



How to Foster a Volunteer Friendly Classroom

Friday, January 12 and Friday, January 26, 2024

1:00-3:00 PM

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Class Outline

► Day one

- Class Needs Assessment.
- Why Use Volunteers.
- Develop Rationale for inviting Volunteers.
- Develop Job description.
- Elements for Designing a Volunteer Training.

► Day two

- How do we Measure our Volunteer's Performance?
- Communication
- Addressing Challenges
- Appreciation



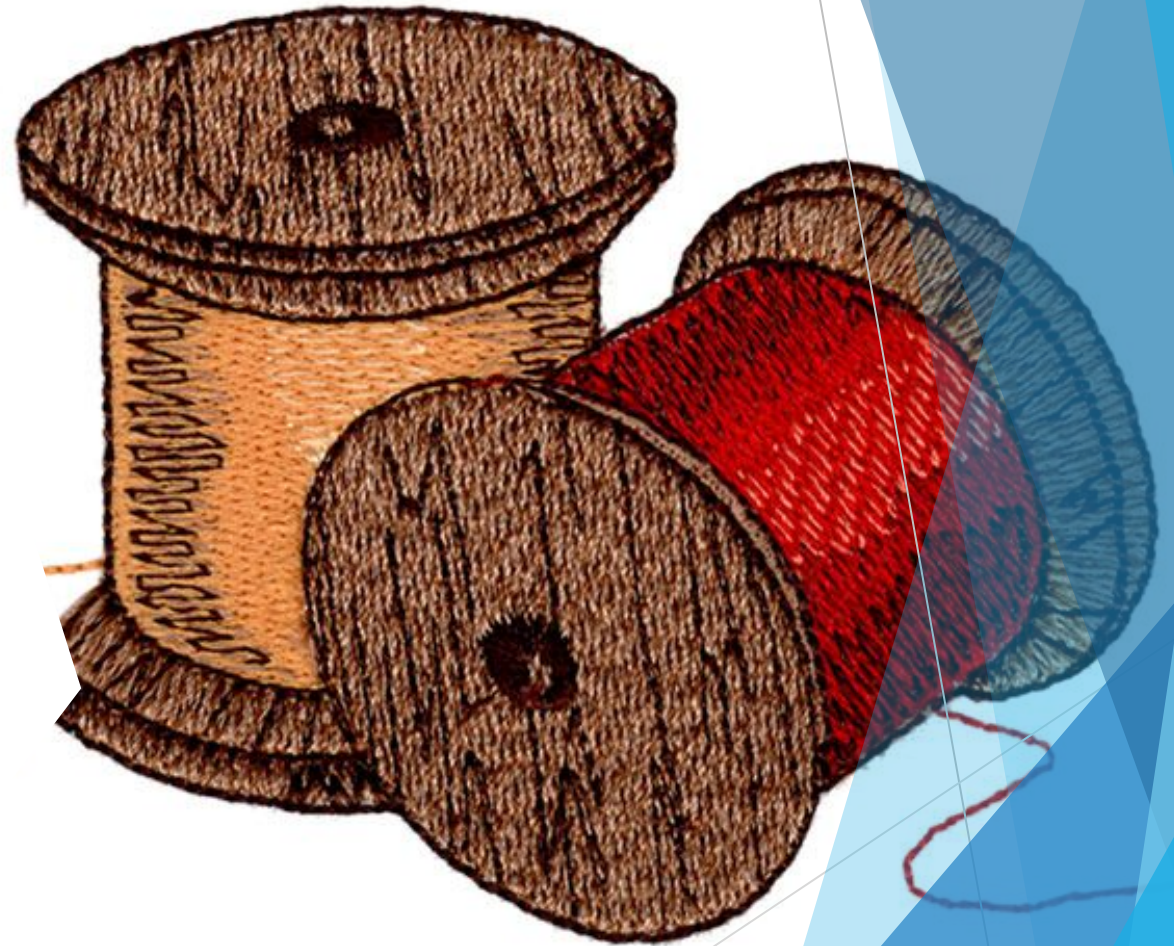
Introductions.

