



VOLUNTEERING SERIES

Interpersonal Volunteering: At the Heart of Who We Are as Humans

RETIREMENT AS SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Interpersonal volunteering is defined as developing **genuine relationships**, being **attentive and comforting**, and offering **support** to a person or group of people of any age. The goal is to provide emotional and social support as well as a kind presence.

Individuals can build genuine relationships and positive connections. They can develop trust and open up to each other, which alleviates isolation and facilitates referrals to various resources. Interpersonal volunteering also contributes to strengthening the social network and fosters feelings of belonging to the community.

Types of Interpersonal Volunteering

Interpersonal volunteering can be done in person or online; there are various types (one-off or ongoing) and different objectives are targeted.

EXAMPLES	OBJECTIVES
Helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand an individual's psychological distress.• Offer emotional support and resources• Support the person in their search to identify solutions (for example, women victims of domestic violence, abuse and mistreatment of older adults, suicidal individuals, parents, grandparents, natural caregivers)
Friendship visits once you have been matched with someone	Alleviate loneliness and isolation for people of any age
Accompany a person to recreational, cultural or sport activities	Facilitate integration of the individual into a group or recreational activity in their community
Intergenerational pairing activities between an older adult and a child who has no grandparents	Enable a child to experience having a grand-parent through an adult substitute
Accompany a person at end of life	Provide support and comfort to a person who is sick and in the last stage of his or her life



Skill Needed to Engage in Useful and Enriching Interpersonal Volunteering

- Strong interest in human relations
- Capacity for active listening and involvement in a non-directive helping relationship
- Capacity to exercise vigilance
- Ability to recognize your limits
- Capacity to put yourself in the other person's shoes
- Capacity to adapt
- Maturity
- Patience
- Autonomy
- Creativity

Active listening helps people make their way through a specific time in their lives, become aware of their own strengths and resources, and find their own solutions.

Listen beyond what is being said.

Organizations that offer interpersonal volunteering services provide **training and support** for volunteers to develop their skills and share their experiences. This training may also be helpful in their personal lives.



BENEFITS OF INTERPERSONAL VOLUNTEERING

- Give meaning to your life by helping another person find meaning to theirs.
- Set aside your own concerns by focusing on another person.
- Make a difference in someone else's life.
- Offer a glimmer of hope in a world in crisis.

Be Vigilant of Compassion Fatigue

Being confronted with human suffering for long periods of time can sometimes provoke emotional burnout. In these cases, many organizations provide support and training to help you prevent compassion fatigue.

This project for active retirement is part of a larger project, the Plan d'impact collectif – Réseau Résilience Aîné.es Montréal (RRAM) that aims to foster resilience, inclusion and social participation of seniors in Montréal.



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Les
Petits
Frères Pour un
grand âge
bien entouré



RÉSEAU
RÉSILIENCE
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