



# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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**Next Step Ministries**

#200 317-37 Ave, NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 6P6



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# WELCOME

Thank you for volunteering with Next Step Ministries! Volunteers are vital to our ministry and community; we couldn't do this without you. We would love to find a place here for you and your unique gifts.

## MISSION & VALUES




NSM seeks to walk alongside women exiting sexual exploitation as they break the cycles of addiction and abuse. Our goal at NSM is to provide a safe place for every woman impacted by sexual exploitation. We believe that everyone deserves to know that they are loved by God, loved by people, and have choices.

*"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

Micah 6:8 (NIV)



## NSM ANCHORS

-  **Love each woman for who she is.**
-  **Provide trauma-informed care and recovery for participants.**
-  **Ensure a wholistic healthy (physical, mental, spiritual) environment for participants, staff and volunteers.**

## INCLUSION

NSM is an inclusive organization that seeks to provide community regardless of faith, ethnicity, cultural background, age, intelligence, socio-economic status, sex, gender identity, colour, and ability. NSM recognizes diversity as a strength and aspires to have diverse Representatives that come together in unity to serve those impacted by sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.





# VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITY

First complete a volunteer application and an interview with the Volunteer & Community Coordinator. After your interview, you will be asked to complete the following:

- [Personnel Agreement and Covenant of Care](#)
- [Confidentiality Agreement](#)
- [Vulnerable Sector Check](#) from the last 3 years (discount provided)
- [Driver's Declaration](#) and driving record (if applicable)

All new volunteers are required to complete Volunteer Training 101, a 1.5 hour online overview of Next Step Ministries, sexual exploitation and compassion fatigue resiliency. Please contact the Volunteer/Community Engagement Coordinator for the next training. Additionally, a volunteer is required to report any and all suspicions of abuse if working with Participants.

## VOLUNTEER ROLES

NSM is committed to placing our volunteers in positions that highlight individual gifts and skills. Please note, however, that not all volunteers will be able to work with our Participants.



# VOLUNTEER ROLES

*Select volunteer role to view volunteer description.*

- [Day Program Volunteer](#)
- [Volunteer Driver](#)
- [Parlour Outreach Volunteer](#)
- [Social Enterprise Volunteer](#)
- [Live-In Volunteer](#)
- [Events Based Volunteer](#)
- [Community Dinner Volunteer](#)
- [Administrative Volunteer](#)
- [Prayer Team Volunteer](#)
- [Follow-Care Volunteer](#)



# VOLUNTEER POLICY

- If policy, as outlined in this handbook (including the appendices), is violated, then Next Step Ministries reserves the right to terminate the volunteer/organization relationship.
- No male is ever to be alone with a female participant, including but not limited to: at home, in a classroom, or in a vehicle.
- Connecting with participants on social media is prohibited. If you are already connected to a participant, disclose this to your program lead (see Appendix C, 'Multiple-Role Relationship Policy').
- If a volunteer chooses to purchase anything beyond what is specifically asked by NSM, they will be expected to pay out of their pocket without reimbursement.
- We understand some people engage with pornography. If you are actively engaging in pornography, you will be unable to volunteer at NSM in order to protect our participants. We also understand that there are barriers in abstaining from pornography that can be difficult to overcome. We will walk with you and offer our support where we can. Your journey matters to us.



# CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is a matter of personal and Participant safety. Volunteers must keep all revealing information confidential, including, but not limited to, house location, classroom location, any identifying features of Participants, etc. All volunteers are required to sign our confidentiality agreement before the start of their volunteer role.

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*  
Luke 4:18-19 (NIV)

# CONTACT INFORMATION

- Office Email: [info@nextstepministries.ca](mailto:info@nextstepministries.ca)
- Office Phone (8:30am-4:30pm Mon-Fri): [403-520-8080](tel:403-520-8080)
- [Our Website](#)



## **Appendix A: Conflict Resolution Procedures**

Next Step Ministries will act expediently if problems do occur, and all individuals will be treated with fairness, respect, and consistency. All volunteers are encouraged to bring forward any complaints or recommendations to their Program Lead and/or the Volunteer & Community Coordinator dealing with safety, health standards, proper working conditions, performance appraisals, discipline, and fair management practices, without fear of reprisal.

