Circle of Care
Sinai Health

With your help, we can impact a life.

MEMORY BEAR MANUAL

This manual will provide all the necessary information to assist you in having the best experience possible, not only as a Memory Bear Volunteer, but also as a member of Circle of Care's Volunteer Community.

You already have the most important asset to be a successful volunteer – the desire to give to those in need.

Thank you for volunteering with Circle of Care, and welcome to our Volunteer Team!

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WELCOME

Memory Bear Program

Circle of Care's mission is to provide exceptional, innovative care so people can stay **independent, connected and safe in their homes and communities.** We provide compassionate support to caregivers navigating the difficult transition of **losing a loved one and the grieving process.**

Our Memory Bear program assists in achieving our mission by providing families with a **treasured keepsake** that honours the memory of their loved one.

Crafted by our talented volunteers and made from a loved one's clothing, every bear becomes a cherished keepsake that offers comfort while preserving precious memories. For many families, these one-of-a-kind bears provide a lasting connection to the person they loved and are **truly invaluable**.

A Memory Bear Volunteer is..

- Someone who is **caring and compassionate.**
- Someone who **enjoys sewing and creating with care and attention to detail.**
- Someone who **wants to help families preserve the memories of their loved ones.**
- Someone who **wants to make a difference in the lives of others.**
- Someone who **wants to contribute to their community.**

Our clients are individuals who are...

- Families that are **experiencing loss** of a loved on.
- looking for **comfort, connection and lasting reminders** of the person they loved.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of Volunteer Resources

- To **recruit and screen** volunteers.
- To provide **orientation** and **ongoing educational opportunities.**
- To provide **training** for the position and **ongoing support.**
- To ensure all **volunteer paperwork is up to date**.
- To **annually review and update** position descriptions and training manuals.
- To act as a **resource for volunteers** and **provide guidance** regarding client needs.
- To **monitor the progress** of the client/volunteer relationship.
- To **record volunteer hours.**
- **To provide recognition for commitment and service.**
- **To treat volunteers as valued and integral members of the organization.**

Role of the Volunteer

- To understand the responsibilities outlined in the **position description.**
- To provide the agency with **all appropriate paperwork and information** prior to start date.
- To sign an **Volunteer (Offence) Declaration annually.**
- To understand **behaviours** related to **client safety.**
- To **monitor signs of troubl**e or health conditions and note signs of acute illness.
- To **determine when client interventions are appropriate** and **how to respond** to an emergency.
- To **maintain close communication** with Volunteer Resources regarding all aspects of their volunteer role including **any concerns of clients well-being.**
- To provide the service in a manner that is **respectful of the clients' cultural and religious norms and to respect client confidentiality.**
- To maintain the agency's **policies and procedures.**
- To attend **meetings and ongoing training sessions** in order to be equipped for volunteer role.
- To **accept support and feedback** from staff.
- To **provide feedback** to staff on **ways to improve** their position and the program.
- To inform Volunteer Resources staff of any **absences or when ending their volunteer role.**

Absences

- **If you are not feeling well,** it would be best to not attend the program as the clients could be at a higher risk of becoming ill. Call Volunteer Resources staff and let them know immediately.
- **If you are planning a vacation,** let Volunteer Resources staff know your departure and return dates.
- **In extreme weather conditions,** you will not be required to attend in person sewing groups.

Holiday or Special Occasions

Holidays or dates that mark special occasions (birthdays, wedding anniversaries, anniversaries of the death of a loved one) **can be difficult times for seniors.** Some clients may find comfort in reminiscing or sharing stories of their loved ones while others may not want to discuss these events at all. **Take your lead from the client** and know that the client may seem sad around these dates.

Setting Limits with Clients

You may or may not meet the clients you are making the bear for.

- If you do It is important to keep in mind that **you are not to offer medical or legal advice or provide counselling** concerning difficult personal or family problems.
- **If a client asks for your telephone number**, advise them that they can contact you by calling Volunteer Resources.
- Only share personal information **that you are comfortable disclosing.**
- You have the **right to not tolerate verbal abuse or rude behaviour.** Just as you are being respectful to the client they are expected to be respectful to you. **Please report any incidents to the Volunteer Supervisor. Volunteers should not accept gifts or gratuities** from clients or their caregivers/family members.

