



Exiting a Volunteer

Exiting a volunteer is never easy, but it may, at times, be necessary for the well-being of both the individual and the organisation.

There are many reasons why a volunteer may need to move on, and sometimes, a little attrition may actually benefit an organisation. A volunteer might no longer meet the required standards, struggle with boundaries, experience burnout, disrupt team dynamics, or find their values no longer align with the organisation's mission.

Whatever the reason, once you recognise that a volunteer is no longer effective in their role, it's important to take action.

Exiting Options

Reassign - Consider whether there's another role within the organisation that might be a better fit for the volunteer. This may or may not be within the same team, depending on the fit and dynamic. Volunteers who have been with your team for some time may be a great resource to assist with the training or support of new volunteers.

Refer - You may have identified another role or organisation that the volunteer is better suited to. Alternatively you can refer them to your local Volunteer Centre for assistance in finding a volunteer role better suited to them.

Retire - Are you holding onto a volunteer where their role is no longer needed? Have changes to their circumstances, health or abilities impacted on their ability to carry out their duties? Might they potentially put your clients and/or organisation at risk? The time may have come for retirement and you will need to let them know that you no longer require their services.

Delivering the Message

It is never easy to have an 'exit' conversation with someone, but it is best to have difficult conversations sooner rather than later. Taking the time to prepare beforehand can help make the

discussion smoother and less stressful for everyone involved.

- Understand the message before you deliver it. It pays to talk it through first, perhaps with your manager or an appropriate colleague.
- Be honest, clear and concise in what you say.
- Don't make it personal, but do acknowledge the volunteer's feelings.
- Stick to the facts - remember the purpose of the meeting.
- Make sure to preserve the volunteers' dignity and self worth as much as possible.
- Thank them for their service and acknowledge their contribution.

It may be useful to have the role description on hand to help focus on the requirements and the volunteer's ability to perform the required tasks.

Starting with 'I' statements can be a useful non-threatening way to address concerns e.g. 'I have noticed...' or 'I have become aware...'. This sounds a lot warmer than 'You have done...'

Sometimes you might find the volunteer is relieved, that they didn't want to resign or quit because they didn't want to let you down.

Consider letting the volunteer determine the date they finish, within a defined time frame, giving them some control over the process.

Be prepared, and be kind to yourself and the volunteer.