

Training Manual 2015

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Lead Volunteer Responsibilities

The Lead Volunteer is the CPP point person from the congregation. There are typically 2-3 lead volunteers per partnership, and other trainees may serve as “as-needed” volunteers.

**Time Commitment:** About6 months.

**Expectations:** Attend program orientation, volunteer training, CPP meetings (introduction, 3-month meeting, exit meeting), and connect with the family for 3-5 hours/month.

**Comments:** The Lead Volunteer is the liaison between the congregation and the CPP. Because the partnership is six months, it’s important for the lead volunteer to keep the partnership “alive” and update the congregation periodically, and is helpful if the lead volunteer has good rapport with the church.

**Outline of Responsibilities:**

1. Attend volunteer training
2. Establish and engage team if desired (recommend at least one other volunteer)
3. Insure volunteer forms and background checks are complete for volunteer team
4. Attend introductory meeting with Housing Resource Specialist, Participants, and CPP Coordinator to discuss volunteer support
5. Determine monthly contact schedule with Participant
6. Grow participant relationship; be a positive role model and support needs
7. Actively reinforce participant’s strengths and be engaged in the process
8. Be congregational spokesperson for program
9. Coordinate contact between volunteer team and participant
10. Attend exit interview and complete evaluation form
11. Discuss renewal opportunity with congregational leadership

**Outcomes and Goals:**

1. Congregational Partner is informed about the housing needs in our community and engaged in the CPP.
2. All volunteer team members receive training, sign consent form and register as a CPP volunteer.
3. The lead volunteer and team and congregation reinforce participant’s strengths and provide support during the partnership.
4. **Participant secures and/or maintains permanent housing during partnership.**
5. Partner and participant evaluations are positive.
6. The congregation is committed to the CPP and agrees to additional partnerships.

**Supporting the Participant’s Goals**

While you may not be responsible for setting goals with your participant, it is helpful if you are supportive of the goals that are in place. To help us be supportive, let’s consider what support is and what it is not.

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| --- | --- |
| **Support is not:** | **Support is:** |
| 1. Agreeing with whatever a person says | 1. Listening with fresh ears |
| 1. Avoiding what a person says because it sounds ridiculous, difficult, or irrelevant | 1. Acknowledging concerns with empathy and respect |
| 1. Disagreeing because you know better | 1. Viewing the person as the #1 expert in their own life |
| 1. Blaming the person for not following through or living up to commitments | 1. Putting aside your own agenda |
| 1. Taking responsibility for achieving a person’s goals | 1. Allowing their goals to guide your work |

**Six Ways to Offer Support:**1. Help your participant see a realistic perception of the event or situation.2. Provide emotional support.3. Allow your participant to vent their feelings.4. Assist in dividing the problem or goal into manageable segments.5. Remind them of past achievements and successes.6. List the strengths you see in your participants that will help them achieve their goals.

**What if there isn’t any progress?**That means it is time to reevaluate! Think about this:   
1. Is this goal truly important?  
2. What obstacles have kept me from achieving my goal?  
3. Are there other things that are more important or take priority right now?  
4. If I modified the goal slightly, would I be more inspired to achieve it?  
5. Consider that the goal is too large and may need to be broken down into smaller steps.

**Building Relationships**

Partnering with a CPP family is a relational ministry. This means it will develop over time and the fruits of your labor may not be evident. Below are some things to focus on as you work to build a relationship with your participant family.

**1. Focus on establishing a bond.** Many participants have worn thin their natural supports during times of crisis, so establishing a close and trusting relationship can be very valuable. However, it also takes a long time, and different families will need and want different levels of intimacy. Don’t take it personally if your participants are not receptive to this.

**2. Establish a sense of equality.** It helps to build a relationship where both parties are on equal footing, instead of one party directing and controling more. For instance:

* Let the family have a voice and choice in deciding what to discuss or do
* Sound like a friend, not a parent. Avoid lecturing, encourage discussion
* Listen. Listening is a form of emotional support and is sometimes all that is needed.
* Share your own stories and disclose appropriate information about your own life.
* Be a trusted friend. Have fun together.

**3. Don’t preach about values**, as this may make it harder to build a trusting relationship. Take a hands-off approach when it comes to the explicit transmission of values and instead teach silently by showing you care through actions.

**4. Be positive.** Participants may be used to negative feedback from others or be stuck in cycles of negative thinking. You have the opportuntiy to build their self-confidence. Offer praise and encouragement when deserved; look for real reaons to encourage and build up (not just flatter)

**5. Develop trust.**

* Avoid expressions of shock/disbelief if told something that seems unusual or dramatic
* Be patient and gentle; don’t push for information.
* Be conistent and direct in assuring the participants they can confide in you without fear of judgement or exposure.

