

AAAPP Volunteer Handbook

Draft as of January 2025



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Welcome!

We are delighted to welcome you as a volunteer for the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas (AAAPP). As a volunteer, you are a valuable asset to our organization. We greatly appreciate your support in making it possible for AAAPP to help older adults and adults with disabilities live and age with independence and dignity in their homes and their community.

You are joining a team of people from diverse backgrounds who contribute not only time and energy but bring skills and qualities that add value to our efforts. Your commitment to assisting AAAPP in serving older adults, persons with disabilities and caregivers is greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this handbook is to guide and help you in your relationship with AAAPP as a volunteer. The policies are subject to change from time to time at AAAPP's discretion and as required by law. We will make sure you are informed of any changes which might affect you and your service to AAAPP.

You may find that some of this document is formal because of various federal and state laws protecting vulnerable persons. AAAPP is concerned about the requirements of handling the confidential medical records and information of our seniors. AAAPP has strong relationships with our volunteers. Handbooks and training are designed to be tools to enrich your life as well as the greater community we serve.

Thank you for giving your time and bringing your passion to AAAPP. You are in a position to make a significant impact on the older adults in our community.

We look forward to a long, happy, and rewarding partnership with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Marie Winter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Ann" and "Marie" stacked above "Winter".

Ann Marie Winter
Executive Director

Agency Overview

Our History

The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas was designated by the State of Florida in 1974 to be the Area Agency on Aging. A private, non-profit independent agency covering Pinellas and Pasco counties, we belong to a nationwide network of over 660 Area Agencies on Aging. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and advised by an Advisory Council of volunteers, AAAPP activities are funded by federal, state and local grants as well as private donations. As an Area Agency on Aging, AAAPP is charged with the responsibility of identifying the needs of elders and caregivers, developing plans to meet those needs, funding services to help meet those needs and ensuring the quality of those services.

The State has since designated AAAPP to be the Aging and Disability Resource Center for the region. As the Aging and Disability Resource Center, we serve as the focal point to which elders, adults with disabilities, their caregivers and the general public can turn for information, referral, assistance and answers related to aging issues. Our Helpline has specially trained staff ready to help. We encourage people to call AAAPP on our Helpline is 1 800-963-5337.

Our Mission Statement

The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas is a trusted resource to advocate, educate and empower seniors, adults with disabilities and caregivers, which promotes independence, in partnership with the community.

Our Vision

Our community will provide seniors, adults with disabilities and caregivers with the resources and services needed to maintain independence, promote healthy aging and live an optimal quality of life.

Our Role as Fiscal Stewards

Each year, AAAPP provides over \$25 million in grants and contracts to underwrite a range of services for the elderly, adults with disabilities and caregivers in our two-county service area through a network of local service agencies. The services we offer through these contracts include, but are not limited to, emergency energy assistance, congregate and home delivered meals, chore, case management, health and wellness support, adult day care, homemaker, personal care, legal assistance, mental health counseling, and transportation as well as support, training, counseling and respite for caregivers, including grandparents raising grandchildren. We provide oversight of the program and services through fiscal, administrative and programmatic monitoring and offer the agencies training, technical assistance and support.

Our Programs

Individuals contact our Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Helpline for information and resources for a myriad of reasons: those needing help in understanding their Medicare plans, seniors facing a financial crisis seeking assistance, information on transportation, housing or food resources, etc. Staff also screen individuals for various funded programs and help them with eligibility. The ADRC provides information and referral services, screens seniors for state and federal service eligibility, and can refer seniors to support groups, home health services, nursing care, mental health services, legal assistance, transportation or home-delivered meals and more.

THE HELPLINE NUMBER IS 800-963-5337.

