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The values of choice, quality of life, independence and community are fundamental throughout Bethany Care Society. As a faith-based organization, we strive to meet the needs of the whole person — body, mind and spirit. We work to make a difference every day in the lives of the people we serve, while also assisting and supporting friends and family members.

Through our caring communities, we create a homelike environment by:

- Celebrating the independent spirit of those who call Bethany home
- Including staff and families as partners in care — it’s a joint effort that involves the resident whenever possible
- Encouraging each family to continue family traditions and to bring furniture, pictures and mementos from home to the resident’s room
- Providing care and support in daily living activities
- Tailoring programs and activities to meet resident needs
- Offering community spaces for social activities and family gatherings
- Providing pastoral care services
- Reflecting in our centers the unique personality of the communities in which we operate
- Doing our best to enhance the quality of life for our residents

Our Vision

Bethany is Alberta’s faith-based leader in advocating for seniors, and excels in providing holistic care, housing and support services for senior and adults with disabilities.

Resident Rights

It is important to remember that Bethany is each resident’s home. All residents have a right to share their thoughts, feelings, philosophies, religious preferences etc. As volunteers, it is important to respect the beliefs of residents and to keep all information about, or shared by, residents confidential.

Who Resides At Bethany

Bethany offers a numerous option for care for seniors and adults with disabilities. These options include independent housing options, supportive living environments, where minimal amounts of care are provided and long-term care, where 24 hour nursing care and support is provided.

Residents residing in the long-term care centres often have complex health needs, including dementia and/or other disabilities.
70% of the residents living at Bethany have some form of dementia. This can vary from mild forgetfulness to fully experiencing or reliving a different period of their life.

**Valuing the Spirit in Residents with Dementia**

*Excerpt from Bell and Troxel: The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer’s Care (1997)*

Someone with dementia remains very human. In fact, this individual is (and continues to be) a person:
- Of infinite value
- With a name
- With a spirit
- With feelings
- With a will and personality
- With a life story
- Who has a physical environment
- Who has the present moment

Yes, there are deficits and challenges — even frustrating behaviours — linked with dementia. But an individual with dementia may still be someone who:
- Gives and receives love and affection
- Can reminisce and respond to stories from others
- Is compassionate and concerned
- Enjoys verbal and nonverbal communication
- Can be surprisingly flexible
- Has a sense of humour
- Is productive
- Has intact social graces
- Maintains old skills and talents
- Thrives on the arts
- Has excellent hand-eye coordination
- Experiences all five senses
- Responds to the experience of new information

What do adults with dementia need?
- To feel connected to people and their environment
- To feel competent and useful
- To love and be loved
- To succeed
- To have hope
- To have a sense of control
- To be respected and appreciated
- To have the opportunity to share
- To feel as though they belong
- To be treated like human beings and valued

**Individuals with dementia have much to teach the world. They live in the now, without being haunted by past failures or future fears. They are free, laugh at the smallest thing, and say what others believe but are too embarrassed to say. They offer a fresh perspective on the world — and perhaps a clearer understanding that to be human is more about whom one is, rather than what one does.**
Residents living at Bethany may have any of these disabilities or conditions in addition to or instead of dementia.

**Alzheimer’s Disease**
- Progressive disease of the brain
- Personality and behavior as well as memory and judgment can be affected

**Aphasia**
- Loss of ability to communicate, verbally
- May be seen in those who have had a stroke or suffered brain damage

**Arthritis**
- Degeneration of joint function with possible swelling, deformity and pain
- Most common form for long-term care residents is osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis

**Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**
- Chronic progressive condition of the lungs
- Decreased ability to expel mucus, shortness of breath and fatigue
- Asthma and emphysema may eventually lead to COPD

**Depression**
- Long standing sadness
- A psychiatric or mental health disorder

**Hypertension**
- Elevated blood pressure
- May have headaches

**Korsakoff Syndrome**
- Often caused from long-term use of alcohol
- Denial and lack of insight will be apparent

**Multiple Sclerosis (MS)**
- Disease that affects the nerves
- A weakening and wasting of muscle tissue
- Resident may be paralyzed or partially paralyzed
- Speech may be affected in the later stages

