Developing an 11th Hour Volunteer Program

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Handout

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Develop and implement an 11th Hour Volunteer program
- Articulate what draws volunteers to be present at the time of death and the skills needed to support the patient and family
- Design a training program for 11th Hour Volunteers
- Identify resources that can be utilized by volunteers while providing companionship during the vigil process

Why do an 11th Hour Program?

- Reduce anxiety and fear by being present and providing education
- Provide respite and companionship
- Advocate at the request of the patient or family
- Provide a communication conduit to the interdisciplinary team
- Provide balance during a time of transition and change

What is an 11th Hour Volunteer?

- A companion
- Support
- Presence
- Listener
Skills Needed in a 11th Hour Volunteer

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Volunteer Training

- What is 11th Hour Care? This is most effectively taught through stories of volunteers. In order to have these stories available, consider attending a volunteer support meeting and videotaping volunteers (who have given their permission to do so) as they tell their 11th Hour stories. Remember to ask them to change the name of the patient and any identifying features.

- The role of the 11th Hour volunteer

- Care settings – describing the variety of places that 11th Hour volunteering is done. If this will include hospitals and nursing homes, incorporate an orientation to these facilities and procedures to be followed when in the facility.

- Skill building techniques in being present with another. Some essential areas to be covered in teaching personal presence are:
  o Understanding near death awareness
  o Being aware of special communications of the dying
  o Listening attentively and sensitively. Acknowledge the experiences shared by the patient.
  o Asking gentle questions
  o Providing reassurance and support to any family members present
  o Being comfortable with silence
  o Remaining aware of what is happening with the patient

- Near death awareness training – a list of resources can be found in the back of this manual. The book, Final Gifts by Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelly is one of the most valuable tools in teaching this segment of the training. Providing access to a library of resources will enhance the volunteer’s ability to build their skills in this area.
• Simple comfort care strategies – including personal care techniques, comfort care techniques and hints on the use of lighting and music in the room.

• How to create a comfortable and sensitive environment – consider including in the training a bag (insulated lunch bags with your hospice logo, or sturdy cloth bags that can be sealed with your logo) of comfort items. This bag can include items such as music tapes/CD’s (Graceful Passages by Michael Stillwater and Gary Milkin), and aromatherapy supplies. If the volunteers have not been trained on the use of these complementary therapies it will be important to incorporate that into the training.

• Communication and documentation processes required of the volunteer

• Self care support strategies to reconnect and revitalize the volunteer
11th Hour Volunteer Training Syllabus

11th Hour volunteers must complete Patient and Family Support Training before registering for 11th hour training

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<td>Trainer and Volunteer</td>
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The Art of Personal Presence

In a paper entitled “Some Reflections on Personal Presence” by Jack Marquis the author identifies some techniques to being present with another.

1. Being present to another is an extremely difficult task.

2. Learn to be with the person, rather than try to solve the problem.

3. Understanding others is enough. There is no need to solve problems. Understanding others is truly a standing under, and uplifting of the other.

4. Allow the other to have his pain. Learn to enter into it with the other rather than try to take it away.

5. Learn to hear not only the content of another’s message, but also his feelings and emotions about the content.

6. Responding to the whole person means at the least responding to feelings and emotions as well as thoughts and ideas.

7. When you feel lost in an interaction, ask yourself: “What is this person trying to reveal to me about himself?” “What is the meaning or purpose of this person’s communication to me?”

8. Respond to the other rather than react. Reacting means meeting the other’s feelings with your feelings. Responding means meeting the other’s feelings with understanding.

9. When we are aware of our own feelings we can respond to others rather than react to them.

10. Being aware of one’s own feelings is not an end in itself, but a means to choosing a behavioral response that is appropriate to the present situation.

11. When we say to the other, “I understand” it is a clear sign that we don’t.

12. Learn to hear the conflict within the other rather than become part of the conflict by taking sides.

13. The more strongly the other is asserting his point, the more certainly he is arguing with himself. To agree or disagree is not the issue, but to help the other become aware of his conflict within.
14. Learn to receive the other; to make room in oneself for the other’s pain. This can only be done when we have first of all accepted our own pain.

15. When we feel revulsion or any other negative feelings toward another person it is most likely because their behavior threatens exposure of something within ourselves that we are unwilling to accept about ourselves.

16. As we grow in being able to make room for the other within ourselves, the other will grow.

17. To minimize another’s feelings about his life is to discount the other.

18. Being present to another is not the same thing as being nice to the other. Being nice is often a form of discounting the other, of not taking seriously his irritating or demanding behaviors that mask his pain.

19. If we want to help others we must accept our poverty; that we have nothing really saving to give but our presence.

**Program Processes**

- Identifying the Need

- Filling the Request

- Coverage Responsibilities

- Follow-up Support

**Frequently Asked Questions**

- Is the pain managed?
- Are the symptoms managed?
- Is the patient alert?
• Who will be present?
• Are there any extraordinary sights, smells, etc.?
• Who should I contact on arrival?
• Will hospice staff be present and/or available?
• What are the patient and family’s faith system?
• How long should I stay?
• Is it okay if the person dies alone? (This question is specifically related to their shift ending, and either the next volunteer hasn’t arrived or the next shift is not filled.)
• What do I do when the person dies?

**Retention & Support of the 11\textsuperscript{th} Hour Volunteer**
Resources

**Books:**


**Periodicals**

Reitman, Valerie, June 14, 2004, *Taking Life’s Final Exit*, Los Angeles Times Column One

**Other Sources**