The following programs are accessed through the AAAPP Helpline and provided directly by the AAAPP:

Serving the Health Insurance Needs of the Elders / Senior Medical Patrol (SHINE / SMP)	<i>What Does the Program Do?</i>
	The SHINE/SMP program offers free and unbiased health insurance counseling, information and assistance from trained volunteers. It also empowers seniors to prevent Medicare fraud. Our volunteers provide year-round free and unbiased counseling.
	<i>When To Make a Referral</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior is turning 65 and does not know how to activate their Medicare• Senior expresses not understanding their benefits• Senior wants to know if their current plan is the best one for them

Senior Community Health	<i>What Does the Program Do?</i>
	This program provides short term case management and financial assistance to adults 60+ who live in Pinellas or Pasco County who are referred from our Helpline or community partners. Programs that fall under the Senior Community Health umbrella include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unmet Needs• Hurricane Resiliency• Housing Grant (zip code specific) Eligibility: There was an unexpected event in recent months that caused the older adult to need assistance that was not otherwise available in the community. Our assistance is short-term and not for ongoing expenses.
	<i>When To Make a Referral</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior expresses they are having challenges affording something they normally were able to afford• All other resource options provided by the Helpline have been exhausted. Examples of past financial assistance: Ramp, tree removal, moving costs, deposit, medicine, food, rent, utilities, pest control, mattress, grab bars, appliances, etc. For older adults needing incontinence products, referrals are made to our Diapers for Dignity partner sites in Pasco and Pinellas counties.

Mental Health Counseling	<i>What Does the Program Do?</i>
	This program provides free mental health therapy from a licensed mental health professional. A treatment plan is developed along with goals that the licensed mental health professional will guide the senior to achieve. Therapy sessions are offered via telehealth or in-person at local senior centers.
	Eligibility: Aged 60 and over and reside in Pasco or Pinellas Counties. Must have access to a smart phone, tablet, or computer for telehealth capabilities, or be willing to attend therapy sessions at a senior center.
	<i>When To Make a Referral</i>

Evidence-Based Health and Wellness Programs	<i>What Does the Program Do?</i>
	This program provides free classes and programs aimed at improving the lives of seniors and caregivers. Available classes are available throughout Pasco and Pinellas Counties throughout the year in varying locations. Available classes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savvy Caregiver: A six-week program for caregivers of individuals living at home, 60 or over, who are living with Alzheimer's Disease and/or other related dementia disorders. • A Matter of Balance: An eight-week program focusing on falls prevention and increasing activity levels. • Chronic Disease, Diabetes, and Chronic Pain Self-Management: Six-week programs providing support and tools to manage complex health conditions while maintaining an active life. • Bingocize: A ten-week program that combines the familiar game of Bingo with health information and simple exercises. • Enhance Fitness: Provided by the YMCA of the Suncoast, this 16-week exercise class aims to reduce falls and increase strength.
	<i>When To Make a Referral</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior is looking for ways to stay active and information on caregiving, falls prevention, or health condition management.

Chore	<i>What Does the Program Do?</i>
	This program provides brief, one-time cleaning services that address routine house or yard tasks, including seasonal cleaning; yard work; lifting and moving furniture, appliances or heavy objects; household repairs which do not require a permit, specialist, or specialized tools; and household maintenance.
	<i>When To Make a Referral</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors aged 60 and older that reside in Pasco or Pinellas counties in need of this type of service. • If a senior is living in a potentially dangerous or hazardous environment that is currently impacting their safety to live in the home, a report should be

	submitted to the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873.
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Older Americans Act, Title IIIIE, National Family Caregiver Support Program	<i>What Does the Program Do?</i>
	This program provides direct help to caregivers who provide care for elder recipients. These services assist in the areas of health and respite to help caregivers achieve wellness and balance in their caregiving roles and responsibilities.
	<i>When To Make a Referral</i>

- Unpaid caregivers to seniors, aged 60 or older.

Our Coalitions & Initiatives

The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas is also home to several coalitions and Initiatives:

Dementia Care and Cure Initiative: Organizations are working together to help make our community more friendly for people living with dementia and for their caregivers. The Task Force provides education and training to area businesses and works to create opportunities for people living with dementia to remain engaged in the community.

