



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

2024



Nourishing the Whole Person

MOWSF

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

3

WORKING WITH SENIORS

5

SAFETY & EMERGENCY

8

COMMUNICATION BEST
PRACTICES

11

EMOTIONAL RESILIENCY

14

VOLUNTEER ROLES

16

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

20

BOUNDARIES: SUSTAINABLE
VOLUNTEERING

23

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

24

REPORTING SUSPECTED
ELDER ABUSE





OUR ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1970, Meals on Wheels San Francisco (MOWSF) began as a grassroots movement of local community members looking out for their elderly neighbors by preparing meals in neighborhood kitchens and delivering them to seniors across San Francisco. Committed to the belief that all seniors have the right to live independently with dignity and respect in their own homes for as long as safely possible. Providing isolated homebound older adults in San Francisco with nutritious meals, daily human contact, and supportive services to prevent their premature institutionalization.

Today, we are an independent, local nonprofit organization that operates out of Bayview/Hunters Point. We are a member of Meals on Wheels America which provides advocacy and program support but no financial funding.

MOWSF strives to alleviate food insecurity and loneliness experienced by seniors who want to stay in their own homes but can't shop or prepare meals for themselves. Supporting these efforts are 159 full-time staff, including 36 employed drivers, 16 social workers and four full-time nutritionists.



WE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES TO 5,000+ SENIORS IN SAN FRANCISCO:



HOME DELIVERED MEALS

Homebound seniors can receive up to two meals per day, up to seven days a week, which are nutritionally tailored to meet the dietary needs of our senior clients. We prepare more than 1.7 million meals each year.

SAFETY CHECKS

With each delivery, our drivers check on the health and well-being of our clients, referring any unusual circumstances to our social workers for follow-up.

NUTRITION COUNSELING

Registered dietitians provide more than 1,000 hours of nutrition counseling each year to help educate and keep our clients healthy.

SOCIAL WORK

We conduct thousands of client visits a year, to check on the safety and welfare of clients. We provide additional support by phone, and assist clients with obtaining support from other agencies as needed.

SUPPORT SERVICES

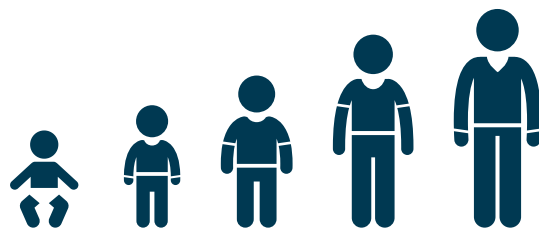
MOWSF provides focused social work to hundreds of clients per year in the event of emergencies or personal crisis.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Beyond meal and grocery delivery, volunteers offer homebound seniors compassion and support through a variety of programs that help alleviate isolation and loneliness.

AN APPRECIATIVE VISION OF AGING AND ELDERHOOD

If we see seniority as the last and most profound phase of human development, rather than as a period of decline, would that, change our treatment of the elderly and our own fears of aging?



MOWSF focuses on the realities of meeting the concrete needs of seniors. Our volunteers are a vital part of that healing mission and the expanding movement to re-imagine aging. Because we focus on people in the last stages of life, clients are often dealing with loss – loss of family, friends, independence, mobility, memory, etc. which understandably creates discomfort and pain at times.

However, this phase of life can still be a time of human growth even during this loss – we can see the dignity, wisdom, and honor that seniors have even as they cope with dementia, serious illness, or mental distress.

“I have a fixed route in the Tenderloin. I bring the groceries to my clients, and we look forward to seeing each other. It’s much more than just the food delivery – it’s talking with my clients, and respecting them, and empathizing with them.” Michael Bereskin, Meals on Wheels San Francisco volunteer, HDG, since 2017.

MOWSF volunteers give the gifts of service, friendship, comfort, compassion, human dignity, respect and gratitude for aging as you meet seniors in this phase of life’s journey.



CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND COMPETENCE

Our MOWSF clients represent the diversity of San Francisco and the Bay Area itself, with various ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, religions, economic classes, political views, languages, customs, and more. It is extremely important that you, a volunteer are both culturally sensitive and seek to be culturally competent.

Cultural sensitivity is making a proactive effort to be aware of the potential and actual cultural factors that affect your relationships with others. Cultural differences and similarities simply exist – without a value, not positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong.

Cultural competence is the ability to work effectively with individuals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds than your own. It includes understanding the language, culture, and behaviors of other individuals and groups, as well as having particular knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness to effectively interact with others.

Our volunteers often first encounter cultural differences in simply interacting with clients from an older generation. Some discover quickly that habits, cultural references and what constitutes “politeness” may be very different for these seniors.

Volunteers are often matched with seniors from different ethnic or racial backgrounds, or different sexual orientations than themselves. In addition to cultural sensitivity, you can pursue cultural competence by finding out more about the senior’s culture, sometimes by directly asking or engaging the client, if they are willing. For instance, discussing books or movies, current events, or favorite stories from their lives can be a great way to grow cultural knowledge and deepen relationships. Alternatively, simply ask about and discuss events, like Cinco de Mayo, other local festivals, or historical events. You can often help the client celebrate their own culture, even in a small way, by doing some simple online research or asking for assistance from the Volunteer Department.

Some clients may choose to be very private about their culture and their life in general, so it is always good to “sound out” the client’s receptiveness first, and proceed from there.



SAFETY & EMERGENCY

Disaster Preparedness

Isolated and homebound seniors are some of the most vulnerable community members in a disaster. Often, these seniors typically cannot leave their home without assistance.

Once you and your family have a plan and the resources you need to safely weather a disaster, you can reach out to others who may need help.

If comfortable, talk to your client about their preparation for dealing with a disaster. Ask if they have a plan and if they have family, friends, or neighbors that they can count on to help.

Find out if they need help to outfit their home with basic disaster supplies needs (water, some stored food, a first aid kit, etc.). Encourage them to get the help they might need to be ready. Make an agreement with them about how will you communicate with each other. Decide if you will contact your client as soon as possible if a disaster occurs.



RESOURCES FOR SENIOR SERVICES

Often our clients need support from a wide array of services. MOWSF social workers provide client referrals for needed services. When interacting with clients, if you observe a need that is not being met, please contact the Volunteer Department and we will work with the clients assigned Social Worker to get this need met.

If you would like to learn more about services that are offered in San Francisco for our senior community, check out the the following resources on page 6.

SAFETY & EMERGENCY

SAN FRANCISCO SENIOR CITIZENS RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Aging and Disability Resource Centers

Information on senior services in San Francisco and outstations located in neighborhoods throughout the city where seniors can go for one-on-one support.

<https://www.sfhsa.org/services/disability-aging-services/aging-disability-resource-centers>

(415) 487-3370

Helplink Social Services

For general social service information, including senior services.

<https://www.smc-connect.org/locations/united-way-of-the-bay-area/helplink-211-san-francisco>

211 or (1-800-273-6222)

Government (Public) Services

For non-emergency City and County of San Francisco government matters.

<https://sf.gov/contact-sfgov>

311 or (415) 701-2311

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The Privacy Rule, a Federal law, gives an individual rights over their health information and sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive health information. As part of your onboarding process as a new Volunteer, you will be required to review several training slides and sign and return to MOWSF Volunteer Staff, a HIPPA attestation. By signing and agreeing to the HIPPA training MOWSF provides you, it confirms that you fully understand the HIPPA Act and your involvement with it as an active MOWSF Volunteer.

<https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-individuals/guidance-materials-for-consumers/index.html>

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY

Senior Mobility & Safety Tips

Assisting people to stand, walk, transfer, etc. requires specialized training, and sometimes volunteers are asked not to help clients in this manner if programming requires in-person volunteering. However, on rare occasions, you may need to assist a client that has mobility issues. Before assisting a client with moving, kindly inquire about the specific assistance they would prefer, respecting their personal preferences and boundaries. The following are tips for offering proper assistance:

A CANE:

Offer your arm and let them grab onto it so that they are in control. If you take their arm, it may throw off their balance.



