

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING

This information has been prepared to introduce you to our agency. The information contained in this handbook applies to all volunteers.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it handy for future reference. One of your first responsibilities is to be familiar with its contents.

If you are uncertain and have questions, please feel free to ask.

Your Responsibility as a Volunteer

Volunteers who will be working directly with SSG clients will be subject to the satisfactory completion to a state of Alaska background check before they begin.

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining a professional attitude of mutual respect and confidence. Your cooperative attitude, expressed in the willingness to provide needed services, is deeply valued. You should:

1. Be punctual and reliable
2. Sign in and out and record your volunteered hours
3. Practice the professional ethics of confidentiality
4. Set a good example of appearance and behavior
5. If you have questions or ideas, share them with staff

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Respectful Workplace Policy

The intent of this policy is to provide general guidelines about the conduct that is and is not appropriate in the workplace. Stone Soup Group acknowledges that this policy cannot possibly predict all situations that might arise, so this is intended to be a guide.

Maintaining a respectful work environment is a shared responsibility. This policy is applicable to all Stone Soup Group employees including regular or temporary employees and volunteers.

Professional Expectations

We expect our volunteers to conduct business according to the highest ethical standards of conduct. Volunteers are expected to devote their best efforts to the interests of the company and the conduct of its affairs.

Company letterhead, fax logos and other documents or forms produced by the company may not be used for any purposes other than those of the Stone Soup Group.

Attendance Standards

If you are unable to report to work on time for any reason, arrive late by at least 15 minutes or must leave early, please notify your supervisor/coordinator by phone, text or e-mail before starting time.

Dress and Personal Appearance

Volunteers are expected to maintain a “business casual” appearance as determined by the requirements of the work area. Keep in mind who you may be working with during that day and dress accordingly. If any questions arise, please speak with your supervisor for clarification.

Types of Disrespectful Behavior

The following types of behaviors cause a disruption in the workplace and are, in many instances, unlawful.

Violent behavior includes the use of physical force, harassment, or intimidation.

Discriminatory behavior includes inappropriate remarks about or related to a person’s race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or status with regard to public assistance.

Offensive behavior may include actions such as: rudeness, angry outbursts, inappropriate humor, vulgar obscenities, name-calling, disrespectful language, or any other behavior regarded as offensive to a reasonable person. It is not possible to anticipate in this policy every example of offensive behavior. Accordingly, volunteers are encouraged to discuss with their supervisor what is regarded as offensive, taking into account the sensibilities of employees and the possibility of public reaction. If an employee is unsure whether a particular behavior is appropriate, the volunteer should seek clarification from their supervisor or the director.

Sexual harassment can consist of a wide range of unwanted and unwelcome sexually directed behavior such as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submitting to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, or
- Submitting to or rejecting the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting an individual’s employment, or
- Such conduct has the purpose or result of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances. This means stalking, patting, pinching, brushing up against, hugging, cornering, kissing, fondling or any other similar physical contact considered unacceptable by another individual.
- Verbal or written abuse, kidding, or comments that are sexually-oriented and considered unacceptable by another individual. This includes comments about an individual's body or appearance where such comments go beyond mere courtesy, telling "dirty jokes" or any other tasteless, sexually oriented comments, innuendos or actions that offend others.
- Requests or demands for sexual favors. This includes subtle or obvious expectations, pressures, or requests for any type of sexual favor, along with an implied or specific promise of favorable treatment (or negative consequence) concerning one's current or future job.

Alcohol and Drugs

SSG recognizes that alcohol and drug abuse in the work place has become a major concern. We believe that by reducing drug and alcohol use we will improve the safety, health and productivity of employees. The object of our alcohol and drug policy is to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all volunteers, to comply with federal and state health and safety regulations, and to prevent accidents.

The provisions contained in this policy apply to all SSG personnel including staff, contract workers, and volunteers.

The use, possession, sale transfer, purchase, being under the influence of intoxicating liquor, illegal use of drugs, narcotics or controlled substances or other intoxicants by employees, contractors, and volunteers at any time on company premises is strictly prohibited.

Confidentiality

During the course of your volunteering here you will be working with our children/youth, children/youth's parents or guardians, their medical records, business systems, future plans, and other information that we consider confidential. Protect this information by safeguarding it when in use, filing it properly when not in use, and discuss it only with those who have a legitimate business need to know. We are required by our funders to maintain HIPAA and FERPA regulations. See the Office Manager if you need a copy of these regulations.

Smoking

Stone Soup Group is a smoke-free workspace. Smoking of any pipes, cigars, e-cigarettes or cigarettes is prohibited except in designated areas outside or in private vehicles.

Telephone Use

Company telephones are to be used for business purposes in serving the interests of our customers and in the course of normal company operations. Answer all calls promptly and courteously. On occasion, personal calls may be necessary, but we ask your cooperation in limiting them to emergencies or

essential personal business while keeping them brief. As a reminder, texting and talking on your personal cell should be avoided when at the front desk.

When using a personal cell phone, if you do not want your number known, you may “block” your number when dialing out, by dialing *67 before the phone number you are dialing.

