

CCM VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Module: Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

Serving with Compassion, Wisdom and Respect

Introduction

As community care ministries (CCM) volunteers, we are called to serve others with Christ-like compassion while maintaining healthy and appropriate boundaries. Boundaries are not barriers—they are essential tools for building trust, ensuring safety and sustaining effective ministry.

Even Jesus demonstrated boundaries in his earthly ministry, taking time for rest, prayer and discernment about when to engage or withdraw (see Mark 1:35–38). In following his example, we learn to serve with both love and wisdom.

Why Boundaries Matter

Maintaining boundaries helps us:

- Stay focused on our purpose and role within CCM.
- Prevent burnout and emotional fatigue.
- Uphold the dignity and independence of those we serve.
- Ensure relationships remain safe, ethical and appropriate.

Key Scripture “All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No,’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37).

Best Practices for Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries in CCM

1. Keep relationships professional and purposeful

Be warm and friendly but remember that your role is one of supportive care—not personal friendship or dependency.

2. Respect personal space and comfort levels

Always be sensitive to emotional and physical boundaries. Ask permission before offering gestures like holding a hand or giving a hug.

3. Avoid over-involvement

Do not take on personal tasks such as running errands, lending money, or sharing your personal contact information. Boundaries protect both you and those you serve.



4. Manage emotional boundaries

While it's natural to care deeply, resist the urge to carry others' emotional burdens. Set healthy limits on how much you invest personally to avoid burnout and preserve your well-being.

5. Follow organizational guidelines

Always adhere to Salvation Army policies related to conduct, communication, confidentiality and reporting concerns. These guidelines exist to ensure ministry is safe, ethical and mission aligned.

6. Know when to refer to professionals

If someone's needs go beyond your role, connect them with appropriate support services. You are not expected to have all the answers—your job is to care, not to fix.

7. Pray with discernment

Prayer is a beautiful part of CCM, but it should always be offered respectfully and with the person's permission. Ensure your approach to spiritual care aligns with their comfort level.

Note: Additional resources related to The Salvation Army's safeguarding and conduct policies are included in this toolkit for your reference and guidance.

Practical Exercise: Navigating Boundaries in Real Life

Pair up with another volunteer. Choose or create a scenario where boundaries might be tested (e.g., someone asking for your phone number or financial help).

Discuss together:

- What boundary is being challenged?
- How can you respond with both clarity and compassion?
- What support or policy might guide your decision?

Conclusion

Boundaries are not about withholding care—they're about offering care that is healthy, respectful and sustainable. By maintaining clear boundaries, we protect ourselves and others, and we create space for ministry that is rooted in dignity, mutual trust and Christ's love.

Reflection question:

How can I strengthen my boundaries while still being compassionate in my CCM visits?

