



ORIENTATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Individuals & Groups

The Center is a non-profit United Way agency that promotes the pursuit of choice, growth, and personal independence for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) through innovative programs and compassionate care. In addition to generous supporters and foundations, we rely on dedicated staff, an engaged board, and selfless volunteers like you to meet the unique needs of the people we serve and to foster opportunities for our clients to thrive.

The following suggestions are meant to help you and our clients feel more comfortable in your interactions together.

1. Remember, people with special needs and those without are more alike than different. If you are unsure how to respond to a person with special needs, ask yourself how you would want someone to treat you.
2. Always remember that the confidentiality, safety, and well-being of our clients comes first. Do not share their personal information or take pictures or recordings of the clients. Do not contact parents or family members of the clients. Breach of this confidentiality will result in termination of your services.
3. The Rights of our clients are very important. If you see a problem occurring or witness abuse/neglect, it must be reported to a staff member immediately. Flyers with important contact numbers are posted around campus. Although unlikely, any injuries, falls, seizures, or medical complaints should also be immediately reported to staff.
4. Be yourself and enjoy your interactions with our clients as you go about your volunteer duties. Use your normal voice with supportive/praising language. Never use negative/degrading language or offensive terms.
5. As a volunteer, all interactions with our clients should be based on respect, trust, and dignity. Encouraging pats on the back or fist bumps/handshakes are the preferred way of praising our clients for their accomplishments. Excessive hugging is not appropriate.
6. Some clients are on special diets. Discuss food/drink options and quantities with the staff when planning events.

If you have questions or issues arise, please contact a staff member. Thank you for following our policies, rules, and procedures at The Center.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Rights Protection Officer: 281.830.2686
Texas Abuse Hotline: 1.800.252.5400
The Center Volunteer Coordinator: 713.525.8484