Please introduce yourself to your partner by answering these questions. You will introduce your partner to the class.

- ✓ How long have you taught?
- ✓ How long in current position?
- ✓ Have you worked with volunteers before?
- ✓ Do you have volunteers now?
- ✓ Does your current agency have a volunteer coordinator?
- ✓ Do you have a volunteer training in place?
- ✓ What is or do you expect to be your biggest challenge in having volunteers in your classroom?

▶ **With your partner review the information participants have shared and uncover any common threads you have heard or any differences in experiences.**

▶ **Report back**



It's important to remember why we use volunteers in the first place?

Volunteers save money. This obvious advantage of volunteers can be a lifesaver for some organizations.

Volunteers bring needed skills.

Volunteers bring renewed energy and excitement..



Most teachers have had that moment when they invite a volunteer or an intern into their classroom and almost immediately ask themselves...
“What...have...I...done?!”

So, we prepare for volunteers...

First, we need to have clear rationales for wanting volunteers.

- ▶ We may have several reasons for wanting volunteers in general. It's important that you can articulate these; you want to write them down.

In your group come up w/ five rationales for having volunteers in your classrooms.

Report back



Some examples of different rationales:

- "We think community involvement is really important to helping us stay on track."
- "We want every adult in our community to have caring adults to talk to and learn from."
- "Volunteers can help teachers meet the needs of every adult in the classroom."
- "We believe that by using volunteers, we can establish a network of tutors who can significantly increase English language skills for our clients."

Develop job descriptions.

- ▶ Now that we have decided exactly why we want volunteers, you want to write a formal job description.
 - ▶ This is unnecessary for some tasks, especially those that are one-time events, such as passing out water to runners at the annual 10K run.
- ▶ But for more involved jobs, such as classroom volunteer or tutor that are longer term, a written description is an excellent way to explain the details to potential volunteers.
- ▶ Also, this is a good way to think even more clearly what we need the volunteer for.





▶ A volunteer job description, much like the description of a paid job, should include the following:

- **Title**
- **Rationale/Purpose**
- **Responsibilities/Tasks** – list as specifically as possible. For example - Reading or writing assistant in pairs or small groups with specific instruction from teacher
- **Expectations** – Be specific.
 - Arrive 15 minutes before class time or
 - Provide structured and quiet space for adult learners to practice reading and writing skills.
- **Reporting relationships/supervision** - daily, weekly check-ins with teacher
- **Qualifications** – fluency in English, classroom experience preferred(?)
- **Time requirement** 2 hours weekly
- **Proposed starting date** (and, if applicable, end date)



- **Your Turn**
First, develop job description for a volunteer/intern in a classroom or at your agency. Include at least **5 task descriptions** and **5 expectations**. Then share with your partner

**Volunteer
training is
ongoing and
often
non-linear.**

We can't leave them to fend for themselves immediately after showing up for their first time on the job.

*Take the time and effort to make them feel ready to do a good job.

*Good volunteer preparation will give you and the volunteer a common framework.



Typically, a training session will try to explain four things to new volunteers or interns:



- ✓ **What to do:**
 - What is expected of them ?
 - What will their responsibilities be?

- ✓ **How to do it:.**
Explaining how volunteers can best accomplish their tasks is the heart of training and will probably take up the largest chunk of time.