A WALKER:



Clients should always stand up or sit down using the arms of a fixed chair, not the walker. You can place the walker in front of them once they are standing, or set it aside (not out of reach) once they're seated.

A WHEELCHAIR:

Make sure the wheelchair is locked and steady, and that the chair they are moving to/from is steady. Help them to stand and pivot, and use their hands to steady themselves, but do not try to lift them when transferring out of the wheelchair.



COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES

Tips for Client Interactions

1

MAKE THE FIRST CONTACT

Friendly Visitor and Grocery Shopper volunteers should call their clients within 48 hours of being matched to schedule a “first call” as soon as possible. After that, you and your client will jointly develop a plan for how often to talk by phone. Generally, you should schedule visits with clients at least two days in advance, but for ongoing calls, you and your client(s) will determine what works best for each of you. The greatest volunteer gift is “unhurried time,” so try to plan your visits when you will not have other time pressures or other distractions. MOWSF Volunteer team will provide you with helpful tips on communication strategies with seniors.



TIPS FOR INTERACTING WITH CLIENTS



TRY TO

- Maintain eye contact, and speak clearly and directly to them
- Communicate as simply as possible using small words, short sentences, and visual aids
- Re-state key ideas of the topic frequently, or have clients write down future appointments or “to do” items that they might want to follow-up on after your call
- Have them restate back to you any agreements that you make
- Use “open” questions to draw the client into conversation
- Listen: Active Listening is always the best way to understand



AVOID

- Communicating quickly or providing hurried instructions
- Doing all of the talking, or interrupting
- Giving advice, unless asked for an opinion
- Arguing or attempting to instill your logic, even if you each hold strong but differing beliefs

COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES

Tips for Client Interactions

2

BE ON TIME, OR IF YOU MUST BE LATE OR CANCEL, LET CLIENT KNOW

Clients often have quiet day to day lives and will generally be anticipating your visit. Please try to be prompt, and attempt to communicate to them any schedule change as soon as you can.



KEEP IN MIND

As you work with clients, these skills become natural and as you do in any work or social setting, you will develop specific ways to communicate effectively with each unique client that you will work with.

3

ESTABLISHING RAPPORT AND PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

Many elderly or disabled people struggle with hearing, reading, writing and general communication skills. We cannot verbally or non-verbally communicate with them the same way we do with our peers. It is important to understand that as people grow older, they often become more difficult to understand and changes in their environment may influence their communication. Rapport refers to a feeling of harmonious connection between people. It is a commonality of perspective, being "in sync" and at ease with the person with whom you are talking. It is the most satisfying state for two people engaged in a conversation.



COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES

Staff Communication

We appreciate all your efforts and dedication towards serving our community of San Francisco seniors. As many of you will interact with Clients, Staff, and other Volunteers in situations that may be challenging to you, it is always helpful to remember as MOWSF volunteers, it is important to always maintain respectful communication.

Please refrain from using derogatory or disrespectful language towards others and be mindful of your tone and body language. Remember to use appropriate titles when addressing staff and clients, and do not make assumptions about their needs or abilities.

It is also important to be aware of cultural differences and to embrace diversity. Show empathy and compassion towards others, and always listen actively to their concerns and feedback. We thank you for your continued commitment to MOWSF to our seniors, and for upholding our values of respect and inclusivity.



Staying in Touch with Staff During Volunteering

Volunteers are encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with staff, providing essential details about their volunteering experience and any relevant updates or concerns.