Better Living for Seniors (BLS): Founded in 1989 in partnership with the AAAPP, this membership network of professionals in Pinellas County is dedicated to serving seniors. Members contribute their expertise by volunteering on committees, participating in fundraisers and engaging in networking and educational opportunities. This collaborative approach fosters a supportive community where members can refer business and build valuable connections. [Better Living For Seniors - Home](#)

Pasco Aging Network (PAN): Also created in 1989 in partnership with the AAAPP, PAN is a coalition of public and private organizations and companies providing elder services in Pasco County. PAN provides a forum for networking, sharing ideas, raising funds for senior serving organizations and disseminating information about services for seniors. [Pasco Aging Network - Home](#)

Housing Roundtables: Access to affordable housing in Pinellas and Pasco counties is becoming an issue for seniors on fixed or limited incomes. The AAAPP has established Housing Roundtables made up of individuals in many different sectors, coming together to discuss and identify ways to advocate for more affordable housing. [Senior Housing Roundtables](#)

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are an integral part of the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas. We

depend upon our volunteers as we do our staff to ensure the highest quality of service and programs for our seniors and community. Below are additional volunteer opportunities:

- **Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE)**
 - Volunteers provide unbiased, free health insurance counseling and empower seniors to avoid Medicare fraud. They receive extensive training from the Department of Elder Affairs and receive mentoring after training. There are various opportunities within the SHINE program for volunteers. The SHINE coordinator will guide volunteers through the requirements of the different volunteer opportunities within this program. **You cannot have an active insurance license to volunteer with this program.**

SHINE Coordinator: Geralyn Fortney Geralyn.fortney@aaapp.org

You may also visit FLORIDASHINE.ORG and click the "Join Our Team" tab!

- **Silver Santas**
 - This is an all-volunteer project that delivers close to 2000 bags of Christmas gifts each year to seniors who are homebound. Seniors identify what their Christmas wish list items are and then donations pour in to fulfill those wishes.
- **Card Writing Campaign**
- **Disaster Preparedness Kits**

Each year, the AAAPP creates hurricane preparedness kits, filled with batteries, rain ponchos, radios, word puzzle books, water bottles, reusable utensil kits, hand sanitizer, etc., to distribute to seniors before the hurricane season begins in June.
- **AAAPP Ambassadors**
- **Advisory Council**
 - This council advises AAAPP and its Board of Directors in planning, developing, coordinating, and administering services to persons 60 and older who reside in Pinellas and Pasco counties. Members assist with educating the general public about the needs and opportunities, problems, resources, myths and stereotypes of older people.
 - Members inform older people and the general public about the services to

- the elderly and how services may be accessed.
- Eligibility:
 - Reside or be principally employed in the county you are representing
 - Commit to a minimum of one term. The term is 2 years, and you can renew for additional terms.
 - Attending at least six meetings per year.

Please email your assigned AAAPP staff person to learn more about the above opportunities.

The Volunteer Handbook starts on the next page. This handbook contains the program policy and procedures. It is your responsibility to read the volunteer handbook and to familiarize yourself with the program policy and procedures outlined below.

Should you have any questions or concerns or are not clear on a specific policy or procedure, it is your responsibility to reach out to your assigned AAAPP staff member to seek clarification.

Volunteer Expectations

The Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas strives to offer our volunteers a worthwhile and enjoyable volunteer experience. Your service to our agency and the seniors we serve is what makes our agency so special.

Volunteer Rights

It is a volunteer's right to:

- Be assigned a task that is worthwhile and challenging, having real purpose and contributing to the organization's mission.
- Receive the orientation, training and supervision needed to do the job in a safe and secure manner.
- Be treated with respect and as an equal partner within the organization.

