

# Retiring Volunteers with Dignity

Pat Wilson  
VSM  
QEHB



# Volunteer profiles

- QEHB volunteers 30% 65 and over (7% over 75)
- As the population gets older, this will increase
- ‘Can do’ generation
- Proud



# Asleep in Meetings



JEFF MITCHELL/AGENCE FRANCE PRES



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# Asleep in Meetings

- Not a one off occasional nod off!
- Repeated feedback of 'resting their eyes'
- Little actual contribution
- Asking questions regarding points that have already been dealt with



# Frail and elderly



# Frail and elderly

- Safety for all patients, staff and volunteers is paramount with patient safety a priority
- deterioration and frailty of a volunteer puts additional pressure on staff who are responsible for volunteers.
- Pressure on other volunteers
- There may also be instances where the obvious ill health of the volunteer will cause distress to patients.



# Accepting its time to stop



**THERE'S A DIFFERENCE  
BETWEEN GIVING UP AND  
KNOWING WHEN TO STOP.**

INSPIREMEHINTUMBLR - A WEIGHT LOSS BLOG



# Accepting its time to stop

- Volunteered for many years
- Part of their life routine
- Gives them something to live for
- Feeling useful and valued
- Possessive of ward/department/staff and patients
- What will I do with my time





# Incapacity

My rememberer is broken and  
my forgetter works perfectly.



# Incapacity

- Forgetful
- Irritable
- Argumentative
- Misses appointments
- Repetitive
- Diminished rational thought process
- Rambling speech
- Confusion



# Discussion and raising awareness

"Bringing a problem to resolution and closure through continued discussion and compromise is an honorable act as it shows respect for the needs of both partners."

-- Lynne Namka

AngriesOut.com

TimeToLoveYourself.com



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# Discussion and raising awareness

- Initially ward/department manager should meet with them to discuss concerns
- Raising and discussing concerns with the volunteer may be a relief to the volunteer
- Give themselves 'permission' to acknowledge that it is time to stop volunteering
- Devote time to themselves.



# Maintaining dignity

## Defining Dignity

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\*... a state, quality or manner worthy of esteem and self-respect\*

\*Dignity in care means the kind of care which supports and promotes a person's self-respect\*

**"Being treated like I am somebody"**



# Discussion and raising awareness

- Volunteers may take offense
- Refuse to acknowledge that there is a problem with their health, wellbeing or daily activities
- Need to be handled with care and sensitivity.
- Important to maintain the dignity of the volunteer
- If volunteer refuses to acknowledge then involve Voluntary Services Manager
- Arrange a follow up meeting
- Write to them outlining the meeting and the decision



# Options

- Monitor those on long term leave are they fit to return
- Occupational Health
- Offer alternatives Committees, focus groups, task and finish groups
- Become a 'virtual' volunteer, readership panel for patient documentation, mystery patients etc
- Become a 'Veteran' volunteer, continue to send them your newsletter and invite them to your social events
- Thank them





KNOWING WHEN  
TO WALK AWAY  
IS WISDOM.

BEING ABLE TO  
IS COURAGE.

WALKING AWAY,  
WITH YOUR HEAD HELD HIGH  
IS DIGNITY.

