Working Together: Respecting Other Volunteers

Center of Hope brings together people with different personalities, backgrounds, experiences, abilities, and ways of doing things.

That's a good thing. It's also why working well together takes some effort.

You won't always agree with every other volunteer. Someone may work more slowly than you do. Someone may approach a task differently. Someone may make a mistake. You may even find that there are people you simply don't click with.

We don't have to be best friends. We do need to treat one another with kindness and respect.

> **“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” — Romans 12:10**

Give Each Other Some Grace

Everyone who volunteers here is giving something valuable: their time.

Some volunteers have served for years and know their area extremely well. Others are walking through the door for the first time. Some can serve several days a week, while others can only give us a few hours a month. People also have different physical abilities, skills, and comfort levels.

Try not to judge another person's contribution against your own.

Be patient with someone who is learning. Offer help when it's needed. And remember that all of us will occasionally make mistakes.

Help — Don't Take Over

Experienced volunteers are incredibly valuable, particularly when they help newer volunteers learn.

If you see someone struggling, offer to help rather than immediately correcting or criticizing them. Explain how we do things and, when appropriate, explain why.

At the same time, please remember that **staff and Team Leaders are responsible for establishing procedures and assigning responsibilities.** Volunteers shouldn't create their own rules for other volunteers or undermine instructions that have been given.

If you believe something is being done incorrectly, bring the concern to your Team Leader or a staff member rather than creating a disagreement between volunteers.

Don't Talk About Each Other

Problems between two people rarely get better when they are discussed with five more people.

If another volunteer frustrates you, avoid gossiping, complaining about them to others, or trying to get people to take sides.

Whenever possible, extend some grace and move on. If the issue genuinely needs to be addressed, speak respectfully with the person involved or bring it privately to your Team Leader or a staff member.

> **“A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.” — Proverbs 16:28**

Don't Let Negativity Become Contagious

Every team develops a culture, and every person on that team contributes to it.

Complaining can become contagious surprisingly quickly. One person starts criticizing a procedure, a guest, another volunteer, or a staff decision, and soon several people are participating.

You don't have to join in.

Sometimes one of the most helpful things you can do is simply not participate. Better yet, help move the conversation in another direction.

Encouragement is contagious too.

> **“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.” — 1 Thessalonians 5:11**

Remember That We're On the Same Team

There are many different jobs at Center of Hope, but we're all working toward the same purpose.

No volunteer position is more important than another. The person stocking shelves, greeting a guest, cleaning up, answering a question, unloading food, entering information, or working behind the scenes is contributing to the same mission.

That means we help each other when we can. We communicate. We follow the same procedures. We respect the responsibilities we've each been given. And when something goes wrong, we work toward a solution instead of looking for someone to blame.

A Simple Standard

When you're working with another volunteer:

Be patient. Be helpful. Assume good intentions. Don't gossip. Don't keep score. Follow the direction of your Team Leader and staff. Address genuine problems appropriately, and let the little things go.

> **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.” — Philippians 2:3**

We're here to serve our community and share the hope of Christ.

How we treat the people serving beside us should reflect that mission just as much as how we treat the people who come to us for help.