Regular check-ins with volunteers allow us to gauge their well-being, address any challenges they may be facing, and accurately track volunteer hours. Therefore, we ask that volunteers respond promptly to these staff contacts. **If a volunteer does not maintain regular staff contact, we will assume that the volunteer has abandoned the volunteer role and will be “inactivated” as a MOWSF Volunteer.**

EMOTIONAL RESILIENCY

Dealing with Grief

While most volunteers witness joy and satisfaction in their client interactions, some see their clients experience suffering. Aging can present many losses, including physical and mental abilities, overall health, loved ones, and eventually life.

Known as the “common cold of the elderly” because of its frequency, depression is currently the most common mental health issue for older individuals. Suicide rates for white males over 70 are the highest of any age cohort. Experts believe that up to 50% of this population may be coping with depression.

Losses and challenges of aging can cause someone to struggle with sadness or depression. Symptoms of depression often mirror the natural aging process, including changes in sleep, changes in appetite, slower motor activity and social isolation. Based on the data from the 2021 Consumer Wellness Survey.



Tips for Interacting with People with Sadness or Depression

- **Your volunteer role is not as a psychiatrist.** Try to understand the person’s inner capacities and show patience. Sometimes the best treatment for deep sadness is a listening ear that does not judge, preach, or pressure, but simply acknowledges and accepts.
- Do not simply avoid sad topics. **Sadness, whether it is manifested in depression or not, is normal.** Although it is painful, sadness itself is not life threatening.
- **Do not attempt to artificially cheer someone up.** If someone grieves the loss of a family member, friend, or even a pet, or complains about the more difficult symptoms of aging, acknowledge that as sad and a genuinely challenging experience. Within reason, share your own sadness. (“Yes, when I lost my cat, I felt sad about that, too. I can see why you feel so sad about losing your dog.”)



Tips for Interacting with People with Sadness or Depression



- **Help the client see the good things in relation to the source of sadness.** (“Yes, it is sad that your partner isn’t with you anymore. You must have really loved each other. What are some wonderful things you remember about your partner?”)
- If someone seems to be truly mired in sadness, after accepting and listening, **try to gently re-direct him or her to other topics or activities.**
- **Find things that give them joy and share those with them:** music they enjoy, the artwork of a favorite artist on an Internet site, funny or entertaining movies sharing a specific recipe, talking about grandchildren, reading poetry aloud, etc.
- Depression is intensified by inactivity. **Talking about things together, especially positive memories or discussions, can help change the tone of conversations, and chemically intervene in someone’s mental process. Engaging in discussions can help someone struggling with loneliness.**
- Be caring and empathic without succumbing to the client’s experience. **Do not try to force happiness on them, but also do not sink into their sadness.**
- If someone talks about suicide, do not overreact, or respond with great alarm. Use all of the same skills and resources described above. **However, do contact the Volunteer Department immediately**, so that our social workers can evaluate the situation and respond, if necessary.



SADNESS AND DEPRESSION RESOURCES



Some of the clients you work with may want to share details around grief and loss. Below are a list of resources to lead them to. Always let your volunteer team know when you hear things that are genuinely concerning.

Counseling and Resources

University of California San Francisco

- List of Bereavement Resources and Services:
 - <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/bereavement-resources-and-services>
- Resources for End of Life:
 - <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/resources-for-end-of-life>

By the Bay Health:

- <https://hospicebythebay.org/types-of-care/grief-support/>

Institute on Aging:

- <https://www.ioaging.org/services/psychological-services/center-for-elderly-suicide-prevention/grief-services>

Articles

The Caregiver Space:

- <https://thecaregiverspace.org/picking-up-the-pieces-after-the-person-you-have-been-caring-for-dies/>

Aging Care:

- <https://www.agingcare.com/articles/caregiving-ending-after-death-148071.htm>

Books

- When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times by Pema Chodron
- It's Ok That You Are Not Ok, Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteer Opportunity Summary

As a volunteer, you could be in direct contact with a senior in their home. In order to protect our clients a standard procedure is to require a background check for all volunteers. Please note that after your application and interview process, you will receive a request from our partner Sterling Volunteers, who will request the background check. Below are the volunteer programs we offer:

HOME DELIVERED GROCERIES

In partnership with the SF-Marin Food Bank, this 100% volunteer-staffed program, operates San Francisco's largest home-delivered grocery program. Each Wednesday morning, volunteers assemble and deliver groceries.