POSITION DESCRIPTION: MEMORY BEAR VOLUNTEER

Program: Memory Bear Volunteer

Purpose of Position: The Memory Bear Volunteer supports Circle of Care's Memory Bear Program by creating handcrafted keepsake bears from clothing provided by clients and families. These special bears help preserve memories and provide comfort to individuals and families experiencing loss, grief, or significant life transitions.

Location: Memory Bear Volunteers can work independently from home, or attend a scheduled sewing group with other volunteers.

Supervision: This position reports to Volunteer Resources

Time Commitment: Flexible schedule. Approx. 2-5 hours per bear with a minimum commitment of 6 bears per year.

Qualifications:

- Intermediate sewing skills and experience using a sewing machine.
- Ability to follow patterns and detailed instructions.
- Strong attention to detail.
- Ability to work independently and manage time effectively.
- Compassion, sensitivity, and respect for families who may be experiencing grief or loss.
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality.
- Ability to pick up fabric from head office.
- Access to a sewing machine and basic sewing tools.
- Reliability and accountability
- Compassion and empathy
- Respect for sentimental and meaningful items
- Commitment to quality workmanship
- Ability to sew and assemble Memory Bears according to program standards.

Service Responsibilities:

- Create Memory Bears using clothing and fabric provided by clients and families.
- Follow the approved Circle of Care Memory Bear pattern and construction guidelines.
- Handle client garments with care, respect, and confidentiality.
- Incorporate meaningful features of garments whenever possible, such as pockets, logos, embroidery, buttons, or other special details.
- Maintain high-quality workmanship and ensure completed bears meet program standards.
- Communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator regarding project status, timelines, and any concerns.
- Return completed bears and any remaining fabric according to program procedures.
- Maintain accurate records of materials received and completed projects.
- Attend orientation and training sessions as required.

Organizational Requirements:

- Represent Circle of Care in a positive manner at all times.
- Wear your volunteer badge and lanyard whenever volunteering.
- Submit the Monthly Volunteer form by the 5th of the each following month.
- Read, understand and adhere to all Circle of Care's policies.

POSITION DESCRIPTION: MEMORY BEAR VOLUNTEER

Risk Management:

- ·Volunteers are expected to work within the scope of their role and follow all agency policies and procedures.
- Volunteers must maintain confidentiality, respect boundaries, and report any concerns regarding client safety or well-being to Volunteer Resources in a timely manner.

Working Conditions:

- Work is performed primarily from the volunteer's home.
- Volunteers may be required to pick up and return materials at designated Circle of Care locations.
- Volunteers should have a clean and organized workspace suitable for handling client materials.

Orientation/Training Required:

- Orientation to Circle of Care, its clients, and programs.
- Emergency procedures and reporting protocols.
- Ommgoing Completion of Circle of Care volunteer onboarding requirements.
- Completion of Memory Bear training which incudes 1 test bear.
- Ongoing support from Volunteer Resources staff.

Benefits:

- Help families preserve cherished memories of loved ones.
- Make a meaningful difference in the lives of Circle of Care clients and families.
- Use your sewing skills to create a lasting keepsake.
- Become part of a compassionate and supportive volunteer team.

Acknowledgement

I understand the responsibilities and expectations of the Memory Bear Volunteer role and agree to perform my duties in accordance with Circle of Care policies and procedures.

_____

Volunteer Resources Signature

_____

Volunteer Signature

_____

Date

PATTERN AND MATERIAL GUIDELINES

Approved pattern

Melody Bears Funky Friends

Fabric requirements

Accepted Items

The following items are generally suitable for creating Memory Bears:

- Dress shirts
- T-shirts
- Sweaters
- Sweatshirts
- Pajamas
- Uniforms
- Blouses
- Dresses
- Light jackets
- Baby clothing
- Quilting cotton and similar fabrics

Special features such as pockets, buttons, logos, embroidery, patches, or other meaningful details may be incorporated into the bear whenever possible.