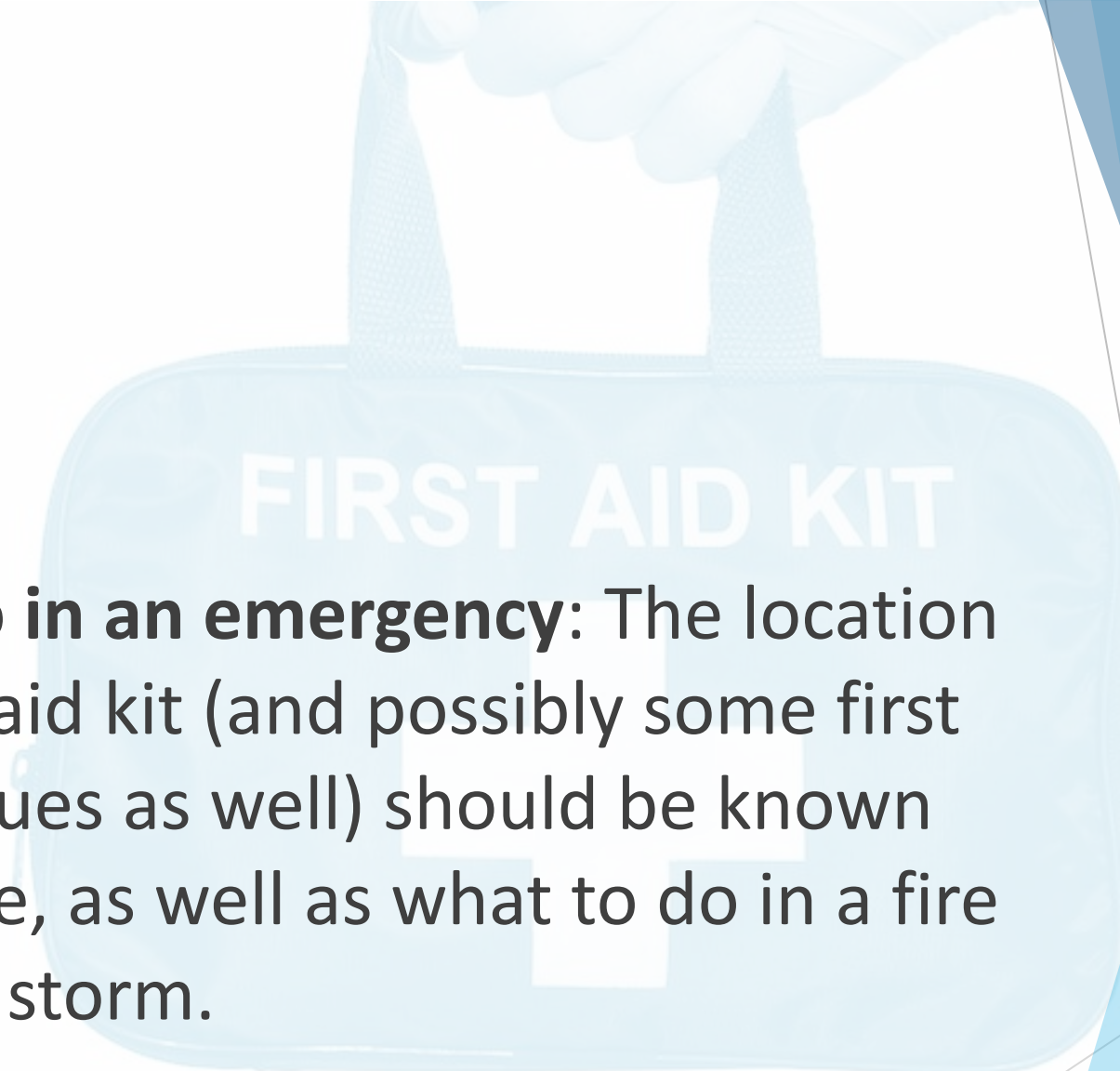


Understanding volunteer tasks:

- ▶ Goal of task
- ▶ Break down task
- ▶ Consider training methods - buddy up and practice techniques



- ✓ **What not to do**
 - Are there certain things volunteers are not allowed to do?
 - For example, should they not talk about clients, for the sake of confidentiality?
 - Can volunteers meet students outside of classroom?
- ✓ Training should make a volunteer's (and the agency's) boundaries very, very clear.

- 
- ✓ **What to do in an emergency:** The location of the first aid kit (and possibly some first aid techniques as well) should be known by everyone, as well as what to do in a fire or a severe storm.

Chunk it.