**6. Take responsibility for building the relationship.** Schedule regular meetings and keep appointments. Call if you are running late or need to reschedule. At first the relationship may seem one-sided and it may feel like you are putting in all the effort. Some people may feel shy or reticent because they don’t yet know you. Be understanding and consider the situation from their point of view.

**Remember**, the relationship component is important, but our ultimate goal is families that are **whole, stable, and well-housed.** You may not receive an equal response or “payoff” – be prepared for that. Even if the family isn’t receptive to your support, your efforts still have an impact, and it’s a big achievement that a homeless family is now housed.

**Ideas for Building Relationships**

Below are some ideas of things to do and discuss as you get to know your participant family. Focus on spending time together, having fun, and sharing – not judging. Your family may be shy initially - you may need to take initiative by first sharing your own experiences, then encouraging the family to respond or ask any questions they have for you.

**Personal Stories**

Tell about a particular time in your life (e.g. a certain age, school year, or season). Where did you live? Who were the people around you? What was it like? What things were important to you? What picture comes to mind when you think back to that time?

**What should we talk about?**

**General Topics**

- interests and hobbies

- special talents, skills, abilities

- aspirations, dreams, hopes, and wishes

- favorite food, entertainment, music

- favorite recreation, exercise, sports

- customs, traditions, holidays & celebrations

- languages spoken

*\*silence can also be enriching and meaningful.*

*Don’t feel that there always needs to be talking*

- pets

**“Ice-Breaker” Questions**

- What were your dreams before you had kids?

- Did you ever think you’d have [#] kids?

- What are your hobbies? What do you do do for fun?

- What is your favorite room in the house?

- If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?

- When are your birthdays?

**What should we do together?**

**Things to do together**

**-** invite the family over for dinner

- go our for ice cream, hot chocolate, or a walk in the park

- invite the family to church dinners & events such as Christmas caroling or concerts

- celebrate birthdays and new jobs with small treats

- help the family move into their new home and gather furnishings they ask for

- visit the zoo, public library, or local museum (the GRAM is free Tues 10-5 and Thurs 5-9)

- summertime: visit local pools, watch movies in the park

- winter: go ice skating, offer to shovel snow for the family

- fall: visit Artprize downtown, visit an apple orchard or pumpkin patch

- find more ideas (including a list of free local events) at grnow.com

*\*being truly present with a person can be more meaningful than ‘doing’ for them*

**Strengths-Based Problem Solving**

Strengths-based Problem Solving assumes that all people have strengths and resources for their own growth and empowerment. It focuses on the future, what is already working in a person’s life, and what has worked previously.

**Strength-based ways you can help:**

1. Break goals down into smaller, more manageable steps
2. Present options
3. Move quickly to solutions
4. Point out genuine strengths
5. Use scaling questions to build confidence

**DO:**

* Listen and ask follow up questions
* Build trust by being genuine, respectful and empathetic
* Seek feedback regarding what would be helpful

**DON’T:**

* + Overwhelm the family with too much information
  + Blame or confront them about their decisions/involvement, etc.
  + Allow the family to become too dependent on you
  + Fail to follow through with steps that you have agreed to

**Take time to consider and acknowledge positive attributes and accomplishments!**

**For example:**“Look at all the things you have accomplished so far.”  
“How did you feel when life wasn’t so hectic?”  
“Good job, you sacrificed a lot to be able to accomplish that.”  
“You managed to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ since the last time we met -- that is amazing!”

**Remember:** Some families may at first find it difficult to focus on their strengths, because they have been trained by others to think only about their deficits. Once in a while, despite attempts to redirect a family back to their strengths, they can only dwell on problems/deficits. Sometimes it is okay to listen to the participant’s concerns and save talking about their strengths for another time.

**Strengths-Based Example Problem**

A participant family has recently been housed. They have very few furnishings and are in need of some basics such as beds and living room furniture.

As the Volunteer, you could:

1. Offer the solutions, ideas, resources that you know of.
2. Your Congregation
3. Goodwill, thrift stores, Yard Sales
4. Contact 211

United Way’s 211 is a free information and referral service available to all Kent County residents. It provides a quick, easy-to-remember central resource for local community services and information.

* + - Cell or Landline: 2-1-1
    - Long distance/Toll-Free: 1-800-887-1107

1. Ask what the family really needs or wants. Perhaps they have things in storage but lack the financial resources to get them out. Perhaps a family member has offered used items, but they have no transportation to go get them.
2. Ask what they have used in the past. In the past, they were likely successful at some point in furnishing their home. Have them think about that time and how they got there. What would it take to get to that point again?
3. Ask what ideas they have for furnishing their home. What is first priority? Set a goal to accomplish the most important thing.