Assembly: In this role, you will join the team of volunteers that assemble 500+ bags of groceries each week.

Delivery: In this role, you will deliver groceries to homebound clients or adults with disabilities each week on a preset route.

FRIENDLY VISITOR & SOCIAL CALLER

In this role, you will be matched with a homebound San Francisco senior. You will make phone calls to your client or visit them at their home. These phone calls or visits contribute to lessening isolation, depression, and loneliness.

As a Friendly Social Call volunteer, you will schedule the calls directly with the client based on the best time that works for both parties.

Calls typically last 15-30 mins but may go longer if desired.

As a Friendly Visitor volunteer post covid you will be able to schedule and visit with the client in their home.

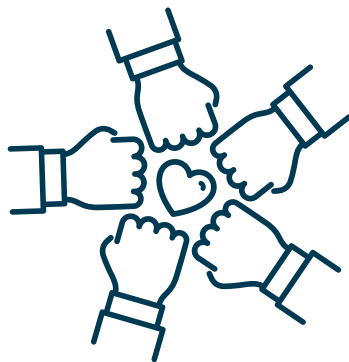


CLIENT NEEDS

In this role, volunteers deliver items as identified by the MOWSF social workers.

Delivery: Deliver client support items. Deliver microwaves and mini refrigerators or miscellaneous items, such as bedding, medical equipment, etc.

VOLUNTEER ROLES



GROCERY SHOPPER

In this role, you will help homebound clients get items they request by shopping for groceries or other items they may need. Clients provide you with a shopping list and reimburse you when you deliver the items to their homes. Please keep a copy of your shopping receipt.

CARDMAKING

Get your creative juices flowing by creating handmade birthdays, winter holidays, Valentine's Day, and thinking of you cards for the 5000 + seniors receiving Meals on Wheels. In the past few years, we have distributed over 50,000 cards to seniors. These cards bring a lot of joy and comfort to many homebound seniors.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Volunteer at our annual Star Chef and Vintners Gala. This renowned Gala raises over \$3 million each year which funds many meals and client support programs. There are other wonderful wine and food events throughout the year that help raise funds and awareness for MOWSF programs and services. These and additional events throughout the year allow volunteers to combine the pleasures of good food and doing good to nourish the whole person.

CORPORATE & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Our corporate and community programs are targeted toward groups. These programs include Lunch and Learn presentations, group card making, calling seniors, creating birthday surprises, and other specialized programs that assist in moving the MOWSF mission forward and providing support to our community of seniors. To learn more about group volunteering, email Volunteer@mowsf.org



MOWSF VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Time Commitment: 3-6 months

Volunteers in the Friendly Social Caller, Grocery Shopper, and the Home Delivered Grocery program are asked to commit to providing support **in these roles for at least six months. We ask for this time commitment to honor the time that you and your clients put into developing a relationship. Additionally, many of our clients are isolated, and keeping a consistent and familiar face with our service is important in helping them feel comfortable and safe.**

Friendly Social Callers are asked to set aside at least one hour every other week for the client, not including transportation time. If the client requires less time, volunteers are not required to fulfill that time. Additional time together is often welcomed but not required. As volunteer-client schedules evolve, volunteers and clients must agree on time changes between them.

Volunteers must inform the Volunteer Department of any changes in the level of commitment and/or status in a timely manner.

No Compensation

Volunteers receive no wages or financial benefits from MOWSF and may not accept “tips” or other payments from clients. Volunteers must be cautious about accepting gifts: cards, homemade items, and cookies should be received graciously, but a gift of any potential value must be declined. This includes items that a client owns that they may want to get rid of, such as clothes, jewelry, and books. (For example, family members may feel a client was pressured or coerced to give away belongings in return for “volunteer” support). If there is any question about the appropriateness of a gift, first consult with the Volunteer Department before accepting a gift.