If you can, try to spread training over several days.
Gather groups of new volunteers or interns doing same tasks for group trainings. This provides a feeling of belonging and camaraderie among the volunteers.
Training in groups saves time and energy for teachers and supervisors.



Ideas to consider when developing tutor/volunteer training.



Adults must feel a need to learn. It's important that they understand the relevance of what is being taught to what they will be doing.

Ideas to consider when
developing tutor/volunteer
training.

Allow adults to share
their previous
experiences and
relate them to the
present situation.





**Ideas to consider when
developing tutor/volunteer
training.**

People like to puzzle
things out and by
presenting a
problem, you ask
people to think

Ideas to consider when developing tutor/volunteer training.

- ▶ Urge volunteers to use their creativity. Encourage the suggestions, ideas, and improvements that the volunteers might have. Their ideas could both to improve the training or the program.





Ideas to consider when developing tutor/volunteer training.

- ▶ Remember that people aren't the same. People learn in different ways and may respond better to different approaches. The trainer should pay attention to how people are responding and try to modify the training accordingly.



Possible Training Materials

- Conversation starters for volunteers to use with students.
- “What if…” scenarios
- Class List
- Class Syllabus
- Readings
- Job description – discussion about specific tasks
- Agency mission statement and description
- Organizational chart
- Contact information.
- Volunteer check-in schedule – face to face w/supervisor or other



- ▶ **Check in about content from last class. We wrote rationale for using volunteers and we developed job descriptions for your volunteers. We discussed elements of a volunteer training. Any question, comments, or concerns?**

Some ideas to keep in mind as we start our next session -



Volunteers are real staff.



Volunteers aren't free.



Supervision of volunteers is about forming and maintaining relationships.

Some more ideas for preplanning. Questions to ask yourself before the volunteer arrives.

Can I make time during training or on first day to have brief conversations with volunteers about my and their own interests, hobbies, or backgrounds?

Will I or my supervisor provide a one-on-one welcome for volunteers? Can I provide mentors or volunteer buddies to help welcome and orient new volunteers?

Can the new volunteer shadow an experienced volunteer? Or have a volunteer that already works w me to come in on the new volunteer's first shift to help train. Double win.

Some more ideas for preplanning. Questions to ask yourself before the volunteer arrives.

Will the volunteer sign in and out each shift? How will I keep track of the volunteer hours?

How will I recognize volunteer efforts and explain how these are making a difference at my organization?

Any of these actions improves your volunteer's experience.

**Identify some of these items you already do and some you would like to try.
Pair/Share - class open comments.**



How do we measure our volunteer's performance to give them feedback?

- ▶ Volunteer staff like paid staff expect performance reviews, timely feedback, and on-going support.
- ▶ **Simple measurements –**
- ▶ **Look at the job description you created for a classroom volunteer**
- ▶ **Focus on the responsibilities you already described**
- ▶ **In your group identify 3 tasks. For each task, develop language to measure a volunteer's performance.**
- ▶ **Report back**

Possible Data Collecting Categories

- ✓ Hours
 - ✓ Days
 - ✓ Students helped.
 - ✓ Number of assignments completed.
 - ✓ Signs of caring and concern
 - ✓ Tasks listed in job description.
- How do we measure and communicate our findings?
- ▶ Collecting data will make your volunteer supervision and feedback communication much easier.





- ▶ Volunteers *want* to hear from you. They truly want to do better. They want to know if they are not living up to expectations so they can improve. They want clear and constructive advice from you. In fact, they are probably starved for it

Professional/Personal Check-in



What emotions am I feeling in this moment?



How might my values be impacting my reactions?



What do I believe to be true about the other person or the situation?



What facts do I have to support my beliefs?



What information is still missing that might shift my perception of what's happening here?




External Self-Awareness.

- Do I understand how my words and actions impact others in this situation?
 - I ask my volunteer, “What am I doing that is helpful or not helpful? “
 - I pay attention to the body language of volunteers. When I speak, do they lean in or lean back? Do they smile or frown? Do they open or close down?
- ▶ **Feedback session – what have been your experience with volunteer feedback sessions? What challenges have you faced communication w volunteers? How did you problem solve? Discuss in small group.**
- ▶ Report back



Here are several additional things to practice for check in sessions.

