

Volunteer Skills

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Praise, Compliments and Accepting Thanks

**PART OF THE 'FIRST 33
HOURS' PROGRAMME FOR
NEW VOLUNTEERS AT
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY
HOSPITAL.**

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Skills for New Volunteers

YOUR ASPIRATIONS AND GOALS

Funnily enough, being thanked sometimes makes us feel awkward. One regular volunteer I know absolutely hates it whenever anyone says ‘thank you’.

People volunteer to make a difference to patients and experienced volunteers know that thanks may be given non verbally, through facial expression and body language. You know when you have made a difference to someone, especially someone who is feeling very ill or an elderly person who is confused, for example.

Volunteers aren’t in it for the ‘thank yous’, we know that. If someone does say thank you, don’t be shy or embarrassed. Accept the thanks with a few simple words, such as:-

- It’s a pleasure
- I’m glad to have been able to help
- Thanks, I appreciate that
- It’s nice of you to say so
- I’m pleased you feel that way

Volunteers, like staff, may not accept gifts from patients – though a box of chocolates to be shared with the ward is fine, anything else must be graciously declined.

OVER TO YOU

Each of us brings a unique perspective to the volunteering role.

VOLUNTEER SKILLS BUILDER

This skills builder is different in that we now ask you to spend a little time thinking about your personal responses.

Please use the space below each question to write, draw or doodle as you ponder your answers. Reflecting now will help you to be more prepared when you're volunteering. If you find these exercises helpful you may enjoy the Reflective Practice skills builder (Volunteer Skills 5). You may want to share your reflection with other volunteers. Before I leave you to your thoughts, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for volunteering.

What are the nicest compliments you've been given at work, college or at other times? How did they make you feel?

How does being thanked make you feel?

How does not being thanked make you feel?

‘Creative conversing’ means applying your full range of personal qualities, imagination and artistic abilities to a conversation. What are your personal strengths? See if you can manage to pay yourself some compliments and acknowledge your strengths. It won’t make you big-headed, but it may help you be more self aware.