

“BE PREPARED: SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS for SUCCESS”

for Volunteer-run Arts Organizations
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Learning Objectives

- What does “support for volunteers” mean? And does it really make a difference to the volunteer and the organization?
- We will explore aspects of this support: What does Orientation, Training and Support for volunteers mean?
- WHO “supports” volunteers in a volunteer-run operation?
- How can we be creative with limited human and financial resources and still provide volunteers the support they need?
- Share some ideas for 2 key issues that came from focus group discussions

SUPPORT implies...

- A process and methods that are used to get new volunteers up and running.
- Volunteers need the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to become effective volunteers in your organization.
- Support includes common terms like orientation and training.
- Support also implies something more long term...do volunteers need continual support? And if so, what does that include?
- Volunteers come to you with a desire to do good work...they do not volunteer to fail or provide less than what you need.
- You have a responsibility to ensure they are successful, know your expectations and feel safe/comfortable ...
- Volunteers do not 'come pre-packaged and ready to go'

Quick Quiz: Let's check in with you...

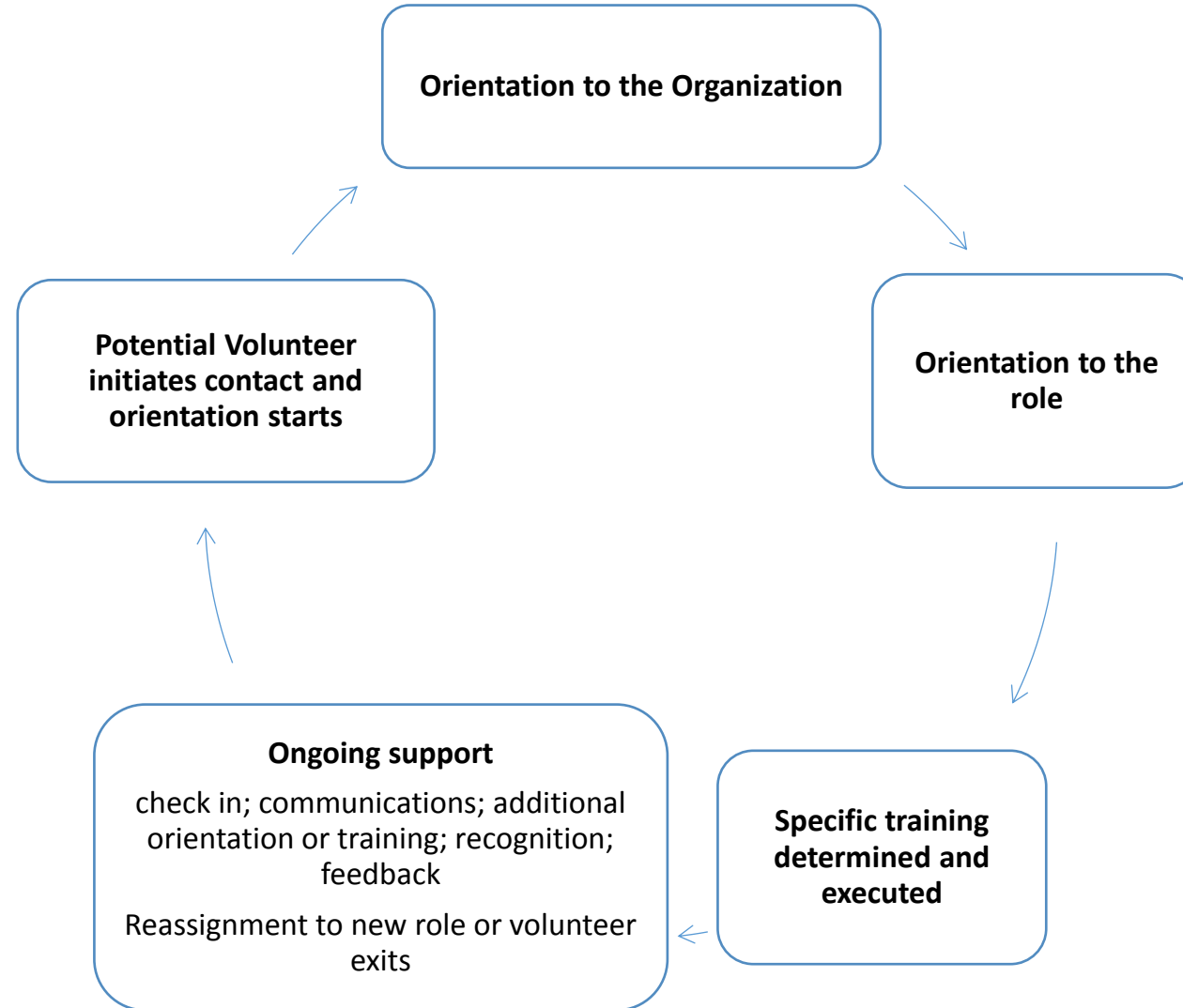
- How many of you have “someone/a volunteer” assigned or designated to support volunteers?
- How many of you have a formal orientation to the organization for new volunteers?
- Is orientation and training mandatory before the volunteer starts with you?
- How many of you orient the volunteer to their specific role?
- How many of you provide more detailed, hands on training if required?