Volunteer Responsibilities

It is a volunteer's responsibility to:

- Be punctual for your scheduled activity.
- Inform the organization of any questions or concerns you have. Any disputes, questions, or comments regarding policy and procedures should be discussed privately with our team and never directly with a senior.
- Follow AAAPP's policies and procedures.
- Be able to work with a diverse population, respecting cultural differences; Treat seniors kindly and with respect at all times.
- Use effective listening skills
- Respect the confidentiality of everyone you serve.
- Maintain a positive attitude and professional demeanor while volunteering.
- Provide feedback on the connection made with the seniors in a timely manner.
- Most of all, have fun while you bring value and a connection to your activity or senior!

Volunteer Pledge

When working with seniors, I must remember that I should have:

- An awareness of my own attitudes, feelings and prejudices and ensure that they do not interfere as I offer help to others.
- An understanding that people may react to situations differently than we do.
- An appreciation that people are different in physical and emotional makeup, family background, education and life experiences. Individuals are alike in their basic needs to be loved, to have security, to feel adequate, to achieve and to be recognized.
- An insight that people form attitudes based on how they see a situation.

- A realization that people want to control their own lives and make their own decisions.
- An understanding that help can be difficult to ask for so it should be met with kindness and understanding.
- An appreciation that each person has personal needs and may react in a manner that attempts to meet them.
- An understanding that a person's response may have little to do with me as a person. He/she may be reflecting worries and concerns that have no bearing on the current problem presented.
- An acceptance of people as they are and where they are with their problems.
- A want to meet people where they are now and not where we think they should be.

Background Screening

Volunteers undergo a level two background screening. As a volunteer, it is your responsibility to notify the AAAPP of an arrest or criminal charge placed against you while actively volunteering for AAAPP. You may be asked to complete the level two background screening again during your time as an active volunteer. AAAPP incurs the cost for all background screenings.

AAAPP does not background check seniors it serves. Later on, this handbook lists volunteer dos and don'ts (page 16). This list will help you set boundaries and maintain a professional relationship with your assigned senior(s). It is for the protection of our volunteers and seniors that AAAPP's policies and procedures require maintaining a professional relationship.

Training

Volunteers will receive an orientation to AAAPP, program specific training, and the supervision needed to serve in a safe and effective manner. Training topics may include confidentiality, HIPAA, elder abuse awareness, age sensitivity, and cultural sensitivity. Training may be done virtually, in person, or via recording. In addition to the program training that takes place during volunteer on-boarding, additional trainings may be scheduled should a need be identified.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is extremely important to AAAPP and the seniors we serve. We are required to safeguard senior information and privacy. As a volunteer you might be exposed to senior information which is confidential and personal. This information must not be disclosed to others outside the organization without prior written consent from the senior. Information should only be shared with those who have a need to know.

Volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement during the application process acknowledging that they have read and understand their responsibilities to protect confidential information.

Your personal information is also private and confidential and will not be shared without your written consent. Any information about seniors that you may become privileged to as a result of your volunteer position is confidential and may not be discussed with others. Your personal information (name, address, phone number) may not be disclosed, and will not be provided to anyone unless specifically authorized by you.

HIPAA

AAAPP is required to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). This applies to staff and volunteers.

What is HIPAA?

HIPAA is a federal law that protects an individual's right to the privacy and security of their protected health information (PHI).

What kind of health information is protected under HIPAA?

The type of health information that is protected under HIPAA includes any personal information that can be linked to a specific individual, such as: name, address, employer, job description, relatives' names, date of birth, telephone number, email address, social security number and medical record number. Job information PHI also includes financial and health information that can be linked to a specific individual, such as: billing information, insurance coverage, illness description or diagnosis, medications, tests results, observations about the individual's condition, past health conditions or treatments, discharge planning and genetic information.

How does a volunteer comply with HIPAA requirements?

Volunteers should provide senior information to only those people with an authorized "need to know" to perform their jobs. They should use and share or release only the minimum necessary information to perform their jobs without compromising senior care. Before viewing or releasing information to someone, volunteers should ask themselves if they or the other person really need the information to perform their jobs accurately and adequately.