We recognize that at times one volunteer may have a conflict with another NSM personnel member, or they may feel that the leadership has made a mistake. To resolve these circumstances, a volunteer should bring the problem(s) to the attention of their program lead and/or the Volunteer & Community Coordinator.

When conflict arises, or there is a problem, NSM will follow a pattern of Conflict Resolution. If there is a problem, this is what the volunteer should do:

### **Between Fellow Volunteers**

The volunteer is to go to the other person first, in an effort to discuss the situation and resolve the conflict without discussing the matter with anyone except the person involved. If they are not heard, or if the problem cannot be resolved, the next step is to go to the Program Lead. If the employee is not satisfied with how they have been heard or treated, and the conflict has not been resolved, the Volunteer & Community Coordinator's door is always open.

### **Between a Volunteer and their Program Lead**

Following the pattern outlined above, the volunteer should go to their Program Lead first. Then, upon failure to resolve the conflict, it should be brought to the attention of the Volunteer & Community Coordinator, at which time the Volunteer & Community Coordinator will arrange a meeting with the appropriate parties to review the information and a decision will be rendered in writing within 2 weeks.

### **Dismissal**

Grounds for dismissal include reaching the end date of the volunteer position, reassessment/re-evaluation by the Program Lead has revealed that the volunteer role is no longer mutually beneficial for the volunteer or the organization, not satisfactorily performing assigned duties, or failure to comply with policies. Failure to comply with policy is grounds to be dismissed from any and all volunteer positions effective immediately.

In the event of dismissal of a volunteer from their role, the Program Lead(s) will discuss with them why the role is not working out, referring back to the original expectations on the volunteer. The Volunteer & Community Coordinator will then offer an exit interview for the volunteer to debrief their role and offer any feedback regardless of reason for dismissal unless it is immediately threatening to the well-being and safety of either party. If the role was not suited for the volunteer and the policy has been upheld, the Volunteer & Community Coordinator will work with them to find another suitable area of volunteering within the organization.

## **Appendix B: Code of Conduct**

All volunteers and staff are expected to meet the Code of Conduct of Next Step Ministries.

Staff and volunteers shall fulfill their obligations and responsibilities in alignment with the values of Next Step Ministries.

Staff and volunteers shall serve participants in a conscientious, diligent, and compassionate manner.

Staff and volunteers shall treat each other with respect and work cooperatively. They should treat Next Step Ministries, its services, and programs with dignity and respect. They should conduct themselves in a manner conducive to the well-being of Next Step Ministries and its participants.

Participation as a staff or volunteer of Next Step Ministries is subject to the following policies being observed and carried out. Any participant or staff member who violates this Code of Conduct at any time is subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

### **Language**

All staff and volunteers are expected to use language that demonstrates respect. Abusive language towards any staff member, volunteer or participant is strictly prohibited.

### **Harassment**

Verbal, physical and/or sexual harassment of participants, staff members or volunteers is strictly prohibited.

### **Cooperation**

Failure to cooperate with a program lead will not be tolerated.

### **Violence**

Actual or threatened violence towards any staff, volunteer, participant, or property of Next Step Ministries will not be tolerated.

### **Conflict of Interest**

Staff and volunteers must act in the best interests of Next Step Ministries and its participants. Staff and volunteers should be aware of real and potential conflicts of interest. It is prohibited to act on private interests that could improperly influence the performance of one's personal responsibilities and duties within the organization. Staff and volunteers should carry out their duties without any intention of obtaining direct or indirect benefit.

### **Representing the Organization**

Staff and volunteers must act as ambassadors and representatives of Next Step Ministries in the performance of their duties, in accordance with their written position descriptions and the organization's policies and procedures.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff and volunteers shall protect the privacy of participants and hold in confidence all professionally



acquired information concerning participants, paid staff, board members and volunteers. They shall disclose such information only when legally or professionally obligated to do so.

### **Alcohol/Drugs/Smoking**

The use, purchase or sale of alcohol or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited while on duty or on the premises of Next Step Ministries.

Paraphernalia associated with alcohol or illegal drugs is also prohibited from being in the possession of a staff or volunteer while on Next Step Ministries' premises.

All staff and volunteers are prohibited from being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, which impair performance and judgment while carrying out their duties.

All staff and volunteers must follow any anti-smoking laws and organization regulations.