- OF the following methods select those you use
 - Open House
 - Tour of the facility
 - Share vision, mission, goals and objectives
 - Policies/safety procedures
 - History of the organization
 - A manual for volunteers
 - Position Description
 - “Shadow” experienced volunteer with new
 - Peer/mentoring
 - Meeting with all new volunteers
 - Specific workshops/case study training sessions
 - One-to-one ‘training’ e.g. computer, skills sessions

Consider ...

- Volunteers, like paid staff, need to know who they are connected to or responsible tootherwise they are like rudder-less ships.
- Could your volunteer-run arts group have someone assigned to support volunteers? (this is considered a best practice)
- Could be one volunteer plays this role or several experienced volunteers in each operational aspect of the organization
- E.g. Front of House: Key Volunteer Lead – has responsibility to orient, train and support volunteers under their leadership
- E.g. One Volunteer – does recruitment, selection, placement and organizational orientation - then assigns volunteers to Key Volunteer Lead who orients, trains and supports in specific roles that were assigned to that volunteer.
- Whatever the model: Volunteers know who they relate to for support.

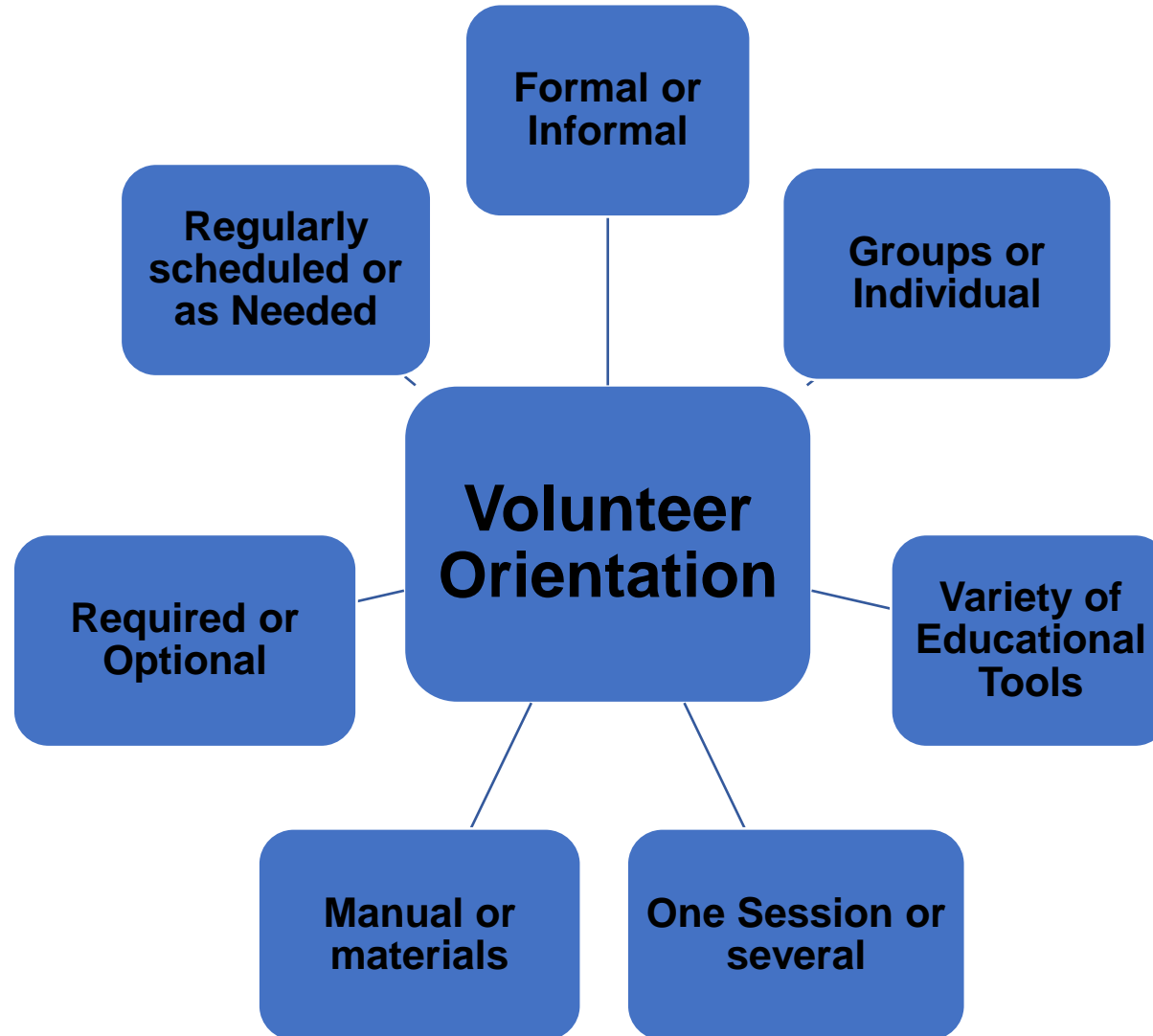
Support: Process and Methods



Orientation – 2 aspects

- To the **ORGANIZATION** and to the **SPECIFIC ROLE** – it starts when a potential volunteer approaches the organization interested in volunteering.
- How they are received and considered initially has a big impact on whether they return and in the long run whether they stay.
- Let's explore the diagram I have provided on the next slide to talk more specifically about the 2 aspects of orientation (to the organization and to the specific volunteer role)
- How you chose to do this orientation is up to you as you consider the elements.