**Parkinson’s Disease**
- Individuals may experience cognitive loss in the later stages
- Response time needs to be considered
- Mobility will be affected due to tremors
- Expressiveness and speech may be limited

**Stroke or Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA)**
- May leave the resident paralyzed on one side and/or with speech difficulties
- Memory can be affected

**Vascular Dementia**
- Caused by lack of blood flow to the brain
- Loss of emotional control may be apparent
- Speech may be affected
- Memory may be affected – even long-term memory
A Volunteer’s Role

At Bethany we believe that volunteers are a valuable human resource and play an important role in striving to meet our mission of Creating Caring Communities.

We commit to our volunteers by:

- Offering a volunteer program that has adequate resources, is well managed and has the appropriate infrastructure to ensure volunteers are working in a supportive environment
- Ensuring every volunteer receives a thorough orientation and training where the mission of the organization is clearly communicated
- Providing the necessary supervision and accessible support so that you can fulfill your commitment to the organization
- Informing you of all new programs, services and changes to policy that impact the services offered to our residents/clients and volunteers
- Providing you with a detailed, current volunteer position description that not only clearly outlines your volunteer role but also how you will give and receive feedback
- Creating an environment where there is open communication, a sense of teamwork and respect for diversity between volunteers and staff
- Providing ongoing opportunities to learn and grow, which includes the opportunity to experience working in various positions while you are volunteering with our organization
- Recognizing you for your contributions and accomplishments in both formal and informal ways

As a volunteer at Bethany, you are an ambassador of our organization.

Because of this important role, we expect volunteers to:

- Participate in orientation, training and ongoing development opportunities
- Work within the boundaries of your volunteer position description while supporting the vision, mission and policies outlined by our organization
- Act as an ambassador of Bethany Care Society by taking ownership of actions and decisions made while volunteering
- Approach your volunteer assignment as a professional commitment
- Engage in discussions with staff in order to express your comments, suggestions or concerns
- Promote a team spirit by respecting differences in people, valuing diversity of opinion and working with others to achieve the goals of our organization
- Provide exceptional quality service to our residents, their loved ones, staff and community members by being friendly, informed and respectful

Source: Volunteer Alberta
Regulations for Volunteers

Absence:
Volunteers are expected to be reliable, dependable, and punctual in the performance of their duties. It is a volunteer’s responsibility to notify the Volunteer Services Coordinator or their immediate Supervisor, if he/she is unable to fulfill a volunteer commitment.

Abusive Behaviour:
Abuse of any sort is not tolerated at Bethany. If you witness abusive behaviour of any sort, please report it to the Volunteer Services Coordinator, or your supervisor. All reports will be treated confidentially.

Accidents/Incidents:
All accidents, whether they involve equipment, another person, or a slip, trip or fall, that occur while volunteering must be reported promptly to the Volunteer Services Coordinator, or your immediate supervisor. The Volunteer Services Coordinator, or supervisor, will then complete the necessary accident and/or injury report forms with you.

Attendance/Sign In:
Volunteers are responsible for recording the time they spend volunteering. This ensures that they are recognized for their contributions and that program staff can accurately report the volunteer hours that are contributed toward their programs. It also ensures that volunteers will be covered by insurance, if required, in the performance of their volunteer roles.

Attire and Appearance:
Clothing should be appropriate, clean and in good repair. For your protection, volunteers MUST wear closed-toed/closed-heeled shoes. Perfumes and other scents should be avoided.

