



CaringMatters, Inc.

Volunteer Policy and Procedures Manual

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Welcome to CaringMatters!

We are thrilled to welcome you to the CaringMatters, Inc. team! We are confident that your contributions will make a meaningful difference in supporting our mission and the people we serve.

This Volunteer Handbook provides important information about our policies, expectations, and other resources you will need to have a successful and rewarding experience with us. To maintain flexibility in managing our programs, CaringMatters reserves the right to modify or discontinue any policies or benefits described herein.

This handbook supersedes all previous guides, policies, or related materials unless otherwise noted. If you have any questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to ask. We are here to help!

Our Mission

CaringMatters supports people of all ages experiencing serious illness, caregiving, loss, or grief through compassionate services, so no one faces their journey alone.

Our Vision

CaringMatters envisions a community that accepts death as part of life; where the processes of caregiving, dying and grieving are embraced; where everyone has access to services; and where no one dies or grieves alone.

History

CaringMatters, Inc. began in 1989 as Hospice Caring, founded to support people facing a life-limiting illness and their families by providing nonmedical assistance, including companionship, emotional support, and practical help. Inspired by successful end-of-life and bereavement programs in other communities, the organization adopted a community-centered, volunteer-driven approach—a philosophy that continues to guide our work today.

In 2017, the staff and board reflected on the organization's identity, mission, and impact, leading to a rebrand with a new name and visual identity. The name CaringMatters was chosen to clearly reflect our mission, the scope of our services, and our vision for future growth.

CaringMatters is proud to hold the Seal of Excellence from Maryland Nonprofits, Inc., a recognition of our commitment to high standards in nonprofit governance and operations. This recognition reflects CaringMatters' commitment to ethical, accountable, transparent, and mission-centered nonprofit practices.

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I. What to Expect at the Cottage

a. Standard Office Hours

Our team is available to support clients, volunteers, and community members Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Staff may be working in-office or remotely, and can be reached by phone, email, or video call.

b. Personal Attire

At CaringMatters, we strive to create a professional, welcoming environment while keeping comfort and personal expression in mind. Volunteers and staff are encouraged to dress in business casual attire—clean, neat, and appropriate for the tasks you will be performing.

c. Holidays

CaringMatters recognizes the following holidays, when the organization and office will be closed:

**New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
Juneteenth
Fourth of July
Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving
Friday after Thanksgiving
December 25–December 31**

Should any of these holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday, CaringMatters will close on either Friday or Monday to observe the holiday.

d. Expense Reimbursement

In rare circumstances, CaringMatters may reimburse volunteers for preapproved expenses directly related to their volunteer service.

All pre-approved reimbursement requests must be submitted using the appropriate form within ten business days and include required documentation (e.g., receipts, mileage logs). Reimbursements will not be accepted unless previously approved in writing by the Chief Executive Officer.

II. Serving as an Ambassador for CaringMatters

a. The Role of Volunteers

Volunteers are central to CaringMatters' mission. They play a vital role in supporting individuals and families experiencing serious illness, caregiving, loss, and grief.

CaringMatters is committed to treating volunteers with respect and providing meaningful assignments, appropriate training and orientation, clear expectations, supervision, and support. In return, volunteers are expected to uphold CaringMatters' mission and values, follow program guidelines, complete any and all required orientation programs, honor their commitments, maintain appropriate boundaries, and communicate promptly with their Program Director about questions, concerns, or changes in availability. Volunteers acknowledge receipt of a copy of the CaringMatters Code of Ethics.

Volunteers serve in a variety of capacities, offering compassionate presence, emotional support, and practical assistance across programs. Although volunteers may bring valuable personal and professional experience, all volunteer roles are nonclinical and do not provide medical, legal, or financial advice.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Act with compassion, respect, and professionalism
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with clients and families
- Follow program guidelines and organizational policies
- Communicate regularly with their Program Director

Through their service, volunteers help ensure that no one in our community faces their journey alone.

b. Ways to Volunteer

CaringMatters offers a variety of volunteer opportunities to support individuals and families experiencing serious illness, caregiving, and grief. Volunteer programs and roles are described below.

Volunteer Helping Hands (Hospice Support)

Provide caregiving and companionship to those who are on their end-of-life journey and their families, by simply being there to support, listen, and lend a helping hand.

JustRides

Support patients and caregivers dealing with a serious illness such as cancer, by providing free, compassionate, and reliable transportation to and from treatments.