**Remember**, the focus is on the family’s housing stability. The partnership is led by the participant. The Housing Resource Specialist (HRS) guides the participant according to his/her housing goals. Volunteers provide support and encouragement along the way.Doing these things **with** **(not for),** a participant fosters economic independence by creating a feeling of empowerment and an ability to achieve goals.

**Principles of Empathetic Communication**From Stephen Covey’s “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”

**1.** Suppose you’ve been having trouble with your eyes and you decide to go to an optometrist for help. After briefly listening to your complaint, he takes off his glasses and hands them to you.

**2.** “Put these on,” he says. “I’ve worn this pair of glasses for ten years now and they’ve really helped me. I have an extra pair at home; you can wear these.”

**1.** So you put them on, but it only makes the problem worse.

**3.** “This is terrible!” you exclaim. “I can’t see a thing!”

**2.** “Well, what’s wrong?” he asks. “They work great for me. Try harder.”

**3.** “I am trying,” you insist. “Everything is a blur.”

**2.** “Well, what’s the matter with you? Think positively.”

**3.** “Okay. I positively can’t see a thing.”

**2.** “Boy, are you ungrateful!” he chides. “And after all I’ve done to help you!”

**1.** What are the chances you’d go back to that optometrist the next time you needed help? Not very good, I would imagine. You don’t have much confidence in someone who doesn’t diagnose before he or she prescribes.

**1.** “Seek first to understand” involves a very deep shift in paradigm. We typically seek first to be understood. Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They’re either speaking or preparing to speak. They’re filtering everything through their own paradigms, reading their autobiography into other people’s lives.

**2.** “Oh, I know exactly how you feel!”

**3.** “I went through the very same thing. Let me tell you about my experience.”

**1.** They’re constantly projecting their own home movies onto other people’s behavior. They prescribe their own glasses for everyone with whom they interact.

**1.** If they have a problem with someone- a son, a daughter, a spouse, an employee- their attitude is, “That person just doesn’t understand.”

**2.** A father once told me, “I can’t understand my kid. He just won’t listen to me at all.”

**3.** “Let me restate what you just said,” I replied. “You don’t understand your son because he won’t listen to you?”

**2.** “That’s right,” he replied.

**3.** “Let me try again,” I said. “You don’t understand your son because *he* won’t listen to *you*?”

**2.** “That’s what I said,” he impatiently replied.

**3.** “I thought that to understand another person, *you* needed to listen to *him*,” I suggested.

**2.** “Oh!” he said. There was a long pause. “Oh!” he said again, as the light began to dawn. “Oh, yeah! But I do understand him. I know what he’s going through. I went through the same thing myself. I guess what I don’t understand is why he won’t listen to me.”

**1.** This man didn’t have the vaguest idea of what was really going on inside his boy’s head. He looked into his own head and thought he saw the world, including his boy.

**1.** That’s the case with so many of us. We’re filled with our own rightness, our own autobiography. We want to be understood. Our conversations become collective monologues, and we never really understand what’s going on inside another human being.

**Thinking Points:**

1. What are a few qualities you possess that might help you be a great volunteer partner?
2. Are there tendencies you have that could potentially make it more difficult to develop a strong friendship with a recently-homeless family?
3. Do you have any concerns about relating to the participant family?

**Remember**, you do not have to dress, sound, or act like the participant, to create a relationship. *You only have to care about them as a person. Y*ou have taken an interest in this program, which already shows that you care about people! Building a relationship takes time and care, and you have invested those two essential elements.

**Volunteer/Participant Boundaries**

Healthy boundaries allow you to empathize, sympathize, help, support and have compassion on another person’s emotions without taking on those emotions yourself or burning out.

**Professional Boundary Setting for Volunteers**

1. Boundaries set the parameters of what is and is not acceptable behavior
2. Boundaries give volunteers confidence as they know how to react to different situations.
3. Clear boundaries help develop trusting relationships with participants who will then know what to expect from volunteers and staff.
4. Boundaries should clarify the difference between befriending someone in order to offer support and being their friend in a social sense.

**Managing Unhealthy Boundaries**

1. If unsure, ask for guidance from the Housing Resource Specialist (HRS) Katie Carroll – contact info on pg 1.
2. Seek advice from the other lead volunteer or a church leader.
3. Set firm limits with the client, and be prepared to reinforce them.

**Respecting Boundaries**

1. Don’t engage in intimate physical contact with participants.
2. Don’t work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, OR if you notice the client is under the influence, reschedule the meeting.
3. Don’t engage in any illegal or unethical activity with a participant.
4. Don’t lend or borrow money from a participant.
5. Don’t use profanity, call insulting names, or use racial or ethnic slurs.
6. Don’t enter the participants’ home without them being present.
7. Don’t babysit the children without a parent being present.