Boundaries and Limitations
We want to encourage positive and safe relationships with residents. To ensure safety for volunteers and residents, please follow these guidelines:

- It is allowed, with permission from staff, to accompany residents off the unit or outside the building, but please do not accompany them off site without specific approval from the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

- Volunteers are not permitted to take residents anywhere in their vehicle at any time. There are no exceptions.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices:
Please keep incoming and outgoing calls or text messages on cellular phones to a minimum while volunteering at Bethany. Please put ringer on vibrate or turn the phone off during resident programs. You may not use your cell phone, or any other device, to photograph a resident unless a Manager has approved the photo in writing and the resident and/or resident’s family has given written consent in accordance with Bethany’s privacy policies.

Communication:
There is Volunteer Services Coordinator at each long-term care site. They contact the volunteers regularly by email, phone or posters, with important announcements and requests. Such communication can include: outbreak notices, upcoming events and training sessions, requests for volunteers, etc.
Confidentiality:

We cannot overstate the degree of responsibility volunteers have when dealing with confidential information of any kind, whether it relates to residents, staff or another matter. Under no circumstances, can you release, repeat or otherwise convey information that is not published or available to persons outside of Bethany. Every volunteer must sign a confidentiality agreement upon entering into a volunteer role at Bethany.

Conflicts of Interest:

It is important to avoid conflicts of interest when volunteering. These include: Using Bethany facilities or identification to carry on a private business; using society time for any purpose related to personal financial gain through outside activities or employment; placing oneself in a position of obligation to a resident.

Discipline:

Appropriate records will be kept on discipline and, in all cases, volunteers will be informed of reason for disciplinary action being taken. Notice can be given in verbal or written form.

Gifts:

For the protection of residents and volunteers alike, volunteers shall not accept gifts of any kind from a resident. This includes future gifts such as writing one into a will. Likewise, volunteers may not give gifts of any kind to residents. Exceptions will be made under the discretion of the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

Grievances:

When there is a complaint from a staff member, volunteer, or resident, an investigation is required. Staff, volunteers, and residents are encouraged to resolve any disputes amongst themselves first. Any unresolved issues should be brought to the attention of the Volunteer Services Coordinator. All staff and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

Identification:

All volunteers will be issued an ID badge. This badge must be worn at all times while volunteering.

Insurance Coverage:

Bethany’s insurance policy covers registered volunteers for general liability when they are performing the duties of their volunteer position description and have recorded their hours.

Letters of Reference:

After contributing a minimum of 40 hours, a volunteer can ask for a reference. Reference requests for current or former volunteers are handled only by the Volunteer Services Coordinator. This request will be on Bethany letterhead and will include the volunteer’s name, nature of his/her volunteer position/duties, hours and length of service. Volunteers must give at least one week’s notice when requesting a reference letter. Personal references can be granted at the discretion of the Volunteer Services Coordinator. This letter will not be on letterhead and formal written permission to release the volunteer’s personal information is required.
Orientation:
All volunteers will attend a general orientation session followed by a more specific position or program orientation.

Outbreaks:
From time to time, a unit or several units may declare an outbreak of a communicable illness, such as Norovirus or respiratory influenza. During this time, please avoid travelling through or visiting residents on the affected unit(s). The Volunteer Services Coordinator will notify you via email and will post signage when outbreaks occur. (for further information, please see Infection Control/Hand Washing section).

Parking:
Free parking is available for all volunteers. Please speak with your Volunteer Services Coordinator to learn about your options.

Personal Property:
Bethany does not assume any responsibility or liability for loss and/or damage to personal property. Please ask the Volunteer Services Coordinator for information about where personal property may be stored while volunteering.

Protection for Persons in Care Act:
This Act is intended to stop/prevent abuse of adults living in lodges, hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities. Volunteers have a legal responsibility to uphold this Act if abuse is suspected. The Act stipulates fines and penalties for those who do not comply with the Act. Please report suspicions of abuse to the Volunteer Services Coordinator, your supervisor, or a Bethany Manager. Please phone 1-888-357-9339 or police if it is an emergency.

Recognition:
Bethany recognizes the valuable contributions made by volunteers. Volunteer recognition is expressed on an informal and a formal basis, and in a manner that is sincere and meaningful to the volunteer.

