

Benefits of Volunteering

In the traditional sense of the word, volunteering is to do work without getting paid, or to freely offer to do something for another. However, just because you are not getting paid in monetary value, does not mean you aren't getting paid at all. Anyone who has spent time as a volunteer will tell you there are many other ways you receive payment when you freely give your time to help others.

- **It's good for mental health.** When you're helping others they feel happy and so do you. The feeling of being happy stimulates the release of hormones in the brain including serotonin, endorphins and dopamine, all of which are responsible for regulating moods, reducing anxiety and keeping you feeling good and mentally alert - the perfect recipe for keeping depression at bay for both you and the people you are helping out.
- **It fosters tolerance and understanding.** Meeting new people is a way to broaden your horizons and find out more about the world. Each person you meet has a different set of life circumstances and stories which got them to where they are today. Talking and sharing these stories is what builds understanding and tolerance between human beings, reassuring us that we are all the same.
- **It helps you see that you are needed.** When you volunteer you are helping others do things they could not necessarily do alone or for themselves, meaning they rely on you to help them out. The feelings of being needed and appreciated may not always come from your paid work, so volunteering and feeling as though you are relied upon can boost your self-esteem. Again, this is great for keeping your mental health in check.

Everyone - rich, poor, old, or young, takes something and needs something from the society in which we live. Volunteering to help others get what they need without any physical reward for yourself is called 'giving back'. As seen above, the intrinsic rewards of giving back to the community have benefits for both the volunteer and the person receiving the help.

If you'd like to experience the benefits of being a volunteer, find out how you can join us today. <http://beconnected.org.au/get-involved-2/how-to-become-a-volunteer>