



Volunteer Ethics and Rules

Bethany House Services is committed to providing quality emergency shelter and housing for homeless and at risk families. Through comprehensive programs, we seek to restore our participants' personal dignity and independence. We actively promote community response, legislative change, and the networking of resources, which will provide creative solutions to the problems of homelessness and poverty in a holistic mode of empowerment.

Volunteers join us in providing these vital services to families. The well-being of our shelter guests and program participants is a responsibility we all share. The following ethical considerations and rules serve as a framework in assuring the safety and well-being of all adults and children served by Bethany House Services. The well-being of staff and volunteers is also a responsibility we seek to address through these rules.

1. Bethany House Services maintains a policy of confidentiality regarding shelter guest and program participant information. Volunteers will not have access to case files unless it is under the supervision of Program Directors.
2. Volunteers will hold as confidential all information obtained directly or indirectly about shelter guests, program participants, their families, or staff. Volunteers will not seek to obtain confidential information from a shelter guest or program participant. Volunteers must understand that intentional or involuntary violation of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including termination by Bethany House Services and/or possible legal action by others (i.e. shelter guests, program participants, family members, etc.).
3. All counseling and case management is to be handled by social workers or counselors. Volunteers are not to contact relatives or any outside agency personnel independently of any counselors or social workers.
4. Volunteer contacts with former and present shelter guests or program participants shall occur only at program facilities unless specifically arranged through a Program Director. Volunteers are not permitted to have shelter guests or program participants in their home nor should they give their home, work or cell phone numbers to them. This is considered a violation of boundaries appropriate to the volunteer setting.
5. Volunteers should not lend personal property or money to shelter guests or program participants.
6. Bethany House Services requires that alternative methods of discipline be used with children in our service programs. Striking a child of any age is forbidden. Other physical or verbal abuse is also prohibited. If there is need for discipline, the volunteer should consult with the Bethany House Services staff members on duty at the time of such situations. They will engage in behavioral modification with the child and the parent.

7. The Program Directors should be informed immediately of any serious events in any program with shelter guests, program participants, or any other paid or volunteer staff.
8. Possession of illegal drugs or alcohol while in a program is grounds for immediate dismissal. Discussions of illegal drug use or alcohol use by volunteers around guests or program participants are inappropriate.
9. Shelter guests and program participants should always experience volunteers in the most positive light, as role models.
10. Any inappropriate contact between volunteers and staff, volunteers and shelter guests and/or program participants or volunteers with other volunteers (such as arguing, flirting, etc.), is detrimental to shelter guests and program participants and will not be permitted.
11. Making or receiving sexual advances to shelter guests and/or program participants is also grounds for immediate dismissal. In addition, criminal charges may be filed.
12. Seductive behavior or flirting of any kind will not be tolerated. Seductiveness is more subtle but when detected through observation, will be confronted. Either behavior will not be tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal.
13. There is to be NO PHOTOGRAPHING of the women or children in our programs without prior consent from the Shelter Director or Director of Client Services and the written permission of our guests and participants.