**Stuck in a Grey Area? Ask yourself these questions:**

1. Are you doing anything that you have not been trained to do?
2. Are you doing something that is making you unhappy or uncomfortable?
3. Would this action put anyone at risk? (Including yourself)
4. Would this action be contrary to the mission or philosophy of my congregation?
5. Has what I am being asked to do been identified on the Volunteer Connection Form? (If not, check with the coordinator or HRS first)

If you answer Yes to any of these questions (or No to #5), STOP! The answer to the participant should be “No, I cannot do that.” OR “I’m not sure that’s the best solution; let me give you an answer later.” It is up to you to **maintain** and **reinforce** the boundaries.

**Volunteer Role Play: Car Trouble**

*V: Volunteer, P = Participant*

V: Hi John, Thanks for coming in today. How’s your week been going?

P: Well, I had a pretty bad week. My car broke down and I need to get to work on Monday. If I’m not there I could lose my job and I need it, even if I don’t get many hours.

V: I’m sorry to hear that. I know how important your job is to you.

P: Yeah, I’ve gotta get my car fixed. Can you guys help with that?

V: I can try to help figure out some solutions but unfortunately we don’t have any funds for car repairs. I’m sensing that this is a pressing issue for you right now. Is this what you’d like us to focus on first today?

P: Yeah, is there any way you can help me get to work on Monday?

V: I’m not able to do that but it does make sense to think about some possible options ahead of time. Has anyone helped you with rides in the past?

P: My neighbor took me to the doctor last week when my kids were sick.

V: Any chance you would feel comfortable explaining your situation and asking him to help again?

P: I could but I don’t know if he will be able to do it.

V: Well, let’s throw out a few options that you think might work and then you at least have somewhere to start. Hey, we might want to think about coworkers too, any possibilities there?

P: I don’t want to bug them.

V: I understand that but sometimes people really like to help out. Is there any one of your co-workers you would be willing to ask?

P: I could ask Steve, I guess.

V: Okay, you’ve got Steve and your neighbor; is there anyone else who has helped in the past that you want to add to our options?

P: My mom and my landlord.

V: Great! You’ve got your mom, your neighbor, Steve, and your landlord. What do you think the chances are that one of them will be able to get you to work next week?

P: Probably pretty good for at least Monday and Tuesday.

V: Do you want to spend more time figuring out transportation and ideas for getting your car running again or do you want to focus on something else?

P: I think my car needs an alternator. When I get paid Wednesday I’m going to get one and I can put it in myself.

V: I wish I had mechanical skills like that! I didn’t know you could work on cars – what kinds of stuff can you do?

P: The basics: brakes, oil changes, rotating tires…

V: It sounds like you have some great skills. Maybe you can trade some of those skills for rides you will need. Heck, a lot of people I know would love having a friend who would change their oil.

P: I never thought of it like that. I just do what I have to on my cars to get by.

V: How’s it feel to think about it like that now?

P: Good I guess. I kind of feel proud.

V: You should feel proud! I wish I had those skills. Keep me posted – I bet you can put those skills to good use with others. People are always looking for a way to save money on car repairs and wishing they had a friend who could help them out.

P: Hmm, maybe.

V: I want to make sure we talk about anything we need to related to your housing and the CPP Program. Can we revisit your goals real quick?

P: Sure

V: Looks like you wanted to get your GED paperwork turned in – how’d that go for you?

P: I was going to do that but just didn’t have time, too much going on.

V: You have had a busy week. Is it still a priority for you to get the paperwork turned in?

P: Yeah, it is. I’ll get to it this week.

V: Okay, how likely do you think it is that you will be able to get it done by Wednesday?

P: Pretty likely.

V: On a scale of one to five with five being for sure what do you think?

P: I’d say maybe a three.

V: Alright, I know how busy life can be but I trust you when you tell me this is a priority so I want to support you in this. What would help you get it to a four?

P: I guess if I set aside some time tonight to work on it I could probably move to a four or five.

V: Is it realistic to set some time aside tonight for yourself?

P: Yeah, I will do that.

V: Great. It sounds like you are going to be one step closer to your GED next week. Were you able to set aside your rent portion this month?

P: I have $75 saved.

V: Great. Have you planned for saving the rest so that it will be paid on time?

P: I get a check on the 29th so I’ll have the other half then.

V: Perfect. Let’s write that on your calendar so we know it’s a solid plan. I want to keep us on task and make sure our time together is valuable to you. Was it helpful to talk about your transportation options, and do you feel like you will be successful in getting rides until you get your car fixed?

P: Yes, I’m going to ask people, even though I don’t like to.

V: John, I know you’re a generous person. I can’t believe how many times you helped your neighbor by watching his kids. It’s okay to be on the receiving end sometimes. Good luck with the asking. Take care, see you next week.