Orientation to the ORGANIZATION



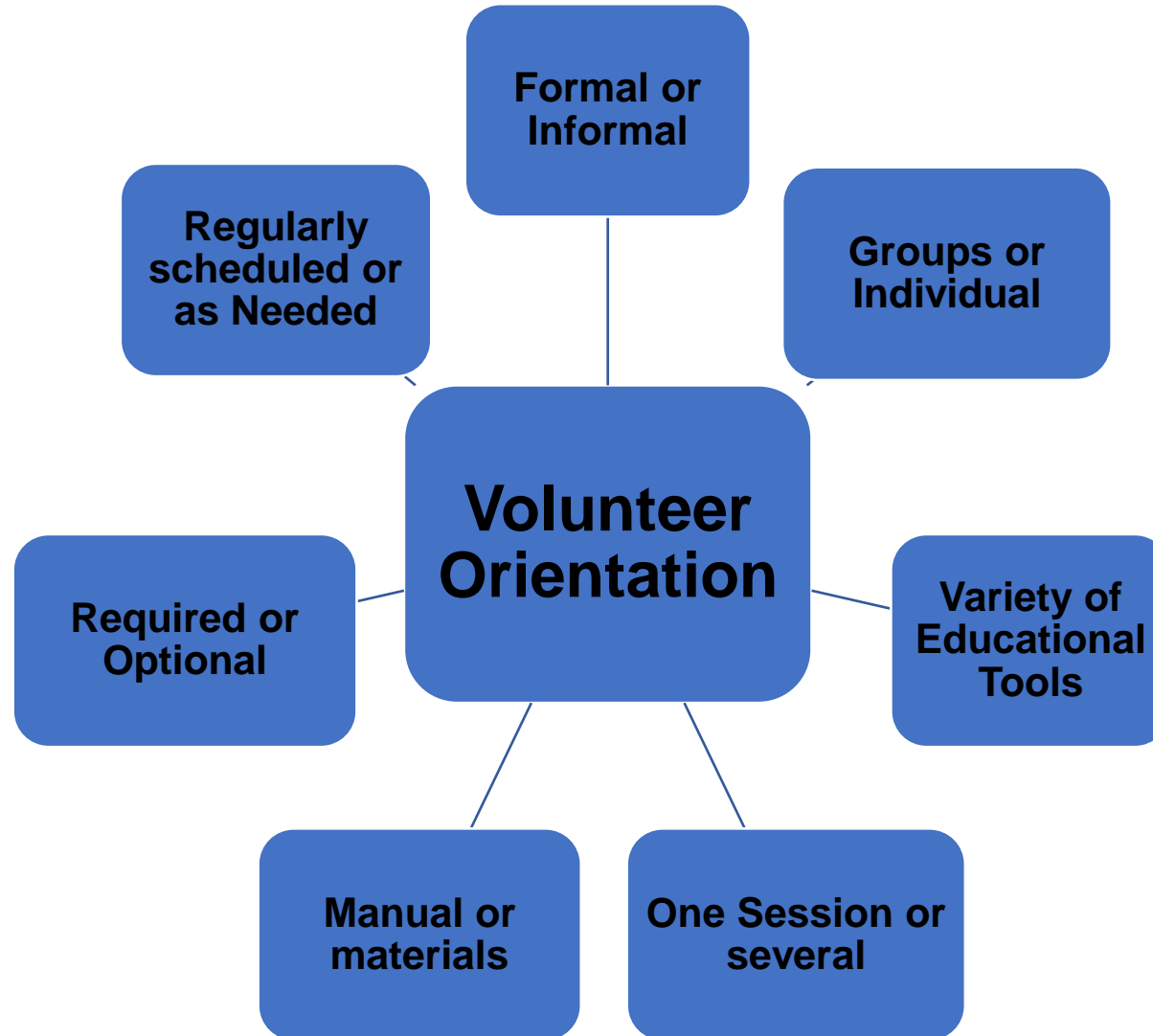
Orientation to the ORGANIZATION

What to consider in Orientation to the Organization	History; Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives Impact of volunteering on Community; Fire safety and risk management; Policies and Procedures; facility tour; meeting staff/volunteers.
Formal or Informal	Do you recruit and place throughout the year; or at specific times? Safety/risk might be more formal. How 'formal' do you want to be? Can people access materials online/web site and do this on own time? Volunteers experience event as observers.
Groups or Individuals	Do you recruit in groups or one at a time? Groups allow you to share general information and interact/question time together. Hold several sessions over the year with open invites to all volunteers.
Variety of Educational Tools	Informal OPEN House – can use to recruit as well as orient to the work you do. One-on-one with experienced volunteers. "Teachable moments approach" . Policies on need to know

Orientation to the ORGANIZATION consider...

One Session or Several	Depends on your intake and learning ability of volunteers. Session repeated throughout the year. Consider online resources. Use your experienced volunteers. Small bites of information.
Manual or Materials	People learn in different ways. Provide a variety of options for learning; come to session; read online; have volunteer manual for everyone; case studies for policies.
Required or Optional	The more professional you are the more seriously volunteers should take you. Making this a requirement of volunteering ensures consistency – however when they do organization orientation is up to them if you give them options.
Regularly Scheduled or As Needed	Depends on the nature of your work. Volunteers are busy people so knowing when sessions are in advance is helpful. 'Teachable moment' is on the spot.

Orientation to the Volunteer ROLE



Orientation to the Volunteer ROLE

