

WC&S Community Care Agreement

Welcome to the WC&S Community. We are so happy to have you. As a domestic violence agency, our emergency shelter is home to families in transition because of DV. In our role as staff and volunteers working in the shelter space, we all want to do our part to respect and maintain the safety of this environment for the sake of our residents' wellbeing. By joining staff and residents in the shelter space, you agree to the following community standards:

- ❖ **Be considerate of the needs of our residents.** We invite volunteers to collectively establish a joint sense of respectful community amongst your group and the WC&S residents and staff while you move throughout the space. Some people may feel like engaging with volunteers while others may not. Everyone is taking care of themselves in their own way. Be open and friendly but don't place social expectations on people. Your volunteer experience doesn't guarantee you will interact with residents.
- ❖ **Use appropriate language with residents, other volunteers and staff.** Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh is committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all individuals. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or discriminatory language or behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. At WC&S, we proudly and respectfully serve all survivors.
- ❖ **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Staff is here to answer any questions you may have or address any concerns that may arise. We are here to support the experience for both residents and volunteers. Staff will offer helpful guidelines for our volunteers to maintain our practice of survivor-centered advocacy.
- ❖ **Respect the rules of the building.** To respect the confidentiality and safety of shelter residents, we do not permit any volunteer photography or facetimeing while in the building. Please also turn off location services while onsite. These are the requirements of your volunteer engagement, and we appreciate your cooperation.
- ❖ **Be Open Minded!** It's okay to be nervous if you're new to volunteering with WC&S. Doing new things can be intimidating - just remember that we are all humans doing our best to share spaces that are caring, encouraging, and enjoyable. Residents, staff, and volunteers make up the WC&S ecosystem and by being considerate of one another, we can create an experience that is meaningful.
- ❖ **Don't be afraid to laugh and have fun.** Finding joy in challenging times isn't always easy but it is important. We invite you to join us with an open mind, a light heart, and a positive attitude. There is no rush to complete your project, and we ask that you take your time as to not create an overstimulating environment. Volunteering at WC&S affords an opportunity to slow down and **be present** during your time in the shelter space, joining us in our efforts to foster an atmosphere of safety and respect while you connect with your group and share space with the WC&S residents and staff. We're grateful to have you with us.