



Managing your emotions

A Guide for Hospice Volunteers





Introduction

-Why Talk About Emotional Management?

- Volunteering can be an emotionally intense experience.
- Recognizing and caring for our emotions is essential in helping others without burning out.





Understanding the Emotional Challenges of Volunteering

- Common emotions: empathy, sadness, frustration, fatigue.
- Feeling this way is normal and human.
- Recognizing them is the first step toward managing them well.



The Importance of Setting Emotional Boundaries



Boundaries are a form of self-care.

Strategies:

- Don't over-identify with the patient's pain.
- Empathy ≠ emotional absorption.
- Balance personal life and volunteering.





Practicing Active Listening Without Emotional Drain

- Being present > fixing everything.
- Use validation phrases like:
- “I hear you,” “That sounds really tough.”
- Avoid absorbing others' emotions.





Managing Personal Reactions to Difficult Situations

- Take a breath and center yourself after intense visits.
- Reflect: what is within my control?
- Use mindfulness techniques to return to the present moment.





After the Visit

- Debrief with another volunteer or supervisor if needed.
- Self-care: journaling, walking, resting.
- Watch for signs of emotional fatigue early on.





Finding Meaning and Motivation in Volunteering

- Remember your "why."
- Celebrate small moments of connection.
- Emotional challenges are also part of your impact.





Your Wellbeing Matters as Much as Your Service

- Taking care of your emotions helps you support others better.
- You are not alone—support is available.



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