- ▶ **Set up Dedicated Time to Give (and Get) Feedback**



Here are several additional things to practice for check in sessions.

- ▶ **Speak from the Heart**

Here are several additional things to practice for check in sessions.

- ▶ Find Your Mutual Purpose





Here are several additional things to practice for check in sessions.

- ▶ Describe Both Acceptable and Superior Performance


Here are several additional things to practice for check in sessions.

- ▶ **Ask Questions to Expand Your View of the Issue**

I have found that valuable volunteer communication requires -

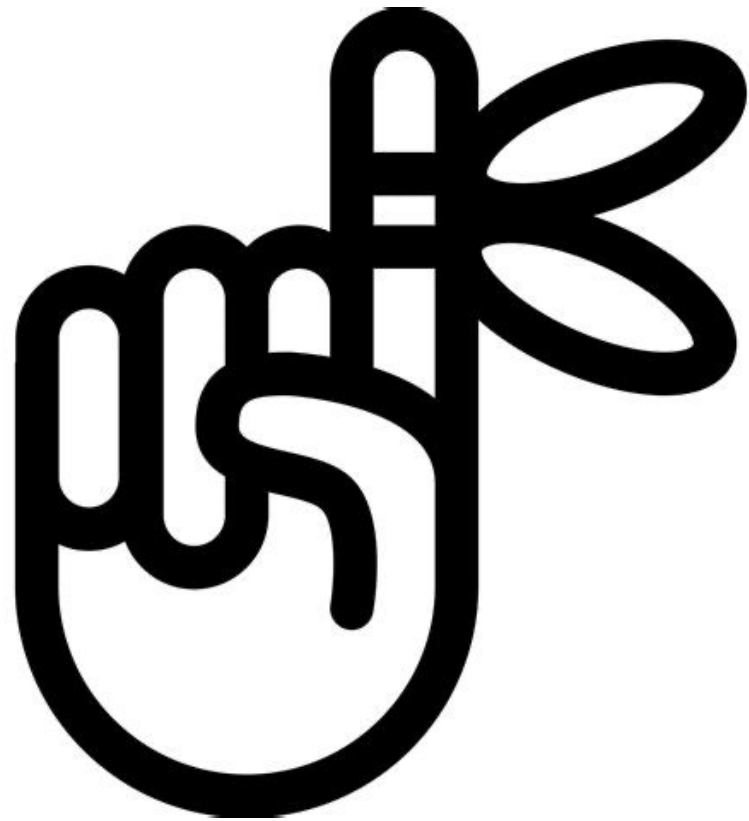
- ▶ **Honesty**
- ▶ **Collaboration-**
- ▶ **Inspiration**





Here are several additional things to practice for check in sessions.

▶ End with Gratitude



Remember...

Constructive criticism.

Celebrate in public and critique in private.

Listen to the volunteer's point of view, but this doesn't mean you need to compromise on standards.

Use behavioral observations NOT judgments. "You missed three shifts over the last month" versus "I feel like you don't care."

Role plays

- ▶ Five different scenarios for each group.
- ▶ Discuss possible strategies
- ▶ Volunteers to role play 3 different scenarios w discussion in group

Appreciation

- ▶ Thank your volunteers frequently. Look for creative ways to express your gratitude.
 - Send volunteers a thank you card.
 - Take several of them to lunch.
 - Give them a small present such as a gift card.
 - Recognize a volunteer that have gone beyond the call of duty in an email newsletter or on the wall of your establishment.
 - Plan a Volunteer Appreciation event.
 - Have students write letters of Appreciation.
 - Have a potluck for volunteer and you and students bring in food



Finally,



- ▶ Be sure to give yourself a break. Working with other adults in your classroom is challenging for everyone. Plan, practice, reflect and act.



Thank you!

We want your feedback.
Insert evaluation link

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