### **Dangerous or Unauthorized Materials**

Bringing dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms, weapons or other similar items onto Next Step Ministries' premises is strictly prohibited.

### **Dress Code**

At all times while performing their duties, all staff and volunteers must dress in a manner that is appropriate to:

- Their assigned responsibilities
- Safety considerations
- Weather conditions
- Representing the image of the organization

### **Acceptance of Gifts**

All staff and volunteers are discouraged from taking gifts from Participants. Borrowing money from Participants is absolutely prohibited.

## **Appendix C: Multiple-Role Relationship Policy**

### **Boundaries Regarding Multiple-Role Relationships with Participants**

A multiple-role relationship (MRR), or dual relationship, is a relationship with a participant or former participant outside the working or therapeutic relationship. Such relationships can be simultaneous or consecutive and may be personal, social, financial, or business in nature. Examples of multiple-role relationships are when the client is a participant as well as a student, friend, family member, employee, or business associate of the NSM personnel.

In general, those working with participants are discouraged from entering a multiple-role relationship as it may impair objectivity, competence, or effectiveness in performing one's working duties and could harm the working relationship. Example: an NSM personnel who works with a participant as a part of their job and takes a participant to church on Sunday in a different role.

Our organization and those working with participants at NSM possess a "fiduciary" relationship with our participants – for any NSM personnel who interact with participants. This means that we have agreed to act on their behalf and are legally bound to put their interests ahead of our own.

Since NSM participants and alumni may have self-esteem challenges and have experienced relational violations, maintaining and modelling boundaries is critical for their protection and growth. As a Christian environment, it is crucial to exemplify boundaries and respect our participants and NSM personnel in this way.

The Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice governing both Registered Social Workers and Counselling Therapists / Psychologists in Alberta have strict guidelines to protect both participants and clinicians. These are rooted in best practices and thus can and should be extended to all NSM personnel.

### **Policy**

Borrowing from the Alberta College of Social Worker's Standards of Practice (2019):

- A) NSM personnel will act to ensure that the difference between working and personal relationships with participants is explicitly understood and respected and that the NSM representative's behaviour is appropriate to this difference.
- B) Due to the potential for power imbalance or harm, it is considered generally inappropriate for a NSM personnel to:
  - a. Enter into a working relationship when the worker and participant have a present or previous familial, social, emotional, financial, supervisory, teacher/student, administrative, or legal relationship.
- C) If a multiple-role relationship develops and is disclosed after the working relationship is initiated, the NSM personnel will seek immediate supervision regarding the relationship and:
  - a. Consider the potential conflict of interest in discussion with the supervisor.
  - b. Discuss the consequences of the multiple-role relationship with the participant.
  - c. Terminate the working relationship if it is in the participant's best interests to do so; and



- d. If appropriate, assist the participant in obtaining services from another worker or another agency.
  - e. If the NSM personnel continues to provide services when the multiple-role relationship exists, they must immediately and fully disclose the situation with their direct supervisor by filling out the MRR Disclosure Form. From there, the NSM personnel must seek regular supervision with their supervisor regarding the nature of the interactions to gather further instructions and document this information in the participants record in SUMAC. Early disclosure helps protect NSM personnel and provides an opportunity to mitigate risks for both parties.
- D) The NSM personnel will document in SUMAC all actions taken, the reasons for the actions, and the client's response.
- E) In ALL cases when a multiple-role relationship exists, the NSM personnel is solely responsible for ensuring that boundaries are maintained and that the nature of the client-worker relationship is protected.
- F) Where an NSM personnel's personal circumstances result in frequent contact with participants outside the work setting, at the earliest opportunity, the NSM personnel will take reasonable measures to discuss with participants how contacts outside the working context will be managed to protect the participants' interests. Such as setting boundaries and expectations around the difference between each role.
- G) Emergency situation: The ethical obligation to provide services in an emergency to a participant may override the general rule that multiple-role relationships are inappropriate if:
  - a. There is no other professional and/or support available to provide the services; or
  - b. Harm would come to the participant if the NSM personnel does not provide support
- H) Factors to minimally consider in determining whether there is more than a minimal risk of harm or power imbalance include:
  - a. Does the participant understand the inherent power imbalance that typically exists in a working relationship (staff, volunteer, contractor)?
  - b. Is the client able to recognize and maintain healthy boundaries?
  - c. Given the nature and extent of the working relationship, has sufficient time passed since the end of the working relationship?
  - d. What is the nature of the participant's presenting and current issues?
  - e. What type of services have been provided by the NSM personnel? How long and intense was the working relationship with the participant? Note that the more intensive the 'treatment', the greater the risk to the participant.
  - f. Has the participant confided close personal or sexual information to the worker?
  - g. What is the participant's level or degree of emotional dependence on the worker?
  - h. How vulnerable is the participant (factors to consider, but not limited to age, identity, ability, socio-economic status, etc.)?
- I) Given the often-cyclical nature of NSM involvement with various NSM programs, any NSM personnel who is currently providing NSM services to a participant or has in the past 24 months provided NSM services to a participant (former participant), the NSM personnel will not enter a