Caregiver Support Group

Cofacilitate peer support groups for family and friend caregivers who are supporting a loved one so that they can share and connect with other caregivers.

Caregiver Mentor Program

Serve as a mentor for current caregivers (mentees) and provide one-on-one emotional and practical support to support caregivers on their journey.

Adult Bereavement

Co-facilitate adult bereavement support groups, which are tailored for specific types of loss and are provided at no charge. Volunteers may facilitate the Bereaved Caregivers Retreat for caregivers whose person has died.

Children's Bereavement

Co-facilitate Good Grief Club. This club consists of support groups with a school counselor or school social worker for children and adolescents in grades K-12. The participants explore and process their feelings about the death of a loved one and develop coping skills. Volunteers also assist with additional children's bereavement programs such as virtual Family Nights and Parenting While Grieving workshops.

Camp Erin

Train and serve as a "Big Buddy" or facilitator at Camp Erin, a weekend grief camp for children who have recently experienced a loved one's death.

Administration and Event Planning

Assist with administrative tasks at the Cottage, help organize fundraising and community education events, and volunteer at community resource fairs.

Each volunteer role has specific responsibilities, expectations, training requirements, documentation requirements, and supervision. Volunteers should only perform duties within the scope of their assigned role and should consult their Program Director before taking on additional responsibilities or acting on behalf of CaringMatters in a new capacity.

c. Representing CaringMatters in the Media

Volunteers are important ambassadors of CaringMatters and are expected to represent the organization in a respectful and accurate manner.

Volunteers should not speak on behalf of CaringMatters to the media, on social media, or in public forums without prior approval. This includes interviews, public statements, or sharing client-related experiences in a way that could identify individuals or misrepresent the organization.

To protect the privacy of those we serve:

- Do not share confidential or identifying information about clients, families, or other volunteers
- Use discretion when posting about your volunteer experience on social media
- Refer any media inquiries to CaringMatters staff

Volunteers are encouraged to share their positive experiences in a general way that supports awareness of CaringMatters' mission, while respecting confidentiality and organizational guidelines.

III. Agency Practices

a. Drug-Free Agency Policy

Volunteers are expected to be able to safely and effectively carry out their responsibilities. The use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misuse of prescription medications during volunteer activities is not permitted. This expectation applies in all settings where volunteers represent CaringMatters.

CaringMatters encourages volunteers to seek support for substance use concerns. Issues related to safety, performance, attendance, or behavior may result in changes to volunteer assignments or discontinuation of service.

b. Equal Opportunity Policy

CaringMatters is committed to providing equal opportunities to all volunteers. Therefore, all terms and conditions of engagement will be carried out without regard to race, creed, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, citizenship, marital status, age, disability, genetic status, or any other characteristic protected by law. We are committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming environment where all volunteers feel valued and respected.

c. Anti-Harassment Policy

CaringMatters is committed to maintaining a respectful, inclusive, and harassment-free environment for all volunteers, staff, clients, families, and community members. Harassment, bullying, discrimination, or intimidation of any kind is not tolerated.

This includes conduct related to any protected characteristic, such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or other protected status, as well as unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, written, electronic, or physical behavior that creates an intimidating, hostile, or uncomfortable environment.

Bullying may include repeated or severe conduct such as threats, humiliation, intimidation, exclusion, mocking, offensive comments, or aggressive communication.

d. Whistleblower Policy

CaringMatters is committed to operating with integrity, transparency, and accountability. Volunteers, staff, and board members are encouraged to report concerns about suspected unethical behavior, violations of law, or organizational policies. If concerns are not resolved by the CEO, please contact the Compliance Officer listed below.

Daniel S. Krakower

Compliance Officer

dskrakower@gmail.com | 301-461-3823

e. Reporting Concerns

Volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns about their volunteer role, supervision, work environment, interpersonal conflict, or program expectations as soon as possible.

Concerns should be reported to a Program Director. If not resolved, contact the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). If still not resolved, please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

No Retaliation

CaringMatters strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports a concern in good faith. Individuals who engage in retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

Reports will be handled as confidentially as possible, consistent with the need to review and address the concern.

Good Faith Reporting

Reports should be made in good faith and with a reasonable belief that the information shared is accurate. Knowingly false or malicious reports may result in disciplinary action.

