



## Hospice Volunteer Training Introduction

The role of the hospice volunteer is very rewarding but also very demanding. Hospice volunteers provide a wide range of supportive services for patients and families including:

***Companionship***, which may include reading to the patient, listening to their concerns, or simply providing a silent presence.

***Respite care***, which entails staying with the patient, thus freeing the family members to rest or to attend to other matters.

In order to prepare the volunteer, we will provide them with all the training and support they require. At no time will a volunteer be asked to do anything that they are not prepared and willing to do. Training can consist of group learning led by qualified facilitators, experiential learning based on practical experiences, reading suggested materials, mentoring support, and self-reflection possibly supported by journaling. The volunteer is expected to attend all training sessions relevant to her/his role and/or to make the necessary arrangements to complete the required training in a reasonable span of time.

If at any time the volunteer feels that s/he need additional training or support, or require clarification of any material presented or discussed, that additional help or guidance should be readily available. The intention is to make the volunteer feel as comfortable and supported as possible.

## Terminology

Some hospice palliative care programs have a preference for the use of the term client or patient. While patient tends to be the preferred term in the medical sense, most hospice organizations expressed a strong preference for the word client. Client is the term we have tended to use in this document and for the sake of simplicity of language we have tended not to use client/patient. Similarly, where the word family is used, it is also meant to include loved one(s), friend(s), and others who might be involved.