



VOLUNTEER BOUNDARIES

Although it is important for volunteers and guests to have a friendly relationship, volunteers must ensure that appropriate boundaries are in place. A lack of boundaries can cause preferential treatment and issues related to favoritism, discrimination and inappropriate personal relationships.

Our interactions are inherently affected by a power dynamic. While volunteers are not employees, guests may not always understand the distinction and may view you as a staff member with authority over their stay. Keep in mind that families are here because they are going through a trauma and depend on the House for help. This dynamic can lead to additional expectations on either side that may make someone feel uncomfortable, exploited or misled.

Maintaining good boundaries keeps you focused on your responsibilities to all families and the provision of appropriate services, such as Family Support Services staff and trainees, who are specifically designated and trained to handle more sensitive issues. Boundaries also help foster supportive relationships and create a safe environment for everyone.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Refrain from asking families about the following unless it is essential to your volunteer duties:
 - Money
 - Child's diagnosis
 - Child's treatment
 - Length of stay
 - **Instead**, if a family initiates conversation about their child, just listen.
- Do not take any pictures of guest families without first obtaining signed waivers. Do not post comments about families on your Facebook, Instagram or other social media platforms.
 - **Instead**, you are welcome to share a post from the Ronald McDonald House social media accounts.
 - If you have a picture or story to share, send it to LARMH-MediaUpload@rmhcsc.org.
- Refrain from giving out information about guests to other guests or to anyone outside of RMH.
- Refrain from talking about families to other staff or volunteers unless essential to your/their duties.
- Never discuss guests in public spaces or areas where you could be overheard.
- Do not pressure front desk employees or FSS trainees to record videos, write messages or engage in private communication. Do not ask employees or FSS trainees for private information.
- Do not give out personal information about staff members to guests or other volunteers.

Personal Boundaries

- Avoid forming personal relationships with guests and/or engaging in behavior beyond your duties.
 - Do not share your personal phone number with guest families.
 - **Instead**, make sure the family has the phone number for the front desk, their designated FSS trainee and/or the Guest Services Manager.
 - Exceptions may be made for special circumstances and must have approval from Volunteer Manager.
 - Do not exchange messages over social media, blogs or email.
 - **Instead**, families can go through LARMH social media pages and emails to communicate with staff.
 - No socializing outside of the House.
 - No giving or receiving rides.
 - No babysitting children,
 - Do not engage in any sexual behavior or behavior that may be construed as sexual harassment.
- Do not initiate physical contact.
 - Refrain from picking up, holding or kissing children.
- You should not visit patients in the hospital without authorization of Volunteer Manager.
- You may not enter occupied guest rooms unless explicitly assigned by the Volunteer Manager or another Operations employee, and only while accompanying an employee.
- Do not share your religious beliefs or engage in any conversation that may be construed as preaching or pressuring someone to become religious.
- Be careful to not give advice – especially not medical advice.

Preferential Treatment

- Refrain from activity or behavior that shows favoritism to one guest or family over another.
 - Do not ask for or grant favors.
 - Do not give gifts or give anyone "first dibs" on event tickets or resources.
 - **Instead**, anything you give to one family must be made available to all 75 families.
 - Do not repeatedly give attention to one family or guest while ignoring another.
- Refrain from activity or behavior that shows negative bias towards one guest or family.
 - Never get into arguments with a guest.
 - **Instead**, notify the Volunteer Manager or front desk team.
 - Be consistent with how you speak to guests.
- Greet every family warmly and with respect.
- Be aware and respectful of cultural values of families that may be different than yours.

Comments or Questions

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- Amy Borton, Program Director at amy.borton@rmhcsc.org or 323-644-3083.