What are some examples of HIPAA violations?

- Sharing a senior's PHI with any individual who does not need to know it, such as another senior or an employee or volunteer who does not work with the senior.
- Gossiping about or discussing a senior's PHI anywhere at any time.
- Sharing a senior's PHI with your friends or family members.

- Mentioning to your friends, family or coworkers that an individual is enrolled in a program.
- Sharing PHI information that you accidentally overhear.
- Leaving a senior's PHI out in plain view where other people can see it.
- Not placing PHI in a locked file cabinet.
- Discarding PHI paperwork without shredding it.
- Sharing PHI with a senior's friends or family members without that senior's permission.
- Emailing PHI to and from private email addresses.

What are the penalties for violating HIPAA privacy and security regulations?

Protecting seniors' privacy and security is a federal law carrying penalties for violations. The penalties for noncompliance are based on the level of negligence and can range from \$100 to \$50,000 per violation (or per record), with a maximum penalty of \$1.5 million per year for civil violations. Criminal penalties for wrongful disclosure of PHI can include large fines and incarceration for up to 10 years. AAAPP requires all volunteers to diligently adhere to HIPAA policies. Volunteers sign the HIPAA Training and Confidentiality Pledge as part of the application process.

When in doubt, contact the AAAPP staff!

Americans with Disabilities Act

AAAPP is committed to providing reasonable accommodation(s) when necessary to qualified individuals with disabilities, or any other persons entitled to reasonable accommodations under applicable law, unless doing so imposes an undue hardship on AAAPP or the individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others in the workplace. In general, it is a volunteer's responsibility to notify the AAAPP staff or the Executive Director of the need for accommodation.

Conduct

General Conduct

- Any person serving as a volunteer is providing services to AAAPP on an at-will basis. This means there is no employment relationship and volunteer services can be cancelled or terminated at any time without notice with or without just cause.
- During the execution of volunteer duties, volunteers should refrain from using profanity and are prohibited from drinking alcohol or taking illegal substances.
- Solicitations of any kind (such as political, religious, money-making endeavors, etc.) are not allowed while performing volunteer duties for AAAPP. Senior information may not be used for personal gain.
- Volunteers should not perform volunteer duties if they are on legally prescribed

medications that impair them mentally or physically.

- Listen to support, not to problem solve (see page 5)

Volunteers who are unresponsive to the AAAPP's staff's phone and email outreach for two consecutive weeks will be terminated from the program.

Change in Contact Information

Change of contact information should be communicated to the AAAPP staff as soon as possible. If you change your address, phone number or email address and do not inform us, we have no way to get in contact with you about important issues or changes we are making to the program.

Discrimination and Harassment

AAAPP maintains a strict policy prohibiting discrimination or harassment of employees and volunteers based on race, color, sex including sexual preference, gender identity and gender expression, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or other protected status by other employees, vendors, seniors, volunteers or guests.

It is AAAPP' policy to provide a workplace that does not tolerate harassment of employees, volunteers, visitors, or seniors; or the display of violent, aggressive or threatening behavior. Harassing behavior may be, but is not limited to, physical, verbal, or visual harassment. Volunteers who believe they have been harassed during the course of performing their assigned duties, including by persons doing business with or for AAAPP, should provide a written complaint to the program supervisor, as soon as possible. The complaint should include details of the incident(s), names of individuals involved, and the names of any witnesses. All incidents of harassment that are reported must and will be investigated. Any volunteer who makes a false claim of harassment may face disciplinary actions.

Conduct Violations

Following the *Dos and Don'ts* below are key to maintaining a professional relationship with your senior(s).

Volunteers who commit minor violations of policy and procedure will be verbally counseled to achieve acceptable compliance. Continued violations may result in additional counseling or dismissal. Serious violations (providing personal contact information; elder abuse; abusive, threatening, harassing behavior to staff or seniors; possession of drugs or weapons; disclosure of confidential information, etc.)

will result in the immediate termination of the volunteer. AAAPP maintains the discretion to terminate volunteers with no verbal or written warning.