Items That May Not Be Accepted

Unfortunately, some materials are difficult or unsafe to work with and may not be suitable for Memory Bears. These may include:

- Leather or suede
- Heavy winter coats
- Extremely delicate fabrics-silk,satin
- Stretch fabrics that cannot be stabilized
- Materials we are unable to work with:
- Fur
- Heavily stained or damaged items
- Wet, moldy, or unclean garments
- Items with significant odours

If you are unsure whether an item is suitable, please contact Circle of Care before starting.

WORKFLOW

Prepare Your Workspace

1.Gather all materials needed:

- Memory Bear pattern pieces
- Prepared clothing pieces
- Thread
- Scisors or rotary cutter
- pins or clips
- fabric marker
- iron
- Sewing machine and supplies
- Stuffing materials
- Any additional finishing supplies

2.Ensure your workspace is clean and organized before beginning.

3.Review the Pattern and Fabric Placement

4.Review the pattern instructions before cutting or sewing.

5.Identify where special features of the clothing will be placed, such as:

- Pockets
- Logos
- Buttons
- Embroidery

6.Confirm that the fabric pieces are positioned correctly before cutting.

7.Trace the Pattern

- Place the pattern pieces on the fabric according to the instructions.
- Trace around each pattern piece, ensuring the correct orientation and grain direction where applicable.
- Mark any important sewing points, notches, or placement areas.
- Double-check all markings before cutting.

8.Cut the Fabric Pieces

- Carefully cut each piece following the traced lines.
- Take your time, as the fabric cannot be replaced.
- Keep all matching pieces together and label them if needed.
- Save any meaningful leftover fabric pieces according to program guidelines.

WORKFLOW

9.Prepare the Pieces for Sewing

- Match corresponding pieces together.
- Pin or clip pieces securely.
- Check that all details are positioned correctly before sewing.
- Confirm that the right sides of the fabric are facing the correct direction.

10.Sew the Bear Together

- Sew pieces following the pattern instructions.
- Maintain consistent seam allowances.
- Reinforce seams in areas that will receive extra stress.
- Sew carefully around curves and small details.
- Leave the required opening for turning and stuffing.
- Turn, Stuff, and Finish
- Carefully turn the bear right side out.
- Check seams and shape before stuffing.
- Stuff evenly, creating a soft but supportive shape.
- Hand-stitch the opening closed securely.
- Add any final details or finishing touches.

11.Quality Check

- Before returning the completed Memory Bear:
- Check that all seams are secure.
- Ensure the bear is evenly stuffed.
- Trim loose threads.
- Confirm the bear is clean and neatly finished.
- Make sure any special clothing details are visible and thoughtfully placed.

12.Return Completed Bear

- Return the completed Memory Bear to the program coordinator.
- Include any unused clothing pieces as instructed.
- Celebrate the completion of a keepsake created with care, compassion, and love.

Remember: Every Memory Bear carries a story. The time and care you put into each step helps create a meaningful connection for a family experiencing loss.

TIPS FOR MEMORY BEAR VOLUNTEERS

Tips for when creating your bear:

Creating a Memory Bear is a special way to honour someone's loved one. Every garment entrusted to us is irreplaceable and holds deep sentimental value. Thank you for treating each project with the care, respect, and compassion it deserves.

Handle Every Garment with Care

- Remember that each piece of clothing represents cherished memories and cannot be replaced.
- Store garments in a clean, safe place while you are working on them.

Plan Before You Cut

- Avoid unnecessary cutting and use the fabric as thoughtfully as possible.
- Review the pattern and decide which parts of the clothing will be most meaningful to feature, such as logos, pockets, embroidery, buttons, or collars.
- Measure twice and cut once.
- If you are unsure about placement, ask for guidance before proceeding.

Create with Compassion

- As you sew, remember that this bear will become a source of comfort for someone who is grieving.
- Take pride in your craftsmanship and give each bear the time and attention it deserves.
- Small details can make a lasting impact.

Respect the Family's Wishes

- Follow any special requests whenever possible.
- If something cannot be done as requested, communicate with the program coordinator rather than making assumptions.

