

## POWELL RIVER HOSPICE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

NOVEMBER 2016

The Powell River Hospice Society offers social, emotional and spiritual support to individuals at the end of their life—through compassion, respect and care, aimed at quality of living and a good death. It also supports family and friends in grief and bereavement, and is committed to providing education and advocacy throughout the community. To provide these services, the society relies on volunteers.

To date, the Powell River Hospice Society has provided training to 37 volunteers<sup>1</sup>. Between December 1, 2015 and July 31, 2016 (8 months) Powell River Hospice Society volunteers supported 28 palliative patients and 17 bereaved individuals, providing a total of 291 hours of volunteer service to the community.

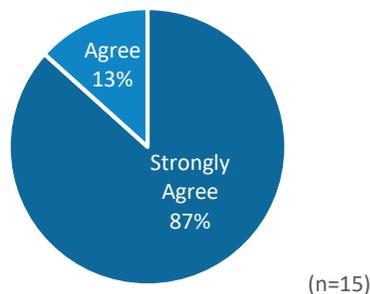
### Satisfaction with Hospice Training – 2016

Following the most recent round of hospice training (October 2016), a post-training survey was provided to all participants. 15 new volunteers filled out the survey.

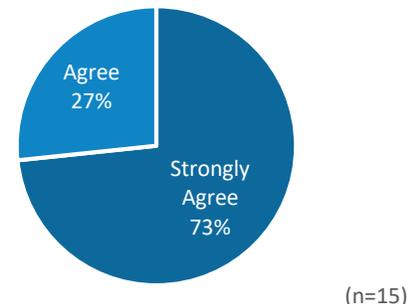
All participants indicated they were satisfied with the training. The average satisfaction ranking given to the training sessions was 4.8/5 (with 5 representing “*Very satisfied*”). Furthermore, 93% agreed or strongly agreed that the training was well organized.

Following the training session, all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understand their role as a volunteer (Fig. 1), and that the training has adequately prepared them to take on this role (Fig. 2).

**Fig. 1 - I understand my role as a volunteer**



**Fig. 2 - The training adequately prepared me**



Generally, volunteers found that learning (or re-learning) communication skills such as active listening were the most valuable components of the training program. They also found it helpful to reflect on their own experiences and thoughts on death/dying, to promote compassion and empathy with clients. One trainee articulated the most valuable aspect of training was, “*To be able to know that you can help someone to live their days as they come and hopefully you help them to be unafraid as they leave this life.*”

<sup>1</sup> Data to November 2016



## Satisfaction with Hospice Training - Reflection

In September 2016, a Volunteer Check-In survey was sent to 20 Hospice volunteers who were trained in 2015; 12 individuals responded, for a response rate of 60%. All volunteers had been providing volunteer services for the hospice society for at least 6 months.

Generally, Hospice volunteers reported being satisfied with the volunteer training they received through the Hospice Society:

- On average, volunteers who responded to the survey indicated a satisfaction rating of 4.3/5 (with 5 being “*Very satisfied*”) for the training they had received.
- 100% of respondents agreed the training they received adequately prepared them to be hospice workers.

## Suggestions to Improve Training

New and experienced volunteers were both asked to comment on any changes they would recommend to improve the training provided by the hospice. Suggestions from volunteers included:

- Providing even more time for in depth discussions with peers
- Quelling background chatter

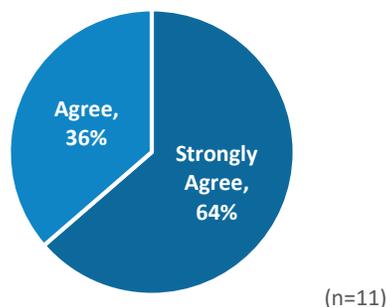


*“To be fair, I don't know if any training can prepare one for the love, heartache and meaning attending this kind of work. It is confronting and beautiful and I highly recommend volunteering for hospice work in our society which does not look death squarely in the face.” - Hospice Volunteer*

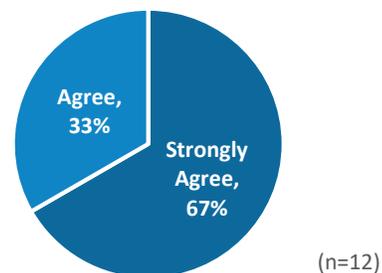
## Value of being a Hospice Volunteer

Volunteers expressed high satisfaction with their experience working for the society. According to the volunteers that completed the reflection survey, 100% of respondents plan to continue volunteering with the Hospice Society, and 100% would recommend the volunteer program to family and friends (Fig. 3 and 4). One respondent elaborated: “*I believe that having hospice volunteers is an essential service in improving quality end of life care.*” 10 of 12 survey respondents (83%) strongly believe the hospice services make a difference for clients and their families.

**Fig. 3 - I plan to continue to volunteer with the society**



**Fig. 4 - I would recommend the hospice society volunteer program to family/friends.**



## Volunteers Reported High Satisfaction with Volunteer Experience

*"It has been a rewarding experience."*

*"I feel taking the hospice program has been a very positive experience."*

*"I really value the monthly meetings. They are a wonderful support to me. I appreciate getting to know other volunteers and the mini-training sessions. What an awesome group!"*

### Areas of Opportunity for the Volunteer Program

Three volunteers indicated additional training and skills that would benefit them in their roles. Ideas included having the opportunity to receive mentoring or shadow an experienced hospice worker; writing case notes as volunteers to create baseline data on patients; and, being provided with more information regarding the medical aspects of end of life.

Volunteer respondents (n=8) also provided suggestions that would improve their experiences as volunteers:

- More activities for volunteers to network, team build and connect to one another.
- Even more ongoing training.
- Less restrictions on scope of volunteer services.
- Have guest speakers provide sessions on various end of life environments volunteers may experience.
- Increase number of clients for volunteers, including increasing awareness of hospice services by care providers and general public.



## Appendix A – Evaluation Methods

### Evaluation Methods

Method	Respondents	Notes
<b>Volunteer Tracking</b>	n/a	Volunteer data is recorded electronically and updated quarterly by Hospice Administrative staff. Information includes how many volunteers volunteer at the Hospice as well as the number of hours provided by volunteers.
<b>Post Training Survey</b>	n=15	Following participation in the Powell River Hospice Society's Volunteer Training program, individuals were asked to provide daily feedback on the training they received. 15 newly trained volunteers provided a response.
<b>6-Month Volunteer Check-in Survey</b>	n = 12	A short online survey (8 questions) was sent to 20 Hospice volunteers that have volunteered with the Hospice for a minimum of three months. Individuals were asked to provide feedback regarding the Hospice's training and programs. 12 of the 20 volunteers responded to the survey, corresponding to a 60% response rate.