multiple-role relationship with the participant (or former participant). *Note that NSM Social Enterprise is a branch of NSM, so the financial (employer/employee) relationship in this context is part of NSM programming and the financial arrangement is between the participant and the organization.*

- J) Social Media: Consistent with NSM policies, NSM staff will **not** interact with NSM participants on personal social media (this includes “friending” or “following” on social media platforms between NSM personnel and participants) and, where possible, will only communicate with participants on NSM phones and email accounts.
- K) If concerns arise from the supervisor and/or NSM personnel regarding MRR, the NSM personnel will fill out the Conduct and Conflict of Interest Reporting Form and send it to the Executive Director for review.
- L) If a participant would like to end a working relationship or desire to disclose an incident, participants will fill out the Conduct and Conflict of Interest Reporting Form and send it to the Executive Director to be reviewed by Next Step Ministries’ Executive Team
- M) Frequent behavior with overstepping MMR, even if the offense seems minor, will be assessed by Next Step Ministries’ Executive Team to address the action required for the best interest of participants. Reference 4.03 Disciplinary Action for Personnel in Employee Handbook.

### **Decision Making**

The various Codes of Ethics agree that not ALL multiple-role relationships need be avoided, and in fact, doing so may be counterproductive to the therapeutic and working alliance if the environment is cold and impersonal. Thus, flexible application of boundaries ensures that the unique needs of all participants are met. All multiple relationships are boundary *crossings* but with care we can avoid them being boundary *violations*.

### **Considerations for navigating “gray areas” include:**

- a) What is the motivation for forming the multiple-role relationships: to meet the NSM personnel’s needs, or are they in the participants’ best interests?
  - a. Is the relationship necessary, or can/should it be avoided?
- b) What is the likely impact or effect of the relationship?
  - a. For the Participant
    - i. Understanding that through NSM, we are ultimately the fiduciary in the relationship, have you offered the participant the freedom to collaborate and discuss with you the pros and cons of engaging in the dual relationship and being part of the decision?
    - ii. Is it consistent with the agreed-upon treatment plan and goals?
    - iii. What are the potential risks for the participant?
    - iv. Are there any cultural, developmental, or other individual differences that may impact the participant’s needs and how they might interpret or be impacted by the proposed dual relationship?

- v. Does the relationship foster participant autonomy or dependence on the NSM personnel?
    - vi. Refer to the considerations outlined in MRR Policy point H
  - b. Other Participants
    - i. How may this relationship impact other participants? For example, is there any risk of the optics of favouritism?
    - ii. Is this relationship appropriate for other participants, and should it be offered to them, also?
    - iii. What is the greatest risk presented by this potential relationship?
  - c. Are there reasons why you, the one working with the participant, will have difficulty maintaining healthy boundaries?
  - d. Is the relationship being considered consistent with widely accepted roles of other NSM personnel?
    - i. Will this relationship jeopardize the participant's and/or the public's trust in NSM?
  - c) Does this relationship risk breaching the anonymity and confidentiality of the participant or other participants?
  - d) Can someone else meet the needs without compromising the working relationship (a volunteer or another agency)?
  - e) If the multiple-role relationship proceeds, what boundaries need to be set to protect the working relationship and the well-being of the participant?
  - f) Can I evaluate this matter objectively?
  - g) Have I consulted with my supervisor?
  - h) Have I documented my decision-making process, the rationale for the decision made, and the action's impact on the participant?
- 