At Will Volunteer Termination

MOWSF is an “employment at will” organization, and like employees, volunteers may be asked to leave and terminate client contact at any time, at the will of MOWSF. Volunteers agree to abide by the volunteer policies and procedures explained in this handbook, professionally represent MOWSF, follow all MOWSF guidelines and directions for volunteers, and behave and perform their volunteer roles in a professional and ethical way and to the best of their ability. If there is a breach of any of these policies, procedures, guidelines, and/or expectations, the Volunteer Department staff will first coach the volunteer to resolve the issue. In serious situations, coaching may include a termination warning, and if the issue continues without resolution to MOWSF’s satisfaction, the volunteer role will be terminated by MOWSF.

MOWSF VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Interacting With Clients

Client Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain strict client confidentiality, except in the instances of elder abuse (see Reporting Suspected Elder Abuse section). Volunteers working directly with clients must sign a client confidentiality agreement as part of the application process. Never discuss the client's private life or share client contact info (name, address, phone, etc.) with anyone outside of MOWSF.



Specialized Advice or Work

Volunteers may not discuss financial matters with clients or perform any tasks that could be construed as financial assistance or advice. Volunteers may not provide medical advice, or any material or information that could be construed as medical advice, unless approved by the Nutrition or Social Work Departments at MOWSF. For liability purposes, volunteers should not perform home repairs or any other kind of specialized work without first checking in with the Volunteer Department.

Prohibited Purchases

Volunteers may not purchase tobacco products or alcoholic beverages for clients, even upon the client's request. Volunteers may pick up prescription medications if a client is unable to do so.

Additional Visitors & Pets

Do not bring friends, family, or pets on visits unless the senior has given advance permission. Some seniors, out of gratitude or shyness, may agree to more than they are comfortable with, so we ask volunteers to maintain respectful visiting practices.

MOWSF VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Volunteer - Client Conflict

If a volunteer has a conflict with the client, MOWSF expects the volunteer to first attempt to resolve the conflict. If resolution attempts fail, call the Volunteer Department for assistance, so that issues can be addressed quickly. If problems continue, the Volunteer Department will look for a new match for the volunteer. Conflicts can be a natural part of relationships, and volunteers should never hesitate to report such conflicts or ask for help in dealing with them.

Volunteer Driving

The mission of our Volunteer Department is to alleviate senior isolation and increase client socialization and facilitate food and personal safety support. We do not provide volunteer driving services because such services are primarily focused on fulfilling non-relational needs for seniors, and increase liability.

Volunteers should never drive clients in their vehicles or the client's vehicle. Volunteers are allowed to take public transportation or ride share service with a client if the client is able to move independently without assistance. In addition, existing senior transport organizations in S.F. such as Paratransit are available as a transportation option. The client's social worker can provide further information.

Clients Ending Services with MOWSF

If a senior has ended their MOWSF meal services permanently, the volunteer and client together can choose one of the following:

1. End the relationship. Please note you always have the option to be matched with another existing MOWSF client.
2. Continue the relationship, but without further contact or involvement with MOWSF. Both parties must clearly understand that the relationship is now just a personal friendship and no longer involves or represents MOWSF in any way.

Because of MOWSF limited resources, we cannot continue ongoing support for clients no longer on our services as there are numerous existing clients needing our support.

INSURANCE AND LIABILITY COVERAGE

Health Insurance

Volunteers provide their own health insurance to receive care as needed. California State Worker's Compensation Law does not cover volunteers.

Volunteering for MOWSF can be a potentially dangerous activity. The dangers include but are not limited to back injury due to lifting, personal injury, property damage, or injury to others in an accident.