Remuneration:
Volunteers are not expected, nor encouraged to pay for anything related to their volunteer role. If any materials are needed, please ask Bethany staff for assistance. Pre-approved, out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Social Media:
You may indicate your place of employment or volunteering on your social media profile (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, personal website, blog, etc.), but you may not portray yourself as a representative or spokesperson of Bethany. Every effort must be made to indicated that opinions expressed are those of a private individual and not as an authorized spokesperson of Bethany.

Additionally, when using electronic social media you are reminded that you remain subject to Bethany’s policies and standards regarding confidentiality and privacy. In this regard, you may not disclose any information or content unless it has been published by Bethany in a public document or you have been specifically authorized to do so.
Security Clearance:
Per the mandate of the Protection for Persons in Care Act, all volunteers 13 years and older, will be required to complete a security clearance, which includes a criminal record check and a vulnerable sector search.

Smoking, Alcohol and Recreational Substances:
While on Bethany premises, no employee, volunteer or contractor may use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol. Also, no employee, volunteer or contractor may possess, use or be under the influence of illegal drugs, or engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution or dispensation of illegal drugs.

Supervision:
Volunteers will have a clearly identified supervisor to support and direct them. Occasionally identified as a staff resource person, this individual will provide the necessary training and answer questions regarding the role.

Telephone:
A telephone may be available for local, outgoing calls. Personal use of the telephone for long distance calls, toll free calls or faxes is permitted only with the prior approval of the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

Termination:
The Volunteer Services Coordinator has the discretion to dismiss a volunteer for any of the following reasons: consecutive, unexcused absences; failing to comply with established policies and procedures; volunteering while in a state of intoxication or under the influence of drugs; and if it is considered to be in the best interest of the volunteer program. Termination of a volunteer may take a number of forms: voluntary resignation, retirement or dismissal. Voluntary resignation occurs when the volunteer, for any reason, leaves the service of Bethany by his/her own will.

Unusual Incidents:
If you have witnessed or are involved in any incident while volunteering, please speak with the Volunteer Services Coordinator so that they can complete the Unusual Occurrence form.

Use of Equipment:
While on duty volunteers will have access to designated equipment and supplies. Volunteers will be trained by their supervisor on how to use the equipment properly (and in a safe manner) and any risks to be aware of. Equipment use is for volunteer related tasks only. Volunteers must notify staff if they identify any safety issues and items requiring repair, and complete a Hazardous Condition form.

Volunteer Position Description:
Each volunteer will receive a document outlining the roles and responsibilities pertaining to the volunteer position he/she holds. It is possible for a volunteer to have more than one position description. The volunteer and their supervisor will review this description as needed to ensure it accurately reflects the work being done.
Preventing and controlling the spread of infections in our care centres is an important part of Bethany's safety program. Volunteers can play an important role in preventing infections by observing the practices of hand washing, isolation and care for one's own health.

Isolation is usually indicated by a sign posted next to the resident's doorway. Volunteers are not permitted to enter any rooms where isolation precautions are indicated.

**Hand hygiene is one of the most effective means to prevent the spread of infection.**

Alcohol based hand rubs are an effective way to clean your hands when they are not visibly soiled. Alcohol based hand rubs are available in every resident room as well as locations throughout the facility. Soap and water are used when hands are visibly soiled or as an alternative to using alcohol based hand rubs.

Hand hygiene should be performed:

- Upon entering the facility/unit
- When leaving the facility/unit
- Prior to contact with a resident or resident environment
- After contact with a resident or resident environment
- After exposure to blood or body fluids
- Before meals/food preparation
- After personal hygiene
- Whenever in doubt

To use alcohol based hand rub: apply one or two pumps on your hand and rub all surfaces of your hands until the alcohol vanishes.

To use soap and water: wet your hands with warm water, apply soap and rub all surfaces for a minimum of 15 seconds. Rinse hands in warm water, dry and turn the tap off with paper towel.
Infection Control/Hand washing continued

Volunteers should be in good health when reporting to their assignment at Bethany. Please do not come to the site if you have a cold, flu or are feeling unwell. Please notify your supervisor when you are unable to come in.