Senior Interactions

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be a good listener• Express concern and caring• Be consistent and dependable• Establish boundaries, i.e., visiting or calling timeframe• Accept the senior as he or she is, not as you would wish him or her to be• Use active listening• Use AAAPP as a resource for consultation and support; and,• Realize and accept that you are not alone• Ask the senior how they like to be addressed; Mr. or Mrs., first name, etc.• Be professional and respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept money or gifts; provide money or gifts• Give your home address or personal contact information (email, phone number, etc.) to the senior• Text or email the senior• Get involved in the senior's family conflicts or take sides• Share your problems with the senior• Provide transportation• Be involved in the senior's finances• Tell the senior what to do• Make decisions for the senior• Present yourself to professionals as senior's proxy.• Do not speak to the media on behalf of AAAPP or the senior.

Reach out to the AAAPP staff as soon as possible

- When you realize that boundaries are starting to shift from professional to personal
- If your senior is not respecting your professional boundaries

The AAAPP staff will help you navigate back to a professional relationship, can provide the best language to help you set and maintain a professional relationship, and remind your senior of the program's policies and procedures.

Resignation

We want volunteers to enjoy a long tenure at AAAPP; however, you are free to end your volunteer service at any time. Because your service is so important to the

program and agency, we request that you provide at least two weeks' notice of your departure to the AAAPP staff, followed by verbal notice to your senior on your next scheduled call.

Goodbyes are not easy. If you want to talk about how to notify your senior on your next scheduled call, please reach out to the AAAPP staff a minimum of one workday before the call.

If a volunteer's resignation is due to an unanticipated event that does not allow for two weeks' notice (ex: medical emergency, etc.), the AAAPP staff will work with you to determine the best way to notify your senior.

Pausing for Self-Care

Leave of absences do not require a specific event (ex: travel, family visiting, etc.) A leave of absence may be requested for any reason, including for self-care.

AAAPP believes self-care is not a selfish act. Self-care is critical to prevent illness, preserve mental health, and avoid burnout. Most don't make time for self-care because we are too busy caring for others, we feel guilty about taking time to look after ourselves, or we feel ashamed something is impeding our ability to meet commitments.

Signs of Burnout may include:

- Feelings of dread or anxiety in lead up to next call
- Frustration when senior does not answer that intensifies over time
- Finding reasons not to call
- Apathy/boredom/dismissal towards what senior is sharing
- Feeling relieved if senior does not answer
- Feeling happy when it is not a call day

If you start to feel these signs, or other signs, of burnout, please reach out to the AAAPP staff! These are signs that you need a break and/or need a re-match.

Volunteer and Employee Relations

AAAPP recognizes the important role both employees and volunteers play in the successful delivery of services to our seniors. To that end, we will try to create an environment that will be mutually beneficial to the staff and volunteers. It is important that both employees and volunteers be pleasant, professional and efficient in the performance of their respective duties. If you encounter any problems or

difficulties that you are not able to resolve, bring them to the attention of the program's supervisor or the AAAPP staff. We ask that you do not discuss such issues with employees or other volunteers.

Equipment and Supplies

Volunteers providing administrative support may be provided with the equipment and supplies needed to perform assigned duties. If there is anything you think we should use, or that you would like us to consider providing, please reach out to the AAAPP staff. While we cannot guarantee we will get the item(s) we will take it under advisement. Cooperation is needed in caring for and returning the equipment. Safe handling practices are required. Any equipment or supplies obtained shall not be used for personal advantage. Unauthorized use of electronic resources is prohibited, as is utilizing same for personal reasons while on volunteer duty

Abandonment of Duties

In addition to the above, volunteers may be terminated for abandonment of duties. This is when a volunteer fails to attend their activity without notifying the AAAPP staff or the senior. The first instance of abandonment of duties will result in a verbal warning, second a written warning, and third instance may result in termination.