Volunteer and Safety Health

The health, safety and prevention of occupational injuries of employees and volunteers is a primary importance to SSG. To the greatest degree possible, management will maintain an environment free from unnecessary hazards and will establish safety policies and procedures. Adherence to these policies is the responsibility of each employee and volunteer.

Life-Threatening Illnesses

SSG is committed to providing equal opportunity to all volunteers and employees, including those who have a life-threatening illness (cancer, AIDS, cardio-pulmonary disease, etc.) We are also committed to providing a safe work environment that meets or exceeds state and federal regulations. We also believe all information regarding a volunteer with a life-threatening illness must remain private and confidential. We ask all employees and volunteers to treat one another who has a life-threatening illness with compassion and understanding.

Holidays Observed by Stone Soup Group

- New Year's Day
- Seward's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

The families with whom we work with have a right to privacy, and the legitimate expectation that we can be trusted with their private information. The identities of our current and former clients, their personal communications to us, and their records are confidential by law. This office requires that confidentiality laws be strictly followed. We are required by our funders to maintain HIPAA and FERPA regulations. The following do's and don'ts serve as specific guidelines for staff and volunteers who handle correspondence files, and who work directly with families.

Do not:

- Disclose that a person is a client to anyone, including a client's spouse.
- Disclose anything in a client's record to anyone other than your supervisor or identified consultant.
- Have a client's information visible on a computer screen when you are away from your desk.
- Remove client files or information from the workplace for reasons other than authorized functions (for example, a home visit or court appearance).
- Repeat anything a client tells you to anyone other than your supervisor or identified consultant.
- Talk about a client with your spouse or any other member of your family or friends.
- Give copies of anything in a client's record to anyone other than your supervisor.
- Share copies of client's information not generated by SSG, even with a Release of Information.

Do:

- Keep files and appointment books facedown or otherwise out of view on your desk and throughout the workplace so that a client's name cannot be seen by others.
- Strictly comply with a client's permission to disclose identity, confidences, or records only when permission has been properly obtained in writing.
- Written information about families is only to be released to outside sources with the written consent of the family, or when authorized by an Executive Co-Director, and as required by law.¹
- Observe all limits and conditions a client places on any permission to disclose confidential information as is legally necessary.
- Keep client files and information locked up and/or in your possession at all times when it is necessary to remove from the workplace.
- Discard confidential materials properly by shredding them.

¹ Pursuant to our contracts with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the SOA Department of Education and Early Development, SSG Board members, staff, volunteers, and interns are subject to the provisions of HIPAA and FERPA.

- Consider a client's confidentiality on the receiving end of fax communications, e-mail, and telephone message-taking devices; ensure that the intended recipient is the only recipient of such communications.

It is possible that requests for information – including subpoenas – about our clients may come to you from the police or other law enforcement personnel, lawyers, or the courts. Tell your supervisor immediately when you receive these types of requests and determine with your supervisor how to proceed. Note that “following orders” may not be sufficient justification in a court of law for breaching confidentiality.

Some exceptions to confidentiality may require or authorize certain disclosures about our clients. Immediately inform your supervisor of any information you obtain about our clients that leads you to believe that you, the client, or anyone else may be endangered by the client. Immediately inform your supervisor of any information obtained about our clients that leads you to believe that you, the client, or anyone else may be endangered. Immediately inform your supervisor of any information you obtain that leads you to believe that a client may be involved in some way, directly or indirectly, in the abuse or neglect of a child, elderly person, or person with a disability. Meet with your supervisor at once and determine how to proceed. Note that “following orders” may not be sufficient justification in a court of law for breaching confidentiality.

VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Representation, Advertisement and Compensation

- A. _____ I agree not to represent myself to others or to advertise his/her service as a SSG Navigator.
- B. _____ I agree that I am a volunteer and not considered an employee of SSG.
- C. _____ I agree that I will not accept any compensation for services rendered to a family as an SSG Volunteer.
- D. _____ I understand that all support and contact offered to a parent/family will be coordinated by SSG and not initiated or sought by the volunteer.

I understand that I may receive information regarding families in the course of volunteering. My signature on this pledge means that I will keep any and all information I learn completely to myself. I promise to uphold the highest possible standards for the rights to privacy of each family with which Stone Soup Group works with. As necessary, staff, volunteers, interns, and others may exchange confidential information with co-workers who have a need to know such information. However, in general, the information learned about families and colleagues is confidential and should not be disclosed to anyone without a clear “need to know”.

I will not share information about families we serve by talking, gesturing, hinting, intimating, alluding to, referring to, etc. in any symbolic or actual way. Employees, volunteers, or interns who improperly use or disclose confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination and/or loss of volunteer/internship status, course credits, and potentially subject to legal action for violation of privacy. Stone Soup Group Board of Trustees members who improperly use or disclose confidential information will be subject to removal from the Stone Soup Group Board of Trustees.

My signature means that I have read, understood and agreed to Stone Soup Group’s Confidentiality Guidelines, and that I promise on my integrity, to adhere to this agreement.

Signature

Printed Name

Date