Routine Practice:
It is possible, during interactions with residents that volunteers may be exposed to the blood or body fluids of residents. If this should occur, immediately report the exposure and seek direction from nursing staff. Volunteers should never attempt to clean up any substances.

Outbreak:
Gastrointestinal and respiratory viruses can spread easily in continuing care settings and, despite our best efforts, cause an outbreak. If a unit is declared in outbreak, you should be advised of the potential risk of acquiring an illness. As a general rule, programs and large group activities will be canceled during an outbreak. However, volunteers may still be permitted to assist with non-resident activities, or to support units that are not affected. If you choose to enter the facility when outbreak is declared, you will be required to follow guidelines as directed by your supervisor.

Remember: hand washing is the #1 way to prevent becoming ill!
Healthcare workers, including volunteers, may be exposed to and transmit vaccine preventable diseases. All volunteers who work directly with residents are strongly encouraged to have up to date immunizations, as recommended by Public Health Canada, to reduce the chance they will get sick and to prevent spreading diseases to other staff, residents and family members.

### Immunization Information for Volunteers

#### Public Health Canada, Recommended Immunizations for Adults

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<th>Immunization Guidelines</th>
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<td>Influenza Vaccine “Flu Shot”</td>
<td>It is recommended that all Canadians over the age of six months get the seasonal flu shot every year.</td>
<td>Provided free of charge every fall to all staff and volunteers or through Public Health clinics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tetanus, Diptheria, Pertussis (Tdap)</td>
<td>If you have not had, or are unsure if you have previously received this vaccine, you should receive a one-time dose of Tdap. <strong>Boosters are required every 10 years.</strong></td>
<td>Alberta Health Services provides routine immunizations for children, adults and seniors. If you are uncertain of your immunization status, visit a Community Health Clinic in your area for more information. <strong>Appointments may be required.</strong> For more information on a public health clinic near you go to: <a href="http://www.albertahealthservices.ca">www.albertahealthservices.ca</a> or call Health Link Alberta at 1-800-408-5465 For more information on adult immunizations visit the Public Health Canada website at: <a href="http://www.phac-aspc.ca">www.phac-aspc.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mumps, Measles and Rubella (MMR)</td>
<td>Persons born before 1970 are generally considered immune. Persons born after 1970 can be considered immune if they have received MMR or have lab confirmation of disease.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pneumococcal Vaccine</td>
<td>This vaccine is recommended for all seniors 65 years of age and older.</td>
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<td>Varicella (Chickenpox)</td>
<td>If you have not had Chickenpox or the vaccine you may need this vaccine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>This vaccine is recommended for all health care workers who may be at risk of exposure to blood and body fluids. It is also recommended for travelers to certain areas in the world.</td>
<td>To evaluate your risk, please speak to your doctor or Community Health Nurse. There is a fee for this vaccine.</td>
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### Respiratory Etiquette:

When you feel a cough or a sneeze coming on, use the crook of your elbow or another part of your arm covered in fabric. If you have no sleeves, use tissues. You should throw the tissue out immediately and wash your hands right away with soap and water or use alcohol based hand rub.
Safety and Wellness Procedures

Fire Safety

When you hear the fire alarm:
- Stay calm and listen for instructions
- Stay with residents in a safe location
- If not with residents, go to the supervisor of the area in which you are assigned and wait for further instructions
- Do not run

If you discover smoke:
- Activate the fire alarm and investigate to determine the origin
- If you discover a room that you suspect has a fire and the door is closed, feel the door with your hands — do not open the door if it feels warm or hot
- Report your findings to the supervisor in your assigned area

If you discover fire:
- Remove those in immediate danger
- Ensure the room door is closed
- Activate the fire alarm (if not already done)
- Call for help
- Try to extinguish/control the fire if safe to do so

If fire location is not known:
Report to supervisor in your assigned area, assist as instructed.

