

Continence Management Services

Incontinence, or the loss of bladder or bowel control, can be a problem for people of any age and is often caused by illness, injury, or childbirth. The VON's Continence Management Services helps a client manage his or her unique situation through self-care strategies, often using natural techniques for controlling the bladder or bowel. A Nurse Continence Advisor (NCA) visits the client at home or at a long-term care facility/retirement home to develop a treatment plan and then makes follow-up visits to monitor progress. A trusting relationship between nurse and client ensures the client's dignity and self-esteem are respected. The counselling, teaching and support of the NCA help the client significantly improve the quality of life.

Mental Health Program

Members of the Mental Health Team help clients suffering from illnesses such as depression, phobias, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders to develop their own internal resources and become as independent as possible. VON nurses provide convenient, confidential in-home counselling for clients, their caregivers and families, and deliver an effective 24-hour, year-long support system. The primary nurse also plays a critical role in connecting the client to community resources, such as support groups, self-esteem courses and various other support agencies. For patients going in and out of hospital, the VON nurse provides "seamless care" by acting as a liaison with hospital staff, as well as the family doctor or psychiatrist. By developing and working on a realistic plan with the client and educating the family about the illness, the VON empowers the client and greatly improves the quality of life.

Enterostomal Therapy Services

For those learning to care for their ostomy, the assistance and understanding of an Enterostomal Therapy (ET) nurse are often invaluable in reducing the stress and embarrassment caused by the situation. An ostomy, a surgical procedure which diverts urine and fecal matter into a pouch next to the skin, is often traumatizing for the patient both physically and emotionally. The ET nurse helps a client adjust by providing instruction in applying the ostomy pouch and helping solve related problems such as skin conditions. In fact, ET nurses are trained to deal with ulcers and bed sores as well as other dressings, wounds and skin care. The ultimate goal of the ET program is to promote a person's dignity, independence and participation in family and community life.

Annual or memorial donations ensures the continued efforts of the VON and strengthens our ability to increase essential health care services in response to the growing communities needs.



Home Help Program

The VON's Home Help Program includes homemaking, personal care, caregiver relief, respite care and mildly ill child services. These services are affordable and designed for all types of people from expectant mothers, multiple birth families, single or working parents and busy families, to children and adults with special needs or children caring for their parents. Home Help services can also enable seniors, patients recovering from illness or surgery, or the terminally ill to remain at home and be reasonably mobile, and independent. VON Health Care Aides not only provide skilled and nurturing service, but can also brighten someone's day. In addition, they'll leave detailed notes about their visit for the family or caregiver, providing them with peace of mind.

Coping with Stress

Stress is a phenomenon of the 90's that promises to continue into the 21st century. You are stressed when you lose your sense of humour, procrastinate, have difficulty making decisions, feel you have no time for yourself, or don't get enough rest. What to do? Go for a walk at lunch or listen to music or book tapes while driving. Get a good night's sleep by:

- Keeping consistent bedtimes and wake times all week;
- Getting out of bed and doing something relaxing if you have difficulty falling asleep;
- Avoiding alcohol within five hours of bed and no caffeine after noon;
- Not going to bed on an empty or full stomach;
- Facing your clock away from the bed so as not to "count down" the minutes to morning;
- Getting Daily Exercise
- Scheduling "worry time" earlier in the day.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers are always welcome and are the backbone to VON's continual success working within our communities. Volunteer positions are available:

- Visiting clients
- Telephone reassurance
- Office administration/Board and Committee members
- Transportation for VON clients

For further information on becoming a VON volunteer, please call Allison Chaisson, VON York, (905) 836-0221.

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