or designee until someone is reached.
7. Fill out Incident Report in Hub when appropriate.

### Caregiver Relief:

1. In addition to the above, contact Caregiver immediately after incident or calling 911 (if needed) at number provided.
2. If volunteer cannot wait for Caregiver, another volunteer will be sent.

## Guidelines on Interacting with Members

### Be an active listener.

- Show a positive attitude and a lively interest in whatever Members talk about.
- Listen respectfully if Members talk about their religious or political beliefs. Never argue with them or engage in debate.
- Let Members talk, but do not feel you have to come up with solutions to their complaints or problems.
- Be prepared to listen and help the Member feel understood. Patiently wait for your turn to express your thoughts. Repeat what you have heard to ensure that each Member feels understood.
- Talk about what interests the Member – it may not be what interests you. If you hear “stories” that sound like wishful thinking, don’t try to challenge the anecdote. Instead say, “Tell me more about that.”

### Common listening mistakes:

- Steering the conversation toward a topic that you feel comfortable discussing. For instance, if a Member talks about a particular interest, don’t change the subject.
- Cutting off communication with a dismissive gesture or expression.
- Responding with impatience or disapproval.

### When listening, avoid answering with platitudes. Here are some examples:

- You will find the strength.
- Everything will work out for the best.
- Keep your chin up.
- Every cloud has a silver lining.
- You’ll feel better tomorrow.
- I know just how you feel.
- God won’t give you more than you can handle.

### Maintain boundaries.

- Boundaries are what make volunteers different from best friends or family.
  - Staying Connected has specific guidelines regarding provision of services and role of volunteer.
- Volunteers are sympathetic, compassionate and concerned, but need to have enough distance to be objective and realistic.
- While volunteers are caring, it is important not to form dependent relationships with Members.
  - If volunteer finds themselves engaging in activities and providing services beyond the accepted scope of Staying Connected, discuss with Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteer Coordinator is always available to talk with the volunteer about any questions or concerns you have about your role as a volunteer.