AAAPP Office Policies

Smoking

The AAAPP office is a smoke-free and vape-free environment. There is a designated smoking area on the grounds.

Safety

When at the AAAPP office, ensure you have signed in at the front desk so that you will be included in any emergency measures required while you are present. If you are injured while on-site, report the injury immediately to the on-site Manager on Duty and the AAAPP staff. All injuries, no matter how minor they may appear to be, should be reported. This is important to ensure you receive proper and timely medical treatment, and to correct any unsafe condition.

Emergencies

Emergencies can occur at any time. An emergency is any situation that requires immediate assistance from the police, fire department or ambulatory services; such as medical emergencies (chest pain, difficulty breathing, profuse bleeding, etc.), a fire, a crime, etc. In an emergency, volunteers should not hesitate to call 911 immediately and report the emergency to the Manager on Duty or front office assistant.

As part of the application process, all volunteers sign a liability waiver in case of an emergency. This acknowledges that you are aware of the risk involved in volunteering with AAAPP and that you will not hold AAAPP liable for any injuries that may take place while you are volunteering.

Accident/Incident Reporting

In the event an accident should happen, or an illness should occur while on AAAPP property, CALL 911, if required. Make sure you inform the AAAPP staff. If a minor injury occurs while you are volunteering on-site, there is a first aid kit located in the kitchen area/break room. Please use extreme caution to avoid contact with any body fluids when administering first aid. Each first aid kit contains plastic gloves. Please be sure to use them. If this is not possible, use a strong disinfectant or liquid bleach to clean up afterwards.

Media Release

During the application process, AAAPP requested permission to use your name, photograph(s), video, likeness, and audio tapes, artwork, creative writing and/or information for the purpose of illustrating organization programs and services in material including print, television, radio, video and internet/web. Volunteers may decline to give consent.

Personal Property

Please try to avoid bringing valuables on the property. If you do, please take them home with you when you leave. AAAPP does not accept any liability for the loss of, or damage to, personal property brought onto the premises. Investigations will be carried out on matters brought to the staff's notice. Personal property may not be covered under AAAPP's insurance policies.

Feedback Opportunities

Suggestions

AAAPP appreciates suggestions to improve operations, employee/volunteer relations, and senior/volunteer relations. Please communicate suggestions which you believe may improve your volunteer experience to the AAAPP staff.

Staff Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact the AAAPP staff Hours of Operation for all numbers are Monday-Friday 8am to 5pm

Geralyn Fortney
SHINE Program Manager
(727) 570-9696 x234

geralyn.fortney@aaapp.org

Suicide Attempts or Threats

If the volunteer is in contact with a senior who has expressed threats to commit suicide or has or is in the process of attempting suicide, there are some specific steps you will need to take. The volunteer should clearly and directly ask if the senior has a plan.

If the answer is "yes," the volunteer must relay they are concerned for the senior's safety and are going to call 911 to request assistance. The volunteer should relay they are going to have to hang up. **The volunteer should hang up and dial 911**, making sure to provide the emergency contact's information.

As soon as possible, contact the AAAPP staff to provide information about the situation. The AAAPP staff will contact the senior's emergency contact and inform them of the situation.

Mental Health Concerns to Report

Depression is one of the most common mental health problems of older adults.

Some symptoms of depression include:

- Decrease or increase in appetite; changes in weight.
- Depressed mood lasting longer than two weeks.
- Feelings of worthlessness, inappropriate guilt, helplessness; thoughts of suicide (NO plan)
- Social withdrawal; loss of interest in things that used to be enjoyable.
- Trouble handling finances or working with numbers.
- Unexplained fatigue, energy loss or sleep changes.