Review and Response

All reports will be reviewed promptly and appropriate action will be taken. The response may include changes to volunteer assignments or discontinuation of service. Concerns related to financial practices or internal controls will be escalated to appropriate board leadership.

f. Consulting and Honoraria

If volunteers are asked to consult with others or to speak at a conference as a representative of CaringMatters, volunteers must obtain prior approval from the Chief Executive Officer. CaringMatters does not charge fees for speaking engagements. This also applies to public appearances included in the Speaker's Bureau. CaringMatters speakers are not to be compensated by the inviting individual or group.

g. Conflict of Interest Statement

Volunteers must avoid situations where personal, financial, or professional interests could conflict (or appear to conflict) with the interests of CaringMatters.

A conflict may arise when a volunteer, a close family member, or business associate could benefit from a CaringMatters decision or relationship.

Volunteers are not permitted to solicit or collect data on staff, clients, or other volunteers for their business or any related business interests. Volunteers are expected to promptly disclose any actual or potential conflicts to their Program Director or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Volunteers may be asked to step back from related discussions or activities.

Volunteers may be required to complete a conflict-of-interest disclosure form; failure to disclose a conflict may result in changes to volunteer responsibilities or discontinuation of service.

h. Confidentiality Statement

CaringMatters volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement as a condition of volunteer service. Volunteers may have access to sensitive information regarding clients, staff, donors, and fellow volunteers. This information may include, but is not limited to, personal details, contact information, medical or financial data, internal personnel matters pertaining to terminations, lay-offs, promotions or disciplinary measures, information pertaining to contractual information between CaringMatters and other third parties, intellectual property, and other confidential information. Volunteers must always maintain confidentiality, even after terminating their relationship with CaringMatters. Volunteers are responsible for knowing what information should be treated as confidential and should consult their program director for clarification if in doubt.

Confidential Information includes information that relates to CaringMatters' clients, staff, donors, volunteers, operations, and finances. The following guidelines apply:

- Do not discuss confidential information in public places
- When discussing potential confidential information, be aware of those around you and consider whether they have a specific need to know such information
- Do not use the names of CaringMatters clients or those receiving services through CaringMatters to anyone outside of program personnel
- Do not take hard copies of confidential information off CaringMatters premises unless approved by a CaringMatters staff member
- Keep electronically stored confidential information password protected, and store hard copies out of sight in a secure location
- Shred or tear up hard copies of confidential information before disposing in the trash or recycling
- Do not share or disclose information that is identifying through email, voicemail, text, or social media

Confidentiality is expected in all actions taken on behalf of CaringMatters and those it serves. Do not remove or share any confidential information from CaringMatters without specific authorization to do so from the Chief Executive Officer. Any possible breach of confidentiality shall be reported to the CEO and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

i. Feedback and Evaluation

Each volunteer will have a designated Program Director or staff supervisor who provides role-specific guidance, support, and feedback. Volunteers are encouraged to raise questions, concerns, or suggestions with their supervisor at any time

CaringMatters may periodically review volunteer performance, role fit, training needs, and volunteer experience. Volunteers are also encouraged to share feedback about their role, program, or experience with their Program Director, the CEO, or through any anonymous feedback process made available by the organization.

j. Discontinuation of Volunteer Service

Volunteers may end their service with CaringMatters at any time. When possible, volunteers are asked to notify their Program Director in advance so appropriate arrangements can be made. Upon leaving service, a volunteer may not take, without

first obtaining the prior written consent of the Chief Executive Officer, any document or tangible evidence of Confidential Information belonging to or under the control of CaringMatters, whether on an external device, recorded or hard drive, and whether an original or reproduction.

CaringMatters also reserves the right to change, suspend, or discontinue a volunteer assignment or volunteer relationship at any time. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, failure to follow policies or program guidelines, breach of confidentiality, unsafe conduct, inappropriate boundaries, repeated absences, conflict of interest concerns, or behavior inconsistent with CaringMatters' mission and values.