What to consider in orientation to the specific volunteer role?	Detailed position description: expectations; specific details; time/shifts; impact; policy related to role; commitment to orientation/training; what support will be provided; what safety; police check requirements; who is contact; other members of group
Formal or Informal	Role is important to meet the mission; therefore more formal the greater impact/formal in an informal, friendly way.
Groups or Individuals	The more specific or unique the role, then focus on one-to-one. E.g. ushers all have same duties so could be group E.g. concession stand cash role different from server
Variety of Educational Tools	Case study for problem solving/policy; small group work; video utube to watch; peer support; materials to read; 'teachable moment' as situation occurs.

Orientation to the Volunteer ROLE

One Session or Several	Depends on the specifics of the role. Some people may take longer than others to grasp role. First time: shadowing ...check in...then on own?
Manual or Materials	People forget what is said. Have written materials in handbook; copy of the position description given to volunteer. Materials referenced online section of web site for volunteers.
Required or Optional	In order to do great work, volunteers need to feel comfortable, safe and sure of their role. This should be required orientation to the role for safety of all.
Regularly Scheduled or As Needed	Orientation to the specific role of the volunteer should take place prior to 'first' shift. However long it takes the volunteer to feel right about doing role alone.

TRAINING

- Orientation – gets the volunteer comfortable with knowledge about the **organization** and about the specific '**role/position**' they will have within the organization.
- **TRAINING** – means that more in-depth, specific knowledge or skill is needed in order to be competent. Not all positions require this additional support.
- Some examples: fire safety; cash register training; computer work in the office; financial work/spread sheets; marketing messaging; web site design/maintenance; fundraising techniques; leadership skills for volunteers who might be key leaders/board members; newsletter graphics training.