Delirium symptoms would also be one to note in the after-call log, as well as to heavily encourage the senior to call their doctor or 911. Delirium is sometimes mistaken for dementia or Alzheimer's. Delirium is marked by a sudden change in mental status or sudden confusion that develops over hours to days. **Urinary tract infections are a common cause of delirium in older adults.** Some of the symptoms include:

- Agitation, restlessness, anxiety, hallucinations.
- Sleepy, hard to respond, decreased responsiveness, withdrawal and flat affect

Elder Abuse Awareness and Reporting

Elders have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Elders have the right to control their finances and property. All Florida citizens and, thereby all AAAPP volunteers, are mandated to report suspected abuse.

If while volunteering you suspect that someone is a victim of abuse, neglect or exploitation, you are required to report it. Notify the AAAPP staff first, they will support you in making the report. All calls are confidential. Be prepared to provide a description of the incident; **you do not have to prove it**. The Adult Protective Services (APS) hotline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by calling 1-800-962-2873 (1-800-ABUSE). Press 1 to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of the elderly or a vulnerable adult. Or report online at this website: <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/Adult/AdultForm.aspx>

Elder abuse can be a cause of health changes in some older adults. There are five major categories that constitute elder abuse. They are:

1. **Physical abuse** – including kicking, punching, slapping and rape.
2. **Neglect** – failing to provide medicine, food or personal care. This can also be self-neglect when there are concerns that a senior cannot care for themselves without assistance.
3. **Financial exploitation** – stealing, mismanaging money, property, savings or credit cards.
4. **Psychological abuse** – threatening, isolating and intentionally withholding emotional support.
5. **Violation of rights** – strictly controlling behavior, keeping a person essentially as a prisoner, confining a person.

Remember:

- Elders have the right to not be yelled at and Elders have the right not to be threatened
- Elders have the right to control their finances and property
- Elders should know that no one has the right to hit them, to treat them like a child or to humiliate them
- Elders should know no one has the right to take their money or hurt them

If you suspect any of these abuses are taking place with your senior, notify the AAAPP staff who will support you in calling Adult Protective Services (APS) at

1-800-962-2873

IF SUSPECTED ABUSE OCCURS WHILE ON A CALL – CALL 911

Hearing Impairment

Hearing loss is the most common condition in older adults. Effective approaches when working with seniors with hearing impairment are:

- Speak slowly and clearly, using brief and simple sentences
- Deepening the pitch of your voice can help
- Enunciate your words slowly
- Reduce background noise as much as possible, it can be very distracting
- Ask if they have a hearing aid (it may be in a drawer somewhere)

Speech Impairment

Sensory, cognitive and neurological factors play a role in speech changes and communication skills in older adults.

- If it is difficult to understand the older adult's speech, listen carefully, and ask the person to repeat things when you do not understand
- Stay relaxed. Give time for response
- Ask "yes" or "no" questions in an attempt to understand something he/she has said
- If the older adult uses little or no speech, do not stop talking to the person. Follow the lead of the older adult

ACTIVE LISTENING is a way of listening and responding to another person that develops mutual understanding. It is a structured form of listening that focuses attention on the speaker and what is actually being said. Showing that you understand what has been said by repeating key points back or asking questions that are useful to the conversation is a way of indicating you understood what the person meant.

EMPATHY means understanding the *feelings* of another and being able to imagine yourself in their situation. It is different from sympathy. Sympathy is when you share the feeling of another.

A PERSONABLE APPROACH means being friendly without being unprofessional. This is a true "human-to-human" conversation. Using your first name is an effective way of showing openness; however, make sure you have asked the senior how they want to be addressed.

SIMPLICITY is important. Use the same types of words as the senior. Use short simple sentences and avoid jargon, unless your senior and you speak the same language.

TONE of voice is very important. Match your tone and the pace of your words with

those of the senior. Although sometimes an opposite tone (for example, slower and lower) can calm a senior who is in distress.

STEERING or guiding the conversation is sometimes needed to keep things on track without interrupting the senior.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS are phrased as a statement which requires a response. This allows the person responding to share their thoughts and feelings about the subject.