Always Remember:
- Do not panic
- Do not run
- Do not use the elevators — take the stairs

Falls

Always stay calm and follow these steps if someone falls:

1. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO STOP THE FALL OR CATCH THE RESIDENT.** You can have them lean against your body to slow the speed and impact. If the resident has fallen, or you come upon a resident that is on the floor, do not try and move the resident. Have someone go for help while you stay with the resident. If you are by yourself, use the nearest phone to call the closest nursing station.

2. Get the closest nurse to come and assess the resident (regardless if this is the unit that the resident is from or not).

3. The nurse will determine if a lift is needed to assist the resident up. Volunteers are not permitted to assist with getting the resident upright.

4. All falls **MUST** be reported. Fill out the Unusual Occurrence form, which can be picked up from the Registered Nurse (RN) or found at the nursing station from the unit clerk if a nursing station is available in your location.
Wandering

Some of our residents may have a tendency to wander. Those with dementia could leave the building, forget their way back and become lost. Many of these residents are housed in areas with secure doors. If you are entering or leaving these areas, always look behind you. Please ensure no residents attempt to exit the unit when the door is open.

There are also residents who can safely travel through the building but could become lost if they venture outside. They may be wearing a small bracelet on their wrist or have a sensor placed somewhere on their wheelchair. This device is called a wander guard.

If you are taking a resident through an area where there is a wander guard alarm point such as a unit door way or elevator, an alarm will sound. Please remember to enter the by-pass code into the alarm point panel to turn the alarm off and on. The code will likely be written somewhere on the alarm point.

Medical Emergencies

If a resident is complaining of chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, sickness, appears to be in distress (from verbal or non-verbal signs), or is choking, taken these reports seriously.

1. If any of the above occurs, or if the resident is behaving out of their normal, alert the nearest staff.

2. If you are off the unit, return the resident to their unit and inform the nurse of your observations.
Aggressive Behaviour

Feelings of frustration or depression can occur among residents, which may lead to verbal or physical aggression. This can include hitting, pinching, kicking, shoving, bumping, biting, spitting, physical intimidation, shouting, obscene language, demeaning comments, racial slurs, sexual gestures, fondling or grabbing. If a resident becomes aggressive:

- Do not try to force yourself away if you are grabbed
- Remove yourself from the situation if possible
- Respond exactly as you were trained
- Seek immediate help from staff
- Do not take aggressive behaviour personally
- Notify the Volunteer Services Coordinator as soon as possible to discuss the situation
- Fill out the Unusual Occurrence form, which can be picked up from the RN or found at the nursing station from the unit clerk if a nursing station is available in your location.

Personal Care and Transferring

Under no circumstances should you attempt to move a resident or conduct personal care as a volunteer. Staff members are always responsible for performing these tasks because they are properly trained and insured. If a resident wants to move from their bed to a wheelchair, or from a chair into a bed, or asks for assistance to the washroom, please find a staff member to help them. This is for the safety of both the volunteer and the resident.

Food and Mealtimes

All residents have very specific and unique nutritional needs. These needs are assessed and addressed by our Registered Dietitians and the Nursing Care staff. There are some residents that may have very severe allergies, special diet considerations (e.g. diabetes, low sodium) and some that are at risk for choking due to a health condition. Do not assist a resident with any food or drink unless you have completed the Mealtime Assistance Program training from the Volunteer Services Coordinator or other designated staff.
Many residents at Bethany use a wheelchair. Below are our guidelines regarding the safe use of wheelchairs:

- If you will be pushing a resident in a wheelchair, always approach a resident from the front corner and ensure that they are aware that you are about to push them.
- Some residents do not have footrests because they use their feet to help propel the chair. If you are pushing a resident without footrests, please remind them to lift their feet, to prevent injury to the resident's feet/lower legs from feet dragging under the chair.
- Ensure the resident's hands are not obstructing the movement of the chair. Take caution when going through narrow doorways so the resident is not injured.
- Always apply both brakes when you reach your destination.

