



Top Tips for Working with Volunteers

Be appreciative.

This might go without saying, but it is one of the most important things to remember. CommunityHealth could not exist without our volunteers, who willingly give their free time to support the clinic. Make sure to thank your volunteers often, point out when you see they've accomplished something / improved on a skill, and tell them they did a great job of sticking it out when wrapping up an especially hectic clinic.

Be patient.

You are likely to hear the same question many times, very possibly from the same person. There is a lot to remember at CommunityHealth – you may find this to be the case, yourself! – and our volunteers spend just a few hours with us each month. Just remember, the more confident your volunteers are in what they are doing, the more effective they will be.

Provide context.

Any time you are asking a volunteer to help with something or providing instructions, be sure to tell them why. Even the most menial task can feel rewarding to a volunteer when they understand the larger picture of what they are supporting. Providing context will also increase your chances of avoiding the repeated-question situation mentioned above!

Don't be afraid to ask.

Though our volunteers are donating their time, they are doing so to help us, so do not be afraid to give them directions. In some cases, your volunteers may have been working with CommunityHealth/in the healthcare industry longer than you. Do not let this dissuade you from taking a leadership role and asking them to help or making suggestions when necessary.

Get to know your volunteers.

Many of our volunteers have been working with CommunityHealth/in the healthcare industry for several years and have a wealth of experience to share. Those who are new to the game bring expertise to the table as well. Take time to get to know your volunteers. Not only will this make for a more social and enjoyable atmosphere, it will also help you play to your volunteers' strengths and help you navigate the balance between recognizing veteran volunteers' experience and acting as a leader.

Encourage communication and feedback.

Check in with volunteers at the end of a shift when possible, especially if you know it was a tough one. Ask how things are going. Let them know to come to you with any concerns. The more we reinforce this, the more volunteers will feel comfortable approaching us with important issues. Volunteers are, after all, the ones in the trenches every day, having experiences we as supervisors may totally miss out on.

Relay information.

As volunteer supervisors, you are the closest contacts to the volunteers making our work possible. Please communicate any absences, concerns, questions, success stories, etc., to your supervisor(s) and to the Manager of Volunteer Services. You can help us all make sure that we are supporting our volunteers as best we can and recognizing their accomplishments whenever possible.