



How to Tell When You Are Too Involved

A Visiting Program volunteer provides a social connection for individuals experiencing isolation. There are countless benefits to both the client and the volunteer when these connections are made. When a volunteer builds a relationship with their assigned client, sometimes it is beneficial to be reminded of what it feels like to be overinvolved. 'Overinvolved' means that the visiting volunteer's professional boundaries are being violated and the volunteer themselves may begin to feel uncomfortable, and sometimes obligated to support the client above and beyond their defined role as a visiting volunteer. See below for a few 'red flags' to be aware of for overinvolvement:

You are too involved when you notice one or more of the following things happening:

- You find yourself feeling possessive of your friend.
- You find yourself dreaming of your friend and wake up with him/her on your mind in a troubled way.
- You find yourself obsessing over your friend's situation/circumstances.
- You feel as though *you* are the only one who can save your friend from their current situation/circumstances.
- You are distracted at home and find yourself wanting to talk about your friend a lot of the time.
- You realize you are losing patience with those people who tell you their troubles when you think, they have no problems compared to your friend.
- You find yourself saying "That could be me," often followed by increased attempts to convince yourself that your friend will get well.
- You identify strongly with your friend's age, family status, disease, etc. to the point that you are dwelling on them.
- You find yourself sharing extremely personal details with your friend.



Relief for Overinvolvement:

- Speak to the Volunteer Engagement Manager.
- Take time off – do not visit your friend for a while.
- Talk about it with a professional– raising it to the conscious level.
- Knowing when you are getting close to reaching your limits and work on accepting them; be able to say, “I know I can’t work with X because I have trouble dealing with this kind of situation.”
- Remember, YOU ARE NOT ALONE. We must try to be ready to listen to what is going on inside of us. Support is on the way.

If you feel that you require more guidance regarding your Friendly Visitor role, please reach out to the Federation Volunteer Engagement Manager at 919-585-1499.