**Seatbelts**

You may notice some residents are wearing a seatbelt while in a wheelchair. Please do not unfasten the seatbelt, even if the resident asks. The seatbelt may be present because the resident is at great risk of falling. Please seek the assistance of a nurse or other staff member if you have questions.

**Etiquette Guidelines**

Here are some tips to increase your comfort levels when meeting and socializing with residents in wheelchairs:

- **Ask Permission**: Always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance. It may be necessary for the person to give you some instructions.
- **Be Respectful**: A person's wheelchair is a part of their personal space and should be treated with respect.
- **Speak Directly**: Be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. Speak directly to the person and if the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel down to their level.
- **Give Clear Directions**: When giving directions, be sure to include distance, weather conditions, and physical obstacles that may hinder a wheelchair user’s travel.
- **Act Natural**: It’s okay to use expressions such as ‘running along’ in conversation. It’s likely the wheelchair user expresses things the same way.
- **Wheelchair Use Doesn’t Mean Confinement**: When a person transfers to a chair or bed, do not move the wheelchair out of reaching distance.
- **Children Are Okay**: Don’t discourage children from asking questions. Most wheelchair users are usually not offended by questions children ask them about their disabilities or wheelchair.
- **Some Wheelchair Users Can Walk**: Some users can walk with aid, such as braces, walkers, or crutches, but use a wheelchair to conserve energy and move about more quickly.
• **Wheelchair Users Aren't Sick:**
  Avoid classifying people in wheelchairs as 'sick'.

• **Relationships Are Important:**
  People in wheelchairs develop the same fulfilling relationships as everyone else.

• **Wheelchair Use Provides Freedom:**
  Don't assume that having to use a wheelchair is a tragedy. It is a means of freedom that allows users to move about independently.

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### Helpful Tips for Visiting

Residents enjoy visiting with volunteers. If you are unsure of what to say, or how to start the conversation, try these helpful tips.

- Introduce yourself and the reason you are there
- Always wear your name tag
- Be relaxed and unhurried
- Put yourself on the same level as the person you are visiting — avoid standing over the person
- Always encourage independence
- Accept the individual's ups and downs with tact and patience
- Do not be personally offended if the person seems hostile
- Report situations of stress or need to someone in charge immediately
- Listen patiently and avoid criticism
- Keep promises, but be careful what you promise

- Talk about a subject of interest to the resident — do not force your agendas on them
- Try reading to the resident, or assisting them to write or post letters
- If the individual is receptive, help them to develop new interests
- Avoid taking sides in disputes or grievances
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Avoid arguing, gossiping, impatience, or talking about your troubles
- Slow your rate of speech
- Be patient, and keep it simple
- Don't patronize
- Give the resident your undivided attention
- Look friendly: your attitude is contagious
- Remember that relationships take time to develop
Listening is an art! Nowhere can this be more helpful to another than in your role as a healthcare volunteer. The residents often enjoy having someone to talk to, but volunteers must be careful to focus conversations away from overly negative issues.

Below are a few ideas to help you create a meaningful conversation:

- **Listen Verbally** (‘yes’, ‘uh-huh’) and non-verbally (nodding, eye contact)
- **Acknowledge What People Are Saying** — ‘That must be tough!’; ‘You seem to find that game exciting.
- **Summarize What You Think Someone Has Said** — ‘It sounds like you enjoy playing cards.
- **Ask Gentle, Leading And Open-ended Questions** — ‘How do you do that needlework stitch?’
  **And Closed Questions** such as ‘I don’t know the rules for this game. What are they?’
- **Provide Some Information** — ‘I hear the Flames are doing well this season, do you follow hockey?’
- **Be Encouraging and Complimentary** — ‘You seem to know a lot about knitting.
- **Focus On The Positive Rather Than The Negative Conversation Topics** — ‘I don’t enjoy spectator sports very much either, but I enjoy participating. What kinds of sports/hobbies do you enjoy?’
THANK YOU!