IV. Volunteer Documentation and Requirements

a. Initial Assessment and Screening

The appropriate CaringMatters employee will interview all volunteer applicants. Volunteer applicants who intend to attend the three-day Volunteer Training will be screened according to Maryland State Regulations policy 10.07.21.18 (D). This screening includes a criminal background check.

b. New Volunteer Documentation Requirements

- Volunteer Application
- Signed Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement of Receipt
- Signed Conflict of Interest Statement Acknowledgement of Receipt
- Signed Confidentiality Statement Acknowledgement of Receipt
- Signed Authorization for Criminal Background Check
- Three Personal References
- Proof of TB testing (VHH and JR Volunteers)
- Copy of driver's license and active car insurance (VHH and JR Volunteers)
- MCPS Online "Child Abuse & Neglect Training for Volunteers" (Good Grief Club Volunteers)

c. Volunteer Hours and Mileage

Volunteers will be asked to track and submit a record of their volunteer hours and any mileage accrued while volunteering. Each program captures this information directly. Please see your Program Director for more information.

d. Continuing Education Units

Volunteers are required by our license through the Maryland Health Care Commission to complete two hours of Continuing Education training each year after their initial training is complete. CaringMatters offers numerous events and workshops throughout the year in which volunteers can participate to complete this requirement. Volunteers may also attend other events and workshops not affiliated with CaringMatters to fulfill this requirement. A continuing education form verifying completion of two continuing education hours should be submitted annually before the end of the fiscal year on June 30th.

e. Medical Testing and Infection Control Orientation

During training at CaringMatters, each volunteer will receive infection control training as required by our license through the Maryland Health Care Commission, Office of Health Care Quality. Each year thereafter, all volunteers will complete an infection control review, which will be included in their personnel folder.

f. Safety, Incidents, and Liability

CaringMatters is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers, clients, families, staff, and community members. Volunteers are expected to use good judgment, follow program guidelines, and comply with any safety instructions provided.

Volunteers should promptly report any safety concern, injury, accident, incident, or unusual situation to their Program Director or designated staff contact. Volunteers may

only perform duties within the scope of their assigned role and training. Volunteers should not provide medical, legal, financial, or clinical advice.

Volunteers who drive as part of their volunteer role must maintain a valid driver's license and active automobile insurance. They also must comply with all role-specific transportation requirements. Volunteers may not transport clients, families, or program participants unless transportation is part of their approved volunteer role and all required documentation, screening, and training have been completed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

I have received a copy of CaringMatters, Inc. Volunteer Handbook, and I understand that it supersedes any prior policy, manual, rules, and practices of the organization. I also understand that nothing in this Volunteer Handbook in any way creates an expressed or implied contract or guarantees any benefits described herein.

Please Print Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

CaringMatters, Inc. requires that volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement as a condition of volunteer service and keep strictly confidential certain information related to individuals served, donors, and volunteers. Volunteers are prohibited from disclosing “confidential Information” (as defined below) to any external parties. External parties are any person or entity aside from CaringMatters employees, volunteers, representatives, or authorized agents. Confidentiality also applies to other CaringMatters employees, independent contractors, or consultants that do not have a legitimate reason to know such information without prior authorization.

Volunteers must maintain confidentiality in all locations, through all modes of communication, and at all times, continuing indefinitely after termination of their relationship with the organization. Volunteers are responsible for knowing what information should be treated as confidential and should consult their program director for clarification if in doubt.

Confidential information includes any information that relates to CaringMatters, its clients, operations, finance, technology, donors, and volunteers.

- Do not discuss confidential information in public places
- When discussing potentially confidential information, be aware of who is around you and consider whether they have a specific need to know such information
- Do not take hard copies of confidential information off CaringMatters premises unless a supervisor agrees that it is absolutely necessary; if you do, make sure it is safe and secure
- Keep electronically stored confidential information password protected, and store hard copies out of sight in a secure location
- Shred or tear up hard copies of confidential information before disposing it in the trash or recycling
- Do not share or disclose identifying information through email, voicemail, text, or social media

Confidentiality is expected in all actions taken on behalf of CaringMatters and those it serves. Do not remove or share any confidential information from CaringMatters without specific authorization to do so from the Chief Executive Officer. Any possible breach of confidentiality shall be reported to the Chief Executive Officer and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

I have read and understand the policy stated above. I agree to and accept its provisions.

Please Print Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

A signed copy of this document is kept in your Volunteer File.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Volunteers of CaringMatters, Inc. shall avoid any conflict or appearance of conflict between their respective individual interest or the interests of a relative or business associate and the interests of the organization in any and all actions taken by them on behalf of CaringMatters and those it serves. Any possible conflict of interest on the part of such person or persons shall be disclosed to the CaringMatters Chief Executive Officer.

I have read and understand the policy as stated above. I agree to and accept its provisions.

Please Print Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

A signed copy of this document is kept in your Volunteer File.