Maintain Quality

- Ensure seams are secure and stuffing is evenly distributed.
- Check that all pieces are firmly attached and the bear is safe to display and hug.
- Inspect your work before returning it.

Protect Privacy

- Respect the privacy of every family.
- Do not share names, stories, or photos of the clothing or finished bears without permission.

Remember the Difference You Are Making

Your time, talent, and kindness provide families with more than a keepsake. You are creating a lasting connection to someone they love, offering comfort and preserving memories that will be cherished for years to come.

Communicating Effectively

Here are some important communication strategies that will make phone call successful and enjoyable for the client and for you:

Speak clearly in person or on the phone
When you talk, **speak clearly, slowly, and in an expressive tone of voice.** Use an appropriate pace. It is okay to repeat yourself if you don't think the client heard or understood you the first time, or to say the same thing again in a different way. **Give the client time to answer** you or add their comments.

Let the client express their feelings
Even if the client is expressing something that is difficult or negative, **let them know it is okay to express their feelings.** You can help them to be aware of what they are feeling by saying something like, "You must be feeling very…" Keep in mind, these are not meant to be long conversations, but clients may want talk and that's ok if the call is still kept brief.

Paraphrase what the client has said to you.
To show that you understand or to clarify, **repeat back what the client has said to you,** but in slightly different words.

Please also remember - **if for any reason you are uncomfortable dealing with a situation,** please contact a staff member. Safety comes first for all concerned.

TWO-FACTOR IDENTIFICATION

Circle of Care uses a two-person identification approach when working with clients, **to ensure that clients receive the service or information intended for them.** This practice prevents incidents such as errors in care, medication, discharge of the wrong client from a service, and privacy breaches.

The identifers used will be the **person's full name, and at least one other client attribute,** including: date of birth, confirmed home address and phone number.

Phone

Before proceeding with receiving or providing information:

1. **Confirm** full name of client with the client directly or with the Substitute Decision Maker or Power of Attorney.
2. **Use a second identifier** such as: date of birth, phone number, confirmed home address or phone number.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Client Privacy

Protecting the privacy of our clients is paramount and is a legal, professional and ethical obligation.
Please remember that **any communication activity must adhere to our privacy policies.**

Confidentiality

Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of client information. **Information must only be discussed with Circle of Care staff who are directly involved in service provision for that client.** Any violation of confidentiality is a breach of the client's privacy rights.

Discussion of **personal health information** or **any personal client information without consent** as well as Circle of Care confidential information and Third-Party confidential information is **strictly prohibited**. **Do not share personal information such as names, addresses, phone numbers.**

Social Media

Please remember the appropriate **professional boundaries between clients, volunteers and staff**.
Clients and families **should not be engaged in any staff or volunteer member's personal use of social media**..
Volunteers and staff **should not respond to invitations** from families and clients to be part of their social media network.

When in doubt - please ask staff in Volunteer Resources.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Circle of Care Business Numbers (During Office Hours: 8:30am- 4:30pm)

General Business Number & 24/7 Call Center	416-635-2860
Director, Volunteer & Community Programs: Lisa Rae	Email: lrae@circleofcare.com Phone: 416-635-2860 ext 284
Supervisor, Volunteer Resources: Lana Rottenberg	Email: lrottenberg@circleofcare.com Phone: 416-635-2860 ext 238
Coordinator, Volunteer Resources: Erin DiLella	Email: edilella@circleofcare.com Phone: 416-635-2860 ext 375

Address and Fax Number

Circle of Care Head Office Address	4211 Yonge Street Suite 401 Toronto ON M2P 2A9
Circle of Care Fax Number	416-635-1692

Where to Find Help

If you have questions, or are seeking further clarification, please consult:

1. **Volunteer Portal**
2. **Volunteer Orientation Manual**
3. **Volunteer Orientation Presentation**

Staff in Volunteer Resources are here to support you, please call if:

- You are having difficulty dealing with the client's deteriorating health or living situation.
- You are having conflicts with a client/staff.
- You are feeling overwhelmed with a client's/staff's expectations of you.
- You are having difficulty coping with the client's sadness or depression.
- You just need to talk to someone about your volunteer experience.

Feel free to contact us at any time that you need.