By voluntarily participating in these activities with the knowledge of the dangers involved, volunteers should be prepared to accept all risks or injuries. Thus, volunteers' assignees, guardians, and legal representatives will agree not to make a claim against, sue, or attach the property of Meals on Wheels of San Francisco for injury or damage resulting from voluntary participation. **For additional information please refer to the Statement of Intent (SOI) that is provided during your volunteer onboarding process.**

Auto Insurance

Volunteers who own a car and will be driving to and from the volunteer commitment will need to provide proof of current auto insurance. MOWSF provides no coverage for physical damage to volunteers' personal automobiles.

Parking Tickets

Any parking ticket incurred while volunteering is not covered by MOWSF.



BOUNDARIES

Sustainable Volunteering

As a **volunteer**, you will work with people with many needs – often, more than any volunteer could ever meet. As in all relationships, challenges can arise around misunderstandings, ordinary mistakes, and differing expectations. Knowing how to maintain your boundaries as a volunteer is an essential aspect of a successful volunteer-client relationship.



Be clear with your client what you can do. When considering anything that is not required of you as a volunteer, do only what is sustainable for you and your lifestyle.

Focus on what you can do for them, not on what you are not doing or cannot do.



Your volunteer role is about decreasing senior difficulties and improving quality of life, **not trying to fix or remove problems**.



Try to **maintain boundaries** that another volunteer would be able to step in and continue in your absence.



HEALTH ISSUES AFFECTING SENIORS

Many health issues regularly arise in the later part of life, including memory loss, depression, and physical frailty, loss of vision or hearing. In addition, other natural illnesses.

Even if you have experienced these issues yourself or in loved ones, do not attempt to advise your client on health issues. Your role is to be a companion and friend, not a medical expert.

If the client's health issues become of specific concern that social work or health intervention is needed, or if issues interfere with your ability to assist or become more than you can handle, please contact the Volunteer Department immediately.

Reference page 6 for emergency resources with more information on HIPAA.

Taking Care of Yourself So That You Can Help Care for Others

On occasion, it may feel challenging to maintain your own life balance, especially when a client that you have become close with experiences emotional or physical difficulties. Because we deal mainly with aging seniors, it is not uncommon to have clients that lose siblings or other loved ones or who experience their own personal decline in health or even pass away. If at any point you are starting to feel overwhelmed, please contact the MOWSF Volunteer Department right away. It is OK to ask for and accept help, even if you just need an understanding person with whom you can discuss what you are experiencing. **In stressful times, it is sometimes easy to forget that you first have to care for yourself before you can care for others.**



The MOWSF Volunteer Department is here to support you however we can. **If at any point your volunteer role is causing you stress, please let us know as soon as you can - we will offer support.**

Taking Care of Yourself So That You Can Help Care for Others



While your volunteer role is not identical to that of a full-time caregiver, advice commonly provided to those professionals to help cope with stress include the following suggestions:

Self Care:

- Take care of your overall personal health, physical, emotional, and mental.
- Try to get exercise, regular rest or sleep, and maintain a normal eating routine.
- Engage in positive hobbies or activities that you enjoy or spend time outdoors.

Overwhelm:

- Try to avoid overwhelming yourself with too many activities.
- Try to eliminate stressors or negative influences wherever possible.

Support:

- Talk with family or friends about what you are experiencing; it is healthy to express your emotions and share your feelings.
- Try to maintain your optimism; know that you are helping make a difference for the people you care for; focus on the things that you are doing to help.
- Be caring and empathetic without succumbing to your client's intense experience; do not try to force happiness on him or her, but also do not sink into their sadness. They need to have the dignity of their own human experience.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY



IF A CLIENT DOES NOT ANSWER THE PHONE/DOOR...

1

If the client does not answer, call MOWSF's main telephone number immediately **(415) 920-1111** to report the client to the safety board.

2

Provide needed information to the MOWSF representative on the phone who will follow up until they determine the whereabouts of the client.

3

Please keep in mind our office hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5pm, Saturday 8:30am-1pm, Sundays closed –leave a message at the main number above we will return your call on Monday. However, in case of emergency, please call **911**.