Getting Training done...

- Recruit volunteers who have the skills you need. There are many highly skilled volunteers seeking opportunities to implement their career/life long skills.
- Recruit volunteers with skills who will train others for you. Some volunteers just want a short term opportunity.
- Recruit volunteers who will put resources online/hard copy as training modules.
- Use existing volunteers who might be ready for a change who have knowledge and skills to train others.
- Approach local business who have staff with the skills they might be willing to share (targeted recruitment).

2 examples of key concerns/situations

Diversity and Inclusivity: increased awareness of all types of issues, cultural and physical for staff/volunteers/customers.

- Values/attitudes checked at recruitment
- Identify your key issues and provide sensitivity training done by partnering with specialists in community
- Case studies – write up and share online/manual
- Discussion groups using examples and solutions
- Teachable moments – when issue occurs immediately bring group together to find solution.

Fire safety/risk management issue: Volunteers not following training provided: e.g. volunteer not opening fire door despite taking training and volunteers without training in lockdown...did not stop people from leaving in lockdown situation (2 issues: training not followed and volunteers not trained).

- Volunteer Position Description: clear expectations; required training; consequences; volunteers not engaged until training completed.
- Use case examples; issues identified; risk and solutions; policy on risk management; policy on discipline and dismissal.
- Practice sessions
- Manual and online examples and ideas
- Volunteer safety group

Support ...4 aspects

Volunteer support includes **Orientation** to the **organization**

and **Orientation to the specific role** the volunteer is taking on.

It also includes any additional **Training** the volunteer might need in order to fully complete the role.

SUPPORT also implies something longer term...do we quit providing support after the volunteer is oriented and trained? What does this term support really mean and how important is it to the overall health of the organization?

- **Short term support:** getting the volunteer up and running and engaged in your work. Being available to follow up with volunteers – how are you doing? What can we do to help? Communicate continually especially within the first 3 months of engagement.
- **Long-term support:** Volunteers want to know they are doing good work; thank them; recognition; feedback sessions; change roles if they want; recognizing fatigue; giving time off; supporting their journey; invite to training sessions; ask seasoned volunteers to share learning or take on a new training role. When policy/protocol changes...volunteers need updates.

Recognizing the “impact of support”

Reasons why you need to support volunteers

1. Inspires a deeper **participation and commitment** (volunteers have high expectations and want to ‘fit’ and they want to get off to a good start).
2. Supporting volunteers is **WIN-WIN** (volunteers have skills, expectations and passion + organization has opportunities = a win when you balance volunteer expectations with organizational goals to create a positive experience).

3. A support process builds trust and can deepen the involvement of a volunteer. **Volunteer engagement = relationship building!** People commit to a cause due to their connection to other people. You want to encourage this.
4. Support helps new volunteers negotiate mixed emotions and gets them comfortable to new surroundings. E.g. a well defined schedule or calendar helps define certainty. Providing a handbook or regular meetings for discussion builds relationships.
5. Converts “**joiners**” to “**stayers**”. Orientation/training increases self confidence; processes help define safety; and discussion can show volunteers the impact they make.
6. Continued **long-term support** shows volunteers that the organization cares about them. Willing to help them do other vital roles in the organization. Support their personal growth and learning. Volunteers feel valued.

Concept of Support

- **IS A PROCESS with METHODS**...starts before day 1. The process by which new volunteers are welcomed; they learn the ropes; understand their role in bigger picture; identifies work to be done and how to accomplish that work; they get help when needed; communication support; address issues; ask them to share their skills and gifts and recognize their efforts via recognition and additional training or new roles where they can thrive.
- Find a PROCESS that works for your organization. Map it out clearly and have someone responsible/accountable to ensure it works. Volunteers have someone/an anchor to ground them.

Questions posted today...or email me...



Resources

- Volunteer Canada web site: <https://volunteer.ca>
- Volunteer Scotland web site: www.volunteerscotland.net (templates and resources for organizations)
- Charity Village: <https://charityvillage.com> (resource section with lots of topics on volunteer engagement/management; articles on specific topics of orientation and training and support).
- Energize web site: www.energizeinc.com (Cultural and Performing arts resources)

If you still have questions please
contact me and I will try to help
you!

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