



TORONTO
HIV/AIDS
NETWORK

THN Volunteer HIV Core Training

**You and the agency:
Steering the course**

Volunteering as a PHA or
affected by HIV

Spring 2021

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Acknowledgements

- Partner agency:
- Developed by Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA)
- David Hoe, writer/consultant
- Facilitator: shae byer

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Learning Objectives

- See volunteering within their own life journey as individuals living with and affected by HIV
- Understanding of the complexities of volunteering in the HIV sector for people living with or affected by HIV
- Knowledge of key self-care issues (boundaries, disclosure, confidentiality)
- Learn about volunteer-agency relationship (including seeking help/information and self-advocacy)

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Steering through.....

- Obligations and agreements
- Being a volunteer who is a PHA
- When HIV is part of your volunteer role
- Self care as a Volunteer
- Confidentiality and community
- Boundaries
- Wearing hats of volunteer and service receiver
- Ownership
- Maintaining balance

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Obligations and Agreements

- Working as a volunteer in an agency is a formal and mutual agreement on
- The work to be done and the role you will play
- Your responsibilities
- The agency's responsibilities
- Resources to do the job
- Hours of work
- Who supervises or supports you
- How you will get feedback on your work
- How to handle concerns you have or the agency has
- Policies and practices the agency has for all.

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Being a volunteer and a PHA

- Whether someone knows you are a PHA or not is your decision
- What you share about your story is yours to tell and once told it is out of your control
- Your experience is unique, others have their own story and it is theirs to tell
- Look at this work not only as a PHA; HIV alone does not define you
- You will come across issues and personal stories that will touch yours - be aware of your humanness
- You may get emotionally triggered by an experience that closely resembles yours
- We are part of a community, with the ability to support one another; there are services and supports for you to call upon

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When HIV is part of Your Volunteer Role

- Sometimes the role requires the PHA to be public or “out”. This may include different levels of openness such as:
- Leading peer support groups
- Helping in research
- Poz prevention outreach
- Speakers bureau
- Media
- Important to consider and set personal boundaries

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Being an Ally as a Volunteer

- Unless HIV+, we can learn about, but we cannot know what it is to live with HIV.
- We can respectfully listen, learn and be supportive.
- We will respect the privacy of our volunteer & staff colleagues and people the agency serves.
- We may know people with HIV but we recognize that everyone experiences HIV differently.
- We can contribute as part of a volunteer team that makes a difference.

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Self Care as a Volunteer

- Taking charge of your own health
- Setting up supports
- Taking care of you
- ‘Bracketing’ - pause; put an issue aside for a time
- Disclosing
- Reflection
- Having a personal life

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Confidentiality and Community

- About people
- About your work
- About the agency
- About gossip (ill intent, not concern)
- About others' disclosures
- About professional conversations
- PHA & HIV services community is small

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Boundaries

- Part of self-care
- In the workplace
- In your role
- In the community
- In your personal life

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Wearing hats of volunteer *and* service receiver

- Pay attention to these two connections with the agency
- Impact on relationships
- Holding on to the right to services
- How to hold both hats well but with one role at a time

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Ownership

- OK to own your role and responsibility and have commitment, being a dependable volunteer.
- Getting too attached to a program or a role
- Having it become “my agency”
- I cannot leave
- I am working on my life

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Maintaining Balance

- We are and we do many things
- We are in charge - making choices
- Nothing is stable
- Adapting to change
- Being aware
- Checking things out
- Being a volunteer is one way to realize fulfillment in your personal journey

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[You & the Agency Evaluation Link](#)

• [THN HIV Core Volunteer Training Module 7: You and the Agency, Tuesday, June 8, 2021](#)

• <https://forms.office.com/r/3bYVGCs5sT>



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