CALL 911 IF

- The person is unconscious or has uncontrolled bleeding
- Has fallen and is unable to get up using their own abilities
- The person is uncharacteristically confused or irrational following a fall or other accident in which a concussion may have occurred
- The person has acute pain that might be associated with broken bones or internal bleeding.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO

MEALS ON WHEELS SF

(415) 920-1111

MOWSF VOLUNTEER DEPT.

(415) 343-1286

VOLUNTEER DIRECTOR (KATHY STIRLING)

(415) 713-5498

SAN FRANCISCO NON-EMERGENCY POLICE

(415) 553-0123

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES HOTLINE

(415) 355-6700

SAN FRANCISCO HOUSING AUTHORITY

(415) 715-3280

*Do not try to move or lift the senior. Stay with your client until s/he has been safely transferred into the hands of emergency professionals.

*Report the incident to MOWSF's main telephone number (415) 920-1111. It is ok to leave a voicemail with the details of the incident. All messages are confidential and will be picked up and returned.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ELDER ABUSE



All MOWSF staff and volunteers are required by law to report suspected elder abuse or neglect to Adult Protective Services (APS). APS is the division of the Department of Aging and Adult Services that investigates reports of suspected elder abuse in the City of San Francisco.

It is their mission to respond to all legitimate reports of abuse within a reasonable period of time and provide protection or relief to seniors through their contacts with the police department and social service agencies throughout the city.

HOW AND WHEN TO REPORT:

Report your suspicions to a member of the MOWSF Volunteer Department staff as soon as possible **(415) 343-1286** no later than the following workday (Monday if after a weekend visit).

A social worker is always in the MOWSF office between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

MOWSF staff may have additional information about a particular case, or knowledge of whether Adult Protection Services* is already involved. If it is determined that a report needs to be made, a member of the social work staff will do it after discussion with the volunteer.

*Adult Protection Services works to help elder adults, and dependent adults, when these adults are unable to meet their own needs, or are victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

does not mandate a report.

However, it is highly recommended to report any witnessed emotional abuse: verbal insults, threats, harassment, intimidation, and demeaning or humiliating comments.

TYPES OF ABUSE THAT REQUIRE A MANDATED REPORT TO APS

Physical Abuse:

Any use of physical force that may result in injury, pain, or impairment. Includes acts like striking, pushing, shaking, burning, force feeding or physical restraint.

Sexual Abuse:

Any non-consensual sexual contact of any kind. Sexual abuse includes any unwanted touching, all types of sexual assault or battery, or any coerced nudity.

Neglect:

Refusing or failing to fulfill any part of a person's obligations to an elder. This includes the failure of a caregiver to provide necessary care, or to provide necessities such as food, clothing, or medicine. It also includes failure of a responsible party to pay for necessary care.

Self-Neglect:

Behavior, which threatens the elder's own health or safety such as failure to provide him/herself with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medication, thoughts of doing harm to him/herself, or not taking proper safety precautions.

Financial Abuse:

Improper use of an elder's money or assets. This includes cashing a person's checks without authorization, forging a person's signature, misusing a person's money or possessions, or coercing or deceiving a person into signing any document.

Abandonment:

The desertion of an elder by anyone having the care or custody of that person.

Abduction:

Taking an elder out of the state when the person does not have the capacity to consent to it.

Isolation:

Violation of personal rights, such as restraint or false imprisonment, preventing an elder from receiving phone calls, visitors, or mail.

THE VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

As a volunteer, your routine interactions with the MOWSF organization will likely be through one or more of our volunteer department members.

Depending on the role and the program(s) you're involved in supporting, they'll help to make sure that you have the resources you'll need to best assist our clients and they will help you resolve an issues that may arise.

The Volunteer Department Contact:

Volunteer@mowsf.org
(415)343-1286

If at any point, you need urgent or immediate assistance and the Volunteer Staff that you are trying to reach is unavailable, contact the MOWSF Volunteer Department at the above contact information.



THANK YOU

for being part of